

*Cheese for the Imperial Government.*

After negotiations regarding price, &c., extending over two months the New Zealand Government was requested near the end of October by the Imperial authorities to requisition for Army purposes 15,000 tons of cheese from the producers, at 7½d. f.o.b., to be delivered in monthly quantities from October to the end of May.

It fell to the Dairy Division to apportion the total quantity of cheese which each dairy company and cheese-factory proprietor would have to supply in order to fill this large order. Acting with the authority given under the War Regulations Amendment Act (No. 2), requisitions bearing the name of the Hon. Minister of Defence were posted to all cheese-factory owners, stating the total quantity of cheese to be supplied, together with the terms of purchase. A covering letter from the Prime Minister dealing with the same matter was enclosed with the form of requisition. Subsequently all dairy companies were advised from month to month as to the quotas of cheese which must be sent forward for shipment on behalf of the Imperial Government, first-grade cheese only being accepted.

The Dairy Division was responsible for the quantities of cheese being supplied in accordance with the requisitions referred to, the grading of the cheese, and the checking of the weights of each company, all other matters pertaining to the shipping of the produce and payment for same being attended to by the Officer in Charge of the Imperial Supply Branch. Up to the end of March 9,881 tons of this cheese had been shipped, and a further quantity of 2,061 tons were in store awaiting shipment.

The dairy companies as a rule readily agreed with the terms of the arrangement, and where delays occurred in despatching the full amount requested the shortage has been or is now being made up. Some adjusting of the quantities had to be made in the case of those factories where the output of cheese showed a falling-off owing to drought or other causes, but, apart from these essential adjustments, all producers of cheese intended for export were asked to furnish a *pro rata* share of the season's cheese-production.

This transaction being on such a large scale created a great deal of extra work for the various Dairy-produce Graders at the respective ports where the cheese was received, but with the willing assistance of the officers of the Division nothing more than minor difficulties arose, which were easily overcome. The correspondence carried on between this office and the dairy companies in connection with the purchase of the cheese assumed large dimensions and took up a great deal of time, as many of the dairy people did not appear to read the instructions laid down for their guidance. Little friction, however, was created, and it can be said that all the arrangements made have been carried through with a minimum of delay.

*Supply of Rennet.*

The possibility of a shortage in the supply of rennet for cheesemaking is a question of the utmost importance and one calling for immediate attention, for if such a thing should happen it would certainly mean a stop in the manufacture of cheese, with attendant serious consequences.

As the usual supplies have been drawn mainly from Denmark and Sweden, and in small quantity from England, it was considered that the ramifications of the war might easily prevent supplies reaching New Zealand. The position was considered early in the season, and with a view of drawing attention to the subject an article was published in the Department's *Journal* pointing out the necessity for taking some action to guard against a possible shortage, special reference being made to the question of saving the raw material to ensure a source of supply. Prior to then a communication had been sent to the Inspector of New Zealand Dairy-produce in London, asking him to obtain as much information as possible regarding the preparation of rennet, with a further request that inquiries be made regarding the chances of securing an experienced man to undertake the work in the event of such assistance being required. The reply, however, to both these questions was rather indefinite, owing to the difficulty of obtaining such information.

Later on we were informed that an ample supply of rennet could be expected to arrive in New Zealand for next season from the firms already engaged in the trade. It turns out, however, that there is now some risk of the orders not being filled because of the firms in question being unable to obtain the usual supply of vells for that purpose, owing to quantities being held up in Petrograd because of the war. It is even now doubtful whether these supplies will be released or not, although we are informed that the High Commissioner in London is doing all he can in that direction.

In view of the uncertainty of the position it has been decided to take definite action almost immediately for the purpose of discussing this question and making some preparation for a supply in New Zealand.

*Pasteurization of Milk for Cheesemaking.*

The extension of the principle of pasteurization as applied to the milk for cheesemaking has engaged the attention of a number of dairy companies during the past season, and it would seem that the innovation is likely to extend in the near future. The number of pasteurizing plants in use amounts to fifty, the majority being in the Taranaki District, and a further three are now being installed.

With a few exceptions this change in the system has proved thoroughly successful, more especially in regard to the improvement in the flavour of the cheese made from pasteurized milk. To give one example: a factory which last year had the low average grade of 86.684 points, and was second-lowest in a group of fifty-one factories, succeeded in turning out this year cheese