

6. You have no faith that any good can come out of a control of this kind in connection with the National Dairy Association?—I will go further and say that I have no faith that anything good can come out of this Bill, no matter who are the men in favour of it. As it is, the Bill itself is bad and vicious.

7. Do you consider that there is a strong opposition to it?—Yes, very, especially amongst the rank and file.

8. The figures placed before us indicate a strong majority in favour of the Bill: are you aware of that?—Yes.

9. Are those figures correct?—I would not challenge them, but I think it would be very difficult to prove them. There are gentlemen in this room who will admit we have been trying to get genuine and reliable information on the subject, and we understand there were two hundred factories in favour of it and one hundred against it.

10. Do "factories" mean suppliers?—Yes; but the trouble is that the suppliers have not been consulted. We find that some of those people—Mr. Morton and Mr. Connett, for instance—have done nothing else but press the Bill for the last twelve months, and they have been acting in opposition to their shareholders, who have passed resolutions against it. Others, large companies in Taranaki, have not taken the votes of their shareholders. I do not think Eltham is in favour of it.

11. Do you hold the idea that the promoters are influenced by the fact that there will be some well-paid positions connected with this Bill?—No; but of course there will be. I think it is vanity, and the gentlemen who are behind the Bill have the idea that they can rule the earth—that is the trouble.

12. But they are public-spirited men, are they not?—They have more public spirit than discretion, sir.

13. *Mr. Field.*] You are satisfied with the London market known as Tooley Street?—Absolutely.

14. If you want to get away from Tooley Street can you do so?—Yes. We are the most independent company in New Zealand. Our share capital is practically all paid up. We are not tied to firms. We do not care for anybody.

15. Is it the fact that you are dealing with a Cardiff firm?—Yes, and with other firms. We dealt with the Cardiff firm years ago. We were satisfied with our account sales and had no reason to leave them. But we are absolutely free, and I do not think there is any dairy company in New Zealand that is not free, unless it is some of the larger concerns.

16. In the ordinary course the Cardiff firm would have no connection with Tooley Street?—I think that Cardiff is a Tooley Street firm. They have their agents in Tooley Street, like the big importing merchants—Davidson and Co.—whose headquarters are at Glasgow. We know the Cardiff firm as a Tooley Street concern. We speak of all the produce firms generally as "Tooley Street."

17. The charges on the account sales are quite satisfactory?—Yes. They vary—4 per cent. and 2 per cent. We are charged according to how it is sold.

18. Have you any suggestion to make as to improving shipping matters?—I made suggestions in Taranaki, but they were not adopted. I suggested that the National Dairy Association be reorganized by the elimination of a number of representatives, as the present large body has been disastrous. I proposed the cutting-down of the directorate to two or three producers and two or three business men, who should confine their attention entirely to the shipping, and, in fact, the trading should be eliminated.

19. *Mr. Masters.*] You are not satisfied, are you, with the present shipping arrangements, or feel that they are satisfactory?—No, I am not.

20. You think that improvements should be made by means of some organization, so that the shipping of the whole of our produce might be the means of securing a reduction in the rates of freight?—We can try. I think there are too many organizations; but, mind you, I would not have another that would do any controlling, or that would be able to say, "You shall ship your butter," or "You shall not." In the matter of prices of freights, such an organization might be useful, but I would not have any organization interfering with our right to say whether we will ship or not.

21. You are in favour of a Board of Producers being formed to do their utmost in the matter—to ship on behalf of the whole industry?—Yes, with the proviso that its operations are confined purely to shipping.

22. How would you say this Board should be elected?—By the suppliers of the factory. I would not care if they were just suppliers, either to proprietary concerns or co-operative.

23. And individual farmers should have the right to vote for who should represent them on that Board of Producers?—Yes.

24. Messrs. Connett, Morton, Corrigan, Forsyth, and Marks are men closely associated with the industry in Taranaki, and also with the National Dairy Association, are they not?—They are, and you cannot separate the two.

25. Do you think those gentlemen represent the views of the working farmers of Taranaki?—Well, we know that Mr. Morton and Mr. Connett do not. We have very grave doubts about Mr. Corrigan, because I have not heard of him consulting the Hawera suppliers. He might have done, but I do not think so. And I am certain that Mr. Forsyth, the Chairman of the Eltham Factory, has not.

26. Would it surprise you to know of a resolution passed at a meeting of about four hundred dairy directors held at Stratford—a meeting lasting from 10 o'clock in the morning to 5 o'clock at night: the main resolution was that every director representing his company there should go back to it and call a meeting of the shareholders? Have Messrs. Corrigan, Forsyth, or Marks ever failed to call that meeting and ask the opinion of their shareholders on the Dairy-produce Export Control Bill?—I cannot say that it would surprise me, as I had an idea that they would not bother; but you are quite right.