

pre-war contract, and since then, whenever the associations have had to make a contract, they have as a matter of courtesy consulted the exporters in order that there might be no objection to it on their part, and that any suggestions they had to make might be considered. Those suggestions, if deemed of use, have been acted on. That is all I have to say.

3. *Mr. Forbes.*] You are the chairman of the National Dairy Association?—Yes.

4. You have not been present at previous sittings of the Committee?—No; this is my first attendance.

5. The opinion has been expressed that the association in handling the interests of the dairy industry has made so many blunders that the proposed Dairy-produce Export Board might do the same?—Did they say what blunders?

*Mr. Forbes.* I do not know if they have particularized them.

*Mr. Burnett.* That they are generally not up to date.

6. *Mr. Forbes.*] Yes, that is the gravamen of the charge in connection with the Dairy Association. Are you aware of that?—But they have not particularized their complaints.

7. Apart from shipping and other matters that were mentioned, I do not know what your activities are. But it was stated that there was some trading business brought in. Have you anything to do with that?—Yes, we trade.

8. They reckon that the trading operations were failures, and that was one of the reasons why they wanted the pool. Can you say anything about the trading business?—Do they suggest that the National Dairy Association, because it made losses in trading, was singular in that respect during the last five or six years?

9. Do you consider that the association has conducted its business in a way to merit the confidence of the industry?—I do; and I say it has the confidence of the industry as a whole, and the only men amongst our members who are finding fault with the work of the association are the opponents of the Dairy-produce Export Control Bill.

10. So far the evidence taken has been principally from the opponents of the Bill. Have you anything to say in that connection?—I know that they are attempting to link up the National Dairy Association with the Bill, but the association has no connection with the Bill beyond that it has expressed its opinion in favour of the measure. The very first question which would be asked everywhere would be, what does the National Dairy Association think of this Bill? And if the association said, "We have no opinion to offer you," then the questioners might retort, "If you have no opinion to offer we look to you as the leaders of the industry to give us a lead as to the Bill." In a way we would have failed in our duty if we had not offered an opinion on the matter.

11. Are you the promoters of the Bill?—Not at all.

12. Are you suggesting that the dealing with the question has been taken out of your hands by any section?—The first suggestion came from the South Taranaki cheese companies, who meet in conference to discuss more or less local matters. They considered the question of pooling the dairy-produce, and passed a resolution that it was desirable that a pool should be brought about, as they believed it would effect better conditions in regard to marketing the stuff and return better prices. Mr. Goodfellow made a visit to the Old Country a year or two ago, and on his return he, being impressed with the necessity of something being done to improve conditions, and having in mind a pooling scheme, and knowing that the South Taranaki people were of that opinion also, he asked the committee of that conference to meet him with his chairman at Wanganui. As the result of that Wanganui meeting the pool was launched, not the Control Bill.

13. Was it to be a voluntary pool?—No; it was to be a compulsory pool. At this meeting at Wanganui one of the representatives of the committee of the South Taranaki conference, was the chairman of the Stratford Factory, Mr. Ranford. He was one of those who launched the dairy-produce-pool scheme upon the producers of New Zealand, and also one of those who did not suggest that any details of the scheme should be given out at that time. For the responsibility of launching the scheme without details being supplied, Mr. Ranford must take his share. I understand that that is the only objection he has to this Bill. The Stratford Dairy Company has objected that not enough details have been given, and Mr. Ranford is the chairman of that company. How does this coincide with Mr. Ranford's action as a member of the first conference which launched the pool scheme?

14. How are you going to get support for the scheme unless you give details?—There have been a great many details supplied as far as it has been within our ability to give them. Bear in mind that up to the time of the actual passing of the Bill by Parliament nothing can be said in respect to details which may or may not be carried into effect. The promoters may not be the same people who may afterwards have to carry this scheme out. After the Bill became law, supposing something that was proposed could not be carried out, or supposing the Board set up under the Meat Control Act afterwards decided on a different course of action—on something which they could have done, or could not have done in the first place—or made other arrangements to improve the position of the meat export business—

15. Which they did.

16. In that case the Board was unanimous that satisfactory provisions should be brought into operation at once for the benefit of the business, was it not?—Yes; and so it would be in this case. But I suggest that if the Bill be passed in its present form it would be at least three years before any Board would feel justified in enforcing the compulsory provisions. They would first make it their business to prosecute the most exhaustive inquiries at the other end, they would confer with the merchants there, and they would exhaust every possible method of improvement before coming forward with a definite proposal to put the compulsory provisions into force. I am satisfied that any action taken by the Board under this Bill if it becomes law will not be rashly taken, but will be well thought out and after the fullest conference and discussion with the marketing agents at the other end.