

70. Then it would be good for us?—But we are not on all-fours with them. We have not their unanimity. The Danes are in a different position to the New-Zealanders. The majority of the New Zealand dairymen are in a comfortable way. It has taken the Danes about fifty years to reach their present position, and that is the principal reason why I say that without compulsion the Bill is no use, because we could not get support. As far as the Danes are concerned, they are up against bad conditions—housing—and they have a very small return of profit in Denmark. They are further ahead in co-operation.

71. You have not much faith in the loyalty of the New Zealand dairymen?—That is so.

72. You were definite that we should retain our individual brands of produce?—When did I make that statement?

73. This morning?—No; it is not my opinion.

74. Do you think we should have a universal brand?—I believe the time will come when it will be in the best interests of the producers to be able to advertise and sell one New Zealand brand, advertised as New Zealand sold on grade. They could have individual brands in small letters. The Danish produce is not known by individual marks.

75. But do not certain factories have special demands for their particular brands now?—That may be so, but we are up against the necessity for a continued supply in one particular brand going to any particular customer. They have got to take other ones sometimes.

76. You say we are too far away from the market for price-fixing?—For price-fixing here.

77. You approve of price-fixing in the Old Country?—I would support price-recording. If we can co-operate with Tooley Street we may be able to arrange the prices, but we should not attempt to fix a price. We could suggest or arrange a minimum price, according to conditions.

78. You have had some experience of the Co-operative Wholesale Society?—I have met their representatives.

79. And you were an advocate for selling our produce through the Co-operative Wholesale Society?—As long as they are able to take it. The Marketing Association is separate altogether. We have a company here, and we also have a company in London which is our representative of the New Zealand company and of the Co-operative Wholesale Society. We sell a great deal of our produce through the Co-operative Wholesale Society.

80. Did the Eltham Factory sell any through the Co-operative Wholesale Society?—I do not know, but we have consigned some through the Marketing Association. The Co-operative Wholesale Society and the Scotch Society are the Marketing Association's main customers.

81. Would it be possible for you to give the Committee a comparison between the prices got through the Co-operative Wholesale Society as against Tooley Street?—Do you mean the Marketing Association's? The arrangement we have arrived at between the Marketing Association and the Co-operative Society is that they are doing the financing, but there is no obligation on their part to take our goods at any particular time. They can take them or leave them. We found that Tooley Street tried to cut the ground from under our feet by undercutting what we were prepared to sell at.

82. You are a member of the National Dairy Association?—I am, sir.

83. You made a statement that the National Dairy Association could not legally bind the dairy factories in the matter of shipping their produce?—That is so.

84. Morally, the dairy factories are behind the National Dairy Association?—Yes.

85. Do you know of instances of factories pulling out from the National Dairy Association?—There was an endeavour to get outside, but the trouble is that we cannot get outside because we have not got the pull in freights.

86. And you usually block them?—We will probably do so because we have made the contracts in good faith.

87. You have been able to make the contracts, and speak for the whole of the New Zealand producers, without being legally able to do so?—We have legally made the contracts, but the factories are not legally bound to put their goods through us.

88. You have not been able to speak on behalf of the factories?—That is so.

89. *The Chairman.*] I understand, Mr. Forsyth, you wish to make a statement in regard to a point raised by Mr. Masters?—Yes, the meeting we held was probably held before the meeting to which Mr. Masters referred, and that would be the reason why we thought it was unnecessary to bring our shareholders together again to further discuss the matter. I believe my directors were the first directors of a dairy company in New Zealand to approve of the first Bill that came out. I had the opportunity to take a copy home before it was circulated, and I was at a meeting of my directors the following day, when they passed a unanimous resolution, and we have since discussed it and we are still unanimously in favour of the Bill—that is, the directors, and the shareholders are guided a good deal by what the directors have got to say. This is the report of the meeting: "Minutes of extraordinary meeting of shareholders held in Town Hall, Eltham, on Tuesday, 24th October, 1922, at 10.30 a.m.—Secretary read Dairy-produce Export Control Bill. Chairman gave explanation of scheme. Cocker-Wood: 'That this meeting approves of the conditions of the Dairy-produce Export Control Bill, and also urges on the Government the passage of the Bill Carried with two dissentients. Number of suppliers to company, 253.—H. Northover, Secretary. Eltham, 24th July, 1923.'" I have heard a statement made that the Eltham shareholders had never been given an opportunity of discussing the Bill. Of the two dissentients one was supplying the Maoriland Factory. As far as we know, the shareholders are strongly in favour of the Bill.

90. *Mr. Field.*] How many were present at the meeting?—I did not take a record of them. My secretary was laid up, and I had to get an assistant to write that memo. I was only able to get at the rough minute.

91. Was it a large meeting?—A representative meeting. Out of 250 suppliers you would not get more than 150 to attend. We always take it that those who are not attending are not opposing.