

13. You have fifty-four factories in Southland and Otago in favour of the Bill?—Yes.

14. Do you take silence as giving consent?—No.

15. Would you think it is fair to take silence as consent?—Yes, because they know of it. They would get up and voice their objections if they had any.

16. How would you deal with a case like this: I have two factories in my district, and I asked for their opinions on the Dairy Control Bill, and their reply is that they have considered the Bill and they leave it to my discretion to act in the interests of the farmers: where am I?—You are pretty safe, I think, in supporting the Bill.

17. Would you put them down in favour or against the Bill?—They could not be against it or they would kick up some noise about it.

18. *Mr. Masters.*] In regard to that Dunedin vote, the result is not a true indication, either for or against the Bill?—That is quite correct.

19. Because I understand that where the subscription to the South Island Dairy Association is £12 10s. a factory gets one vote, but where it is over £12 10s. they get two votes, so the result is not a true indication either way?—No. But the indication is that they are for the Bill, because the number for the Bill is more than double that against it. But it is not a true indication in itself.

20. You said that you are making arrangements for the erection of cool stores at the Bluff?—We went out to purchase the cool stores there, but we could not do it, and we went into the question of building, and finally we purchased the cool stores at the Bluff from the Harbour Board.

WEDNESDAY, 1ST AUGUST, 1923.

MR. R. COBBE examined. (No. 20.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Your full name, Mr. Cobbe?—Richard Cobbe.

2. And you are representing?—The New Zealand Dairy Farmers' Union.

3. You appear in support of the Bill?—Yes, sir.

4. Will you make a statement?—Yes, sir. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I am not here to give evidence on the clauses or the details of the Bill: I am simply here to affirm the general principle of the Bill on behalf of the New Zealand Dairy-farmers' Union. The executive of the New Zealand Dairy-farmers' Union have instructed me to interview the members of this Committee and to inform them that their union is unanimously in favour of the Bill. We have had conferences of the provincial executives and of the Dominion executive, and the motions to affirm the principle of the Bill have been agreed to unanimously. We have not had one voice raised against it at the conferences. It is true that we are suggesting certain amendments, but we suggest those amendments simply to give this parliamentary Committee some idea as to how we feel on certain aspects of the Bill. But I want this Committee to quite understand this—my executive have instructed me to emphasize this fact—that any such amendments we are not pushing if the pushing of those amendments would impede in any shape or form the passage of the Bill this session. That is one thing that I have been asked to impress upon this parliamentary Committee by my executive. I am not expressing a one-man view, or anything of that kind. I am simply expressing the decision of the Dominion Executive of the New Zealand Dairy-farmers' Union. I may say this, gentlemen: Our organization to-day shows something like five thousand financial members. I think we are probably the largest organized body of dairy-farmers in the country. Possibly the National Dairy Association may have a greater membership, but of course that association is run on totally different lines. I am not going into any of the details of the Bill: that is not my province. I am simply here to affirm the principle of the Bill. We are quite satisfied that the Bill will be for the benefit of the dairy-farmers, and I am here to ventilate that opinion. I do not think there is any need for me to go any further into the matter. Here you have something like five thousand dairy-farmers who are organized and who are in favour of the Bill. We want something done, and we believe the Bill is an honest attempt to do something for the dairy-farming community.

5. *Mr. Langston.*] Can you give us any idea of the suggested amendments? Evidently the Bill is not totally satisfactory as it stands?—I am instructed not to push any amendment or to discuss any amendment. I am simply here to inform this Committee that the New Zealand Dairy-farmers' Union is in favour of the Bill. We are under the impression that this Committee, or some of the members of it, have got hold of the idea that some of the members of the Dairy-farmers' Union are not in favour of the Bill; but I wish to say that we are in favour of the Bill, and I am here on behalf of the New Zealand Dairy-farmers' Union to affirm the principle of the Bill.

6. Are you satisfied with the financial arrangements contained in the Bill?—Well, I would prefer to leave that aspect of the question to Mr. Grounds and this Committee. I have no instruction to give my personal opinion.

7. Is your union satisfied with the method of allocating the members of the Board as contained in the Bill?—If I might not, sir, I would rather not venture any opinion outside my instructions from the Dominion Executive.

8. *The Chairman.*] You only wish to affirm the general principle of the Bill?—Yes, sir.

9. *Mr. Hawken.*] Do you think, Mr. Cobbe, that the great bulk of the dairy-farmers are in favour of the Bill as it is?—Well, I can only express the views that I have obtained through attending the meetings of dairy-farmers, and undoubtedly, if their resolutions are anything to go on, they are unanimously in favour of it. In our district and in the Waikato many of the members of the Dairy-farmers' Union are in a large way. One member on the executive is milking 250 cows and his neighbour is milking 290. They are not small men. I think that the meetings have generally expressed the views of the man who has a large herd as well as the small owner.