

22. I understood you to say that there were eight factories in favour of the Bill and four against ?
—That is so. Southland makes a tremendous amount of cheese.

23. What is the feeling down there ?—They are overwhelmingly in favour of the Bill, and this can be borne out by the evidence that was given by Mr. Dunlop the other day.

24. Can you tell me how many proprietary companies there are down there ?—Butter companies, do you mean ?

25. Yes, mostly butter ?—There are no proprietary cheese companies.

26. *Mr. Masters.*] You say there are no proprietary cheese companies down there ?—At any rate they are a negligible quantity, and they are up against the pool. That is in Otago and Southland.

27. *Mr. Forbes.*] Does that apply to Canterbury ?—No.

28. *Mr. Field.*] I understand that the suppliers to the proprietary companies complain as to their test—are they satisfied with the test with the co-operative factories ?—I would like to say that I represent a company that has taken eight hundred of their suppliers away from them in twelve months, and they provided us with £13,000 to commence operations on our own behalf.

29. Are you in a position to say whether or not their tests have improved since you took them over ?—We have not yet actually commenced operations. We have started now, but there is no cream to test much.

30. Can you tell us about their system of marketing down there—that is, the co-operative factories that have been in existence for many years ?—Some consign and others sell.

31. How do you feel about Tooley Street—do you think that they give you a fair deal ?—At the present time there is no other avenue open to us.

32. *Mr. Langstone.*] When do you think you will be in a position to alter existing arrangements ?—When the scheme has been going for a year we will be able to answer the majority of the questions that we would like to answer to-day. Until the information is obtained it is impossible for any one to get up here and say this is going to happen and that is going to happen. Until the evidence is collected we are not in a position to say very much about the scheme, and the only thing that we can do is to wait until such time as we are in possession of the information.

33. *Mr. Field.*] Are you in a position to say as to whether or not those who have consigned their produce are satisfied with the charges they have had to pay in the Old Country ?—One is never satisfied with commissions and that sort of thing, but one has to deal with the world as it exists.

34. It has been shown that the producers were charged from 2½ per cent. to 4 per cent. commission, and they were paying other charges as well—that is, necessary out-of-pocket charges : if they have been satisfied with that commission is that regarded a reasonable commission ?—I think 2½ per cent. is reasonable. If we could cut it down at all we would be glad to do it.

35. *Mr. Masters.*] You stated that the co-operative factories who were opposing this pool were mainly decoys of the proprietary concerns ?—I am sorry to think it.

36. You still maintain that ?—I do.

37. Take the position in Taranaki, for instance : do you think the factories in Taranaki who are opposed to the pool are being used by the proprietary concerns ?—I am not prepared to say whether they are or not.

38. In what part of New Zealand do you say the decoys are situated ?—I mentioned that I came here to speak on behalf of the dairy-farmers of Otago, and I do not know what the people in Taranaki think.

39. So far as Taranaki is concerned you are quite prepared to leave that district out of your statement ?—I can bring no evidence to show that they are the decoys as you suggest.

40. You said it.—(No answer.)

The Chairman : He said “Not so far as Taranaki is concerned.”

41. *Mr. Masters.*] I suppose you will admit that the Taranaki dairy-farmer is just as intelligent as the ordinary farmer of New Zealand ?—I have not met him, but I understand that he is an intelligent individual.

42. Would you be surprised to know that there are only two proprietary concerns in Taranaki—that is, actual proprietary concerns ?—I am not surprised at anything.

43. And opposition has increased against the pool by the co-operative factories ?—Are they truly co-operative factories ?

44. They are more co-operative than in any other part of New Zealand—I have a statement from the Agricultural Department, and it says they are more advanced there than in any other part of New Zealand. You stated in a resolution that you entered an emphatic protest with respect to the produce being dealt with without your consent ?—Yes.

45. You lay that down as a general principle ?—Last year a resolution was passed—

46. I am speaking of the resolution that was passed—I will take the resolution that was passed last year—was not that resolution rescinded ?—No.

47. You approve of the principle that your produce should not be dealt with without your consent ?—I think if it can be shown that the great majority of our produce should be dealt with in a certain way, then I say we must abide by the wishes of the majority.

48. But you passed a resolution last year protesting against your produce being dealt with without your consent ?—That was without representation.

49. The resolution says, “without consent” ?—I do not think the resolution was passed.

50. You voted for it ?—I did not.

51. It was passed at a meeting of suppliers in Otago ?—I could explain that position to you.

52. At any rate, the resolution was passed at a meeting of farmers ?—Yes.

53. And they protested against their produce being dealt with without their consent ?—What they mean was without representation in Wellington.