

representing here—the Geraldine Company—was not represented there; and I think that the vote taken at that time for or against the Bill is very clear evidence of whether these companies wanted it or not. It does not give us the exact number of factories. We do not know the exact number of factories actually, but the great bulk of them had two votes. Very few had one vote. The great bulk of them—probably more than 90 per cent.—had two votes, and none more than two. So that I too maintain that the voting which was given there is very good evidence that the general suppliers of those factories are in favour of the Bill.

11. No factory had more than two votes?—No, none.

12. *Mr. Field.*] You say that the factories you represent overwhelmingly support the Bill?—Decidedly so. I could not have stated that in October last.

13. There has been a change?—A decided change.

14. Do you think that it would be sufficient to have a board for shipping purposes only?—I think we badly need control. We badly need a powerful organization. I think we need to be a powerful body ourselves.

15. Have you any proprietary factories in your district?—There are proprietary factories in Canterbury. As far as I know I think there are four.

16. And they are one and all opposed to the Bill?—As far as I know. I think they are opposed to the Bill.

17. You say that the Tooley Street merchants, as far as you know, do not hold up supplies?—No, they do not. They have made their advances, and as a rule they are going to get their advances back as soon as possible. If the advances have been greater than the amount realized for the produce clear of expenses, then they write and ask for a refund at once.

18. You believe that regularity of shipping is required?—Most decidedly. In April last 18,000 tons, more than one-quarter of New Zealand's annual output, was landed in the one month.

19. And that resulted in a glut?—Yes. It depressed the market at once.

20. Do you think anybody engineered that glutting of the market?—I cannot say that they did. But certainly there is a want of supervision in regard to the methods of shipping.

21. There has been no attempt to regulate the market up to the present time?—Consistently, no.

22. There are men at Home who operate on a glutted market, and who buy and sell our butter and cheese to their own advantage?—I think they do.

23. Do you know anything of that kind generally?—Well, the statement has been made, and it has always been acknowledged to be the case by the representatives of the Home firms, that there are buyers who do that sort of thing. Buyers from Tooley Street, they call them.

24. But they are not really Tooley Street merchants?—That we do not know.

25. *Mr. Masters.*] You say there has been a want of supervision in regard to the method of shipping?—Yes, I believe so. We are not powerful enough to deal with the shipping question. I would like to say that there are very few big organizations in existence now that actually stand alone. For instance, we have got a federation of shipping companies and there is the banks' federation. We have not got an organization that is strong enough to deal with the shipping question in a proper manner.

26. Did not the National Dairy Association have a contract in connection with the shipping of the produce? You have an association in the South Island, have you not?—There is an organization in the South known as the South Island Dairy Association, and it works in conjunction with the National Dairy Association, but there is no bond between them except that of sympathy.

27. There has been a shortage of shipping this last year, has there not?—I do not think so.

28. Seeing that there has been no shortage the National Dairy Association has its remedy?—I may say that there was one part of the time when the produce did not get away when it should have done.

29. And whose fault was that?—I do not know, except that it appears to me that the shipping companies are not attempting to give us a regular service. I submit that if we had an organization—that is, a powerful organization which could dictate to the shipping companies and insist on boats being available at certain times and under certain conditions—we would get along much better than we are doing at the present time.

30. You have admitted that there has been plenty of shipping available during last season?—Yes.

31. You cannot understand the shipping companies letting their boats go away without taking the produce?—I cannot understand them doing that.

32. The supervision is not the shipping companies' business?—No, sir, I do not think so.

33. Whose business do you think it is?—I presume it would be the duty of some organization which we do not possess at the present time.

34. I am dealing with the present position—whose duty last season was it?—The National Dairy Association and the South Island Dairy Association, as far as the powers allowed them.

35. *Mr. Hawken.*] I take it that the National Dairy Association has no power to regulate the supply on to the ships?—I cannot tell you that, sir. I do not think they have power to stop us. They might have power to refuse to allocate your space, but I cannot tell you that definitely because I am not conversant with that position.

36. Do you know of any companies in the South Island that have refused to abide by the decision of the Dairy Association?—Not that I know of.

37. I take it that you are a member of the association?—Yes. It is an association of companies.

38. There is nothing in the powers given to that association that would enable it to hold back supplies?—Nothing whatever, sir.

39. So, therefore, the association cannot regulate the supplies if the dairy factories do not stick to it?—No, it cannot do anything—it is absolutely powerless.