

17. Were you there, Mr. Grounds, when Mr. Corrigan said that they should go into the matter whole-heartedly or throw it out whole-heartedly?—No.

18. Would you be surprised to learn that both those gentlemen made those statements I have referred to?—I do not know how they have been reported. Newspaper reports are frequently very wide of the mark.

19. I take it if those statements had appeared in the newspapers in support of the Bill you would say they were reliable reports—ordinarily you would take it as being so?—Yes.

20. Do you remember the Prime Minister making the statement that if the dairy-farmers agree to some form of control the Government would pass the necessary legislation?—We think a large measure of agreement has been secured when we get 76 per cent. of the industry in favour of the Bill.

21. You will not suggest that they have all agreed to it?—You will never get an absolute agreement.

22. So that if the Prime Minister carries out the statement he made at Stratford, that the farmers should agree before any legislation is passed, that promise should be kept?—I think that with the exception of Taranaki the whole of the country is practically supporting the Bill.

23. The Prime Minister was not talking of Taranaki, but was talking of the industry as a whole in New Zealand, and stated that if the farmers agree to some form of control then the Government would pass the necessary legislation?—That all depends on what is meant by the word “agree.”

24. However, if that statement was made, do you not think the promise should be kept?—We think there is a sufficient majority to warrant the passing of the Bill.

25. That is not an answer to my question—the question I asked you was this: if the promise was made by the Prime Minister to the producers of the Dominion that if they agreed to some form of control the Government would pass the necessary legislation, do you not think that that promise should be kept?—I suppose it will be kept.

26. You will not answer my question: I have asked you a very plain question, whether if the promise was made by the Prime Minister that promise should be kept?—Exactly, it should be kept.

27. On the figures shown by you according to the tons of butterfat in New Zealand there are 61,000 tons in favour of control and 20,000 tons against control—in other words, one-third of the total output of New Zealand is against control. In view of the statement of the Prime Minister and of prominent men connected with the promotion of this Bill, that nothing would be forced on the opponents to the Bill, do you not think that that is sufficient justification not to pass the whole of the Bill in the manner it is attempted to be passed?—I think that a hybridized Bill of that sort would be of no value to the industry at all, and, moreover, I think that if the Board, after a full examination of the whole position, is convinced of the necessity of another change it will be able to convince the industry of the need for it.

28. There is considerable opposition: as a consequence of the promise made by prominent advocates of the pool, and also of the Prime Minister, is it fair to force the pool on to the people who are opposed to it?—It is not for me to presume to pass judgment on the Prime Minister.

29. You have your own opinion about it?—Yes, and I have already stated it.

30. That it should not be forced on them—I understand that. In the list which you have submitted you have certain factories, particularly in Otago and Southland, which you suggest are in favour of the Bill: are you aware that Bobby Burn is against the Bill, and the Lochiel and Browns are in favour of a Shipping Board and against the Bill?—There is nothing on the list about which we have not information.

31. I have here a telegram showing that Bobby Burn is against the Bill, and that Lochiel and Browns are in favour of the Shipping Board, but are against the Bill. I ask you, what reliance can be placed on the factories that you have in your list if this is one instance where the list is wrong? If that is so, how many more can there be?—I can produce telegrams to cover the whole of the list submitted to the Committee.

32. In view of the telegram I have just referred to, do you not think that that is an indication the list is not reliable?—I do not accept your statement that it is unreliable.

33. Do not let me misunderstand you. If you have not received an indication that these people are in favour of it, is it not an indication that they are themselves unsettled about the business? I am not suggesting for one moment that this list has been faked, but I ask you, Mr. Grounds, is it not an indication of how unreliable these statements are that we are getting? Were you present the other day when Mr. Hawken put in a list from one factory stating that it was in favour of it, and immediately afterwards I had to put in a telegram from the same factory showing that it was opposed to the Bill?—A good deal of confusion has been in evidence as a consequence of the propaganda that has been carried out.

34. To my mind, the whole thing is an indication that the figures which have been submitted to the Committee both for and against the Bill are not very reliable?—I do not admit that at all.

35. In view of the information which I have given this morning, is that not an indication that the figures are not reliable?—I am not in a position to analyse the telegram you have referred to, but I submit that the figures that we have handed in this morning are based on the information that we have.

36. You stand by the submission that one-third of the output is opposed to the Bill?—That is obvious.

37. In the speeches that you have made throughout New Zealand I think you made the statement that you have offers from the shipping companies to carry the produce at a favourable rate from New Zealand: is that not a fact?—We discussed matters with the shipping companies.