

1888.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE DAIRY INDUSTRY

(NOTES ON), BY THE AGENT-GENERAL.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 28th June, 1888.

I beg leave to enclose you the first part of a series of notes I have been bringing together on the subject of the dairy industry—namely, Section I., Imports into the United Kingdom; Section II., Notes on the Industry; Section III., Methods and Requisites; Section IV., Recent Imports from New Zealand. It was my intention to have added another section, with the hope of being able to tell our dairy-farmers something of what they have to do and what they ought to avoid; but I have now given this up in favour of a much better thing, as will be explained presently.

In these notes I have tried to bring together the best and latest information on most of the leading points of interest for our colonists; and after reading carefully a great deal on the subject I think I may say that you can rely upon the accuracy of what I have said. The information comes down to the present month, including the most recent official returns, consular reports, special books and papers—including some read at the Dairy Conference of May, 1888, which will appear in the next volume of the Association's Journal. I have been greatly indebted to Professor Long, under whose guidance some of the New Zealand factories are now being worked; to the High Commissioner for Canada, and to Mr. Lynch, the Canadian author of "Scientific Dairy Practice," as to what is being done in the Dominion; to my colleagues the Agents-General for what is being done in Australia; to several large importers as to the results of shipments of dairy produce lately made from the colony; and to many others. The difficulty was how to choose out of the great number and variety of statements and reports not only what seemed to unite the most consensus of opinion, but what would be of most interest to New Zealand; above all, to put it into anything like readable shape. But when I came to apply the information so as to be of any good in the way of advice for the future, I saw that I was really incompetent to do it; so I applied to Professor Long to help me, and to write a paper himself with special reference to the wants and capabilities of New Zealand. I am very glad to say he has consented to do so. He has for some time past taken a great interest in the establishment of the dairy industry in New Zealand, and of all men he is the one best able to advise us; because on the great question of foreign competition which we have to meet no one has ever approached him in the extent and value of his investigations. In his last letter to me he says: "In my personal study of dairy-farming I have had not only to master the scientific problems which are within our grasp, but, for instance, to make all the leading cheeses with my own hands. My daily work at home and at the Royal College [Cirencester] has made me familiar alike with grasses, soils, and manures, and the whole equipment and produce of the dairy. I only say this because I take pride in being something more than a 'science-man,' and in being one whose practice is copied by his farmer-neighbours. Cheese is now being made in New Zealand at some of the companies' factories under my advice, and I also went fully into the condensed-milk question for them, visiting Switzerland and Italy to see factories there, most of which are familiar to me. I am quite sure that, if only the colonists knew how, they could compete in our markets against the world: and I say this with an intimate knowledge of the countries which now hold these markets." The concluding paper of the series of notes will therefore contain not my own ideas, but the practical advice of a high authority, on the dairy industries of Europe.

But it appeared to me in the course of the correspondence with Mr. Long that it would be of immense advantage to our dairy-farmers if, before a permanent teacher was sent out, the Professor could be induced to visit the colony, to see for himself what its capabilities in dairy-farming really are, to give lectures in the chief dairying districts, and to advise you on the spot as to what it would be best to do to promote and extend the industry. New Zealand is essentially a dairy country *par excellence*. As Professor Arnold (Cornell University) says, grass is the basis of food for the dairy, and no system of feeding yet devised can equal grass-feeding for the production of butter. A country, therefore, which can grow English grasses as New Zealand does, and a country where the cattle can thrive in the open air all the year round, may well rival England and Europe in producing the finest butter and cheese in the world, as well as gain the top price for it in this market. Last year, in one part of Munster, a farmer was getting £6 18s. a hundredweight for his butter, and in Normandy two brothers were sending butter to Paris, for which they got 5fr. a pound. There is no reason in the world why our dairy-farmers should be sending butter to England which varies in