

Now, as to Mr. Grounds's statement as to growing support, and that factories in Taranaki will abandon their initial opposition, the facts are absolutely against him. Taranaki and other factories that were in complete support of the Bill are now opposed to it—for instance, Mangorei, Midhirst, Normanby, Oxford, Joll's, Maketawa, East Tamaki, Rangiotu, and Rata. I am a little doubtful about Rangiotu Factory. I wrote to the Minister and he was good enough to forward me a list of the factories in favour of the Bill. There is a good difference now: amongst those that were then given as being in favour of the Bill but which are now opposing the Bill are: Midhirst, Rata, Normanby, East Tamaki, Maketawa, Mangorei. I am satisfied that with one exception my figures are correct. The Department's list of factories favouring the Bill last year, compared with votes taken at Palmerston and elsewhere, display this: Instead of support growing in Taranaki and elsewhere, as stated by the chairman of the Council, opposition is steadily growing. All except the last three of these are Taranaki factories. Further, it is known that some factories previously in favour are wavering and have not declared themselves. In face of the above it is clear that the measure is losing ground; and in view of the Right Hon. the Prime Minister's repeated indication that only if the measure was desired by practically the whole industry would it be gone on with, we cannot believe that it will be gone on with.

Mr. Grounds states that the initial opposition to the Bill in Taranaki would be abandoned. There is the true state of affairs. Dealing with his statement, "At all places I have been able to visit and at which I have explained the proposed legislation we have been supported even by those who were formerly opposed to the Bill": We had a meeting in Taranaki on the 24th June at which it was decided to give a vote by ballot-paper. By some means Mr. Brash became the returning officer, and the votes were posted to him, and they were to close on the 24th June. So as to try to influence the vote before the Palmerston meeting the Council called a meeting at Stratford on the 16th June. Mr. Grounds attended that meeting and spoke for two hours, and spent a long time in answering questions. The result of that meeting—and there are at least twelve gentlemen present who were there—was to show that the feeling was overwhelmingly against Mr. Grounds, and showed itself so overwhelmingly on the voices that the whole of the opponents of the Bill went outside and shook hands with one another. We could hardly get away, for our success in opposing this obnoxious measure had been so great. Well, as I have told you, it was decided to take a vote by ballot. Mr. Brash was the returning officer, and the votes were sent in. The poll ought to have been declared immediately after the 24th June. I say that Mr. Grounds has failed to disclose the full position. That poll ought to have been declared. I know they have offered an excuse, but that excuse is not valid. I say I would have been able to settle the position in ten minutes; and if any outsider can settle the matter in ten minutes, then Mr. Brash could surely settle the matter in three weeks. As secretary of our factory I wrote as follows to Mr. Brash:—

DEAR SIR,—

The Kahui Company sent in its vote against the Bill in accordance with the resolution passed at Stratford over a fortnight ago. It was requested that a list of the names voting for and those voting against the Bill be published in the 'New Plymouth papers. No such list has been seen, though the closing date, 24th, is a week past. It has been suggested that the names of the Taranaki factories which appeared after the Palmerston meeting was supposed to cover this, but, of course, that could not be so, as the vote had not closed nor was that list closed, as the names of some factories who had posted their votes did not appear. I am instructed to request that the list be published as requested, without delay. In this request many factories are concurring. I am also instructed to ask that a copy of the list be supplied to me at the earliest possible date, as it is required.

T. C. Brash, Esq., Secretary, Dairy Association, Wellington.

Yours truly,

E. MAXWELL, Secretary.

Mr. Brash's acknowledgment to that letter is as follows:—

DEAR SIR,—

We have your letter of the 1st instant, and so far the Council have not considered your request that a list of factories voting in Taranaki should be published. Mr. Grounds will be in Wellington in the near future, and we will place your letter before him.

E. Maxwell, Esq., Occidental Hotel, Lambton Quay, Wellington.

N.Z. Dairy Association, 5th July, 1923.

Yours faithfully,

T. C. BRASH, Secretary.

So far we have not secured the list. I say that the thing was as simple as A B C. We had our list of votes. We had the votes taken at Taranaki, and we had the votes taken at Palmerston. We ticked over the two lists, and where a double tick occurred—where the vote was cast at Palmerston and also at Stratford—it was obvious that it was one vote. The result of that check—as far as I can ascertain from the papers posted and from my knowledge of the voting—is that the position is approximately as I have stated it, nineteen for the Bill and forty against. I will say at once that I may be wrong by two, but no more. Now, that is a very serious position. We have a plain, bald statement that wherever Mr. Grounds went he gained support. Well, it is not true. Mr. Grounds must have been overworked. Then we have the statement that Taranaki is speedily going in favour of the Bill. Taranaki is not going in favour of the Bill: Taranaki is going against it. In addition to those that I have given you, there are some most important factories whose suppliers have not been called together, and those suppliers would vote against the Bill. I suggest that Eltham Factory is one of those. Their directors are not to-day in favour of the Bill. That will soon come out.

My next section is: Legislation is not required. It is said that we ought to follow the Meat Control Board; but whereas the meat business was almost "down and out" when that Board was set up, the dairying industry is the most wealth-producing and far and away the most wonderfully progressive of all our industries. It has been advanced by leaps and bounds from a mere nothing in the early "nineties" to the position now of not only the premier industry of the Dominion but to that of being the premier dairying country of the Empire. Its progress has been steady, rapid, and sound, and it has proved the mainstay of the Dominion's finance.