

is to the interest of the Government to see that everything is done properly and to know that it is being done for the best. That is my point. Do you think it is interference when the Government have representatives there to see that there is no undue trouble caused through mistakes, or to give advice?—Candidly, I do not think it would contribute very much. A sincere desire to help along might be there. A lot of the people in Russia are sincere in what they do, but we have got into the habit of deprecating that sort of thing.

85. You do not suggest for a moment that the Government of this country are likely to do anything like what they have been doing in Russia?—This compulsory power is a little bit like it. Without imputing insincerity I think it is a fair parallel.

86. You and the other men who are opposed to the Bill represent interests that have been working in this country for a long time, and you are against an organized attempt by the producers themselves to control their own business in their own way, because it is in conflict with the methods and means by which you and others have been accustomed to carry on the business in the past: is not that so?—I entirely deprecate the insinuation at the back of that. The insinuation, if not the statement, is that all those who are in opposition to this Bill are in opposition because of influence from interested channels and that it is not our sincere conviction. I think it is a very improper imputation. I do not object to what we say being criticized, but I think it ought to be received as the *bona fide* expression of honest men.

87. I did not wish to insinuate that at all. What I meant to convey was that the methods that have been employed in business in New Zealand in connection with the dairy-produce up to the present moment are entirely in opposition to the proposals that have emanated from the producers for a system of control of their own business by their own methods under a Bill such as is submitted to the Committee now. That is my point. I am not imputing any evil intentions to any of you. Your ideas and methods of conducting business are directly opposed to what is proposed by the majority of the producers, who, I maintain, want this Bill. Is not that so?—A section of the producers only want the Bill.

88. I made the statement, and I have to take the responsibility for it, that a majority of the producers desire this system?—There has been no consultation of the producers, and therefore, if you will pardon me, it is your view on that point as against mine to the contrary; and if you will pardon me further, I think I am in a better position to judge even than you are on that point, because, being a producer, I am in very intimate touch with the producers.

89. I am not going to dispute the point with you. That is the whole objection to the change that is proposed. The producers who desire this change desire to be able to conduct their business as producers on the lines they think best for their own benefit. If they make a mistake, of course they have got to pay the penalty. They are quite alive to that fact?—We who dissent will also have to pay the penalty with them. That is where it touches us.

90. *Hon. Mr. Ngata.*] You said in your evidence last Friday, I think, that New Zealand butter was off the English market for some months?—For some months.

91. About how many months, on the average?—On the average, perhaps right off for three months, and only negligible quantities are offered for an additional three months—that is, we work up from nothing to a maximum, and then work down again.

92. Do you propose to remedy that at all by evening the deliveries up, which would entail a certain amount of storage?—I do not propose doing it. I disapprove of that attempt, because wherever it has been tried it has failed.

93. You think the dominating business policy should be to serve the butter up to the English market as fast as it is produced?—Yes, as quickly as possible. On the average that brings the best return.

94. With regard to reducing the number of loading-ports for vessels, would that not entail penalizing factories that are situated in out-of-the-way places, more than they are handicapped at present?—No, because the shipping companies under their contracts have always paid all expenses from grading-ports. Therefore there would not be a penalty.

95. The reduction of loading-ports would not necessarily mean the reduction of grading-ports?—No.

96. So that no additional expense would be involved to the producers by a concentration of the shipping-ports?—No.

97. *Mr. Langstone.*] When the boats come to New Zealand, of course they have got to call at different ports to discharge cargo. They do not always go to these ports just to pick up cargo, but they discharge and load at the same time: is not that the position to-day?—It is a practice which has grown very much in recent years. Earlier, a considerable quantity of goods was distributed up the coast—distributed to the smaller ports from the larger ports.

98. That would mean extra handling, would it not?—That is so, but the extra handling was more than compensated for by the despatch and the increased earning-power of the bigger boats.

99. *Mr. Masters.*] Take a port like New Plymouth. There are direct boats coming in there now with merchandise from the Old Country, and loading butter there. If that port were cut out, would it not have the effect that the coastal freight would have to be paid? You say that this is paid by the shipping company. I cannot imagine that the shipping companies are going to do that for fun. They must take it into consideration when they are fixing the freight between New Zealand and London. It must have a bearing on the freight: I think you will admit that?—It has a bearing on the freight. As a matter of fact it would permit of a lower freight if it could be carried to its natural conclusion. Just imagine a hypothetical case: Load all the butter at Wellington and bring it here by coastal boats: a lower freight would be possible, including the coastal freight, than we have now when the big boats tramp all round the Dominion.