

And they said, "No." Possibly some agents do. I am not prepared to say to-day that there are no consignments from Denmark. But I asked the chairman of the Danish United Dairies the same question, and they all said "No; we make an attempt to clear up every keg of butter that we have to offer for each weekly shipment." There are many other details of this which could be discussed, but I will not trouble you with them at the present time. In connection with the necessity for compulsion or control, it has been said by the leaders of the promoters that there is no intention to bring in the compulsory clauses. I have heard Mr. Grounds say that he was prepared to give his word that those compulsory clauses would never be brought in. We say, gentlemen, that when an Act becomes law it is practically impossible for any individual to give undertakings of the kind. I wish to make these suggestions. If we—producers and commercial and financial interests—are generally in accord with the opinion that there is no real necessity for compulsion or control; if we are in accord that in an industry or a business that is well established we should not have Government representation; if we are in accord that we are all out for the same result—the highest possible price net to the producer in this country—why is it that we cannot come together? Why is it that we cannot work in harmony? Why should we continue in sections, as we have been doing for many years in this country? These sections have been created, we think, only by misguided efforts in connection with this question of marketing. I am not prepared to say, although I have had a good deal of experience, that we should do this or we should do that. It is a man's job, though, to improve some of the conditions which we have existing in this country to-day. We have made rapid progress. The quality of our butter and cheese reflects credit on every one that has had anything to do with it, and to-day it continues to reflect credit. Taking our cheese as compared with Canadian, a short time ago when Mr. Ruddick visited this country he was amazed at the progress that had been made. If you take butter the same thing applies. I go round the world regularly in connection with my business, and I can safely say to you gentlemen that as far as the manufacturing end is concerned and the general supervision we have very little to learn from these other countries that have been in the butter business for so many years. I say we have done exceedingly well. If there is even a reasonable fear of interference or disturbance at the present time, should we not go carefully? Should we not say we must be doubly certain? From listening to the evidence this morning there seems to me to be a concentration of unrest or doubt in the minds of the Committee about shipping. I believe that to get an efficient service from New Zealand is difficult—that in this respect New Zealand is the most difficult of any country in the world. A brief description will enable you to understand. In Canada they have one port, practically, in the summer time—Montreal—and they have sufficient business to give them regular steamship services to all the main British ports, the British buyer or importer being able to calculate almost to an hour when his goods will arrive. Denmark is equally good, or better, for there is a shorter sea trip. Buyers can always calculate on their butter reaching their ports on Monday morning of every week. Holland is the same. From the Argentine I believe they get also a very regular delivery. Australia has a good service, principally through her mail-boats. There are five ports of call, and the boats arrive in London docks within a few hours of time-table dates. That is the main service. Now, in New Zealand, by reason of our domestic conditions, we have established a great number of grading-ports, which have developed into shipping-ports. I express this belief: that the New Zealand farmer on the average pays shorter railage hauls than in any country in the world. That must come when you have so many ports. I would express that opinion, without being able to give it as concrete evidence, that the New Zealand farmer pays shorter railage hauls than in any country in the world. Questions have been asked this morning as to what we should do about all these various ports, and the question of the discharge of inward cargo has been raised. I have only one recommendation to make. I am not a shipping man, although we have been shipping and receiving goods all our life. Is this not a problem to be taken up with the shipping companies, either here or in London? My opinion of the shipping companies is that they are out to give New Zealand a good service. They are a very important connecting-link between the hundreds of millions of money invested in this country and our oversea markets. Why should they not give us a service which will enable us to market our goods in the most satisfactory way and to obtain the highest possible price? I offer no opinion as to how this is to be brought about, because I think that is only a detail at the moment which might only take up too much time; but the problem is so big, so important, that I strongly advise all concerned to sit together on this problem. Let us say we want a regular delivery at London, or at Manchester, or at Liverpool. All these questions require consideration. Are we going to ship to Liverpool? Are we going to ship to Manchester? If we do, will it pay us to do so? I say that opinions at this end are not worth a great deal even after extensive experience. I say, let us send a deputation of moderate, sound producers. Let them go to Canada and study the position there at first hand, finding out why the Canadians market their goods in the way they do, and what arrangements they make about shipping. Let them go to Denmark, and find out at first hand accurate, truthful information. Then let them go around among the importers and wholesalers and retailers of Great Britain and say to them, "We want to give you a better service: how are we to do it?" In conclusion I wish to say that on my recent visit I gave a bit more time than usual to marketing, and I wish to put it in evidence here that among the importers and the wholesalers and retailers of Great Britain the view was held that New Zealand stands right at the top. Some of them were a little bit disturbed last year at the proposed legislation, because they thought an effort might be made to make them do something they did not want to do. They did not like the idea. I explained that I believed that the promoters of the proposed legislation had in mind an improvement in our marketing-conditions, and we were out to give them regular deliveries. I said that in the coming competition in their markets by the countries which have been out of action for some time we wanted them to give New Zealand produce preference. I did not mean by a tariff. I meant that they should