

SERIOUS DANGER TO NEW ZEALAND CHEESE INDUSTRY.

THE following circular letter by Mr. D. Cuddie, the Director of the Dairy-produce Division of the Department, has been sent to all dairy companies manufacturing cheese :—

GENTLEMEN,—

There are several most important matters connected with the present position of the cheese industry in this country which it is desired to bring under the notice of dairy companies and others concerned.

Since the warmer weather set in this season, much too large a percentage of inferior cheese has been exported from the Dominion. Unfortunately, this faulty produce has been more in evidence in cheese from the Provinces of Taranaki and Auckland, although that from other districts has been affected to some extent.

The early shipments of this class of cheese are now being marketed in London, and cable advice has reached us within the last few days from Mr. Wright, Inspector of New Zealand Dairy-produce in London, which confirms the judgment of our officers on the quality of the produce before it was loaded into the Home-going steamers. It appears that the trade is making serious complaint about the quality of our cheese at the present time. On examination at this end much of the produce was found to be of poor flavour, such as would undoubtedly increase with age. Then, again, the body of many of the cheese was too weak for an export article.

The faults that have been complained of can safely be put down to one or more of three causes—viz., (1) inferior milk, (2) over-anxiety to increase the yield of cheese, and (3) lack of cool storage and the unsatisfactory carriage of cheese to the final port in New Zealand.

As to the need for more care in handling the milk on many farms and the thorough cleansing of all dairy utensils, much has already been written and said on the subject. The experiences of the Dairy Instructors this year prove conclusively that there is yet a great deal of room for improvement in this connection. Many of the milking-machines in use have been found on inspection to be in a deplorably insanitary state, and in some cases parts of them have had to be taken to the factories for cleaning. There is not the slightest doubt that the dirty condition of a large number of these machines is a serious menace to our dairy industry. Some are found to be so very unclean that it would be impossible for milk to pass through them without becoming badly contaminated and so spoiled as to be totally unfit for the making of good cheese. The rejection of such milk at all costs is the only effective cure for this evil, and managers of factories should be given a free hand in the matter, in the interest not only of those who deliver sound milk to the factories, but of the reputation of the particular brand and the good name of New Zealand cheese.