


The attempts that are being made to abnormally increase the yield of cheese are proving disastrous, and if continued will end in heavy financial loss. No further comment on this point is necessary, as the remedy is obvious.

At the present time I believe that cause No. 3 is even more serious than the other two; at least it is certainly so for about three months of the year, when the atmospheric temperature is high. In the first place there are many districts where the transport of cheese from factory-door to grading-port cannot be considered altogether satisfactory. The long cartage which is necessary in some places is undoubtedly harmful to the cheese. As a matter of fact, in one of the most important cheese districts in New Zealand those engaged in the business are without the conveniences of a railway, with the result that the produce has to be carted long distances in road wagons. Then, even in places which are conveniently served by a railway, there is at times a scarcity of proper closed-in vans for conveying cheese to the shipping-port, with the result that open trucks covered with taupaulins have to be used for the purpose. 

The present position of affairs is greatly accentuated by the fact that the cheese industry has expanded so rapidly and to such dimensions as to have quite outgrown the facilities provided for the proper handling of the produce at some centres. The cool-storage accommodation available is altogether inadequate, and where it is provided in some cases it is not taken advantage of as fully as might be the case.

This season already—up to the 20th February last—some 20,407 tons of cheese have been exported from New Zealand, which is an increase of 30 per cent. on last year's figures for the same period. Surely, then, the value to this country of a trade of such dimensions would warrant the provision of proper cool stores wherever quantities of the produce have to be collected!

At Auckland and New Plymouth such stores are provided, although in some cases dairy companies have failed to make use of them, while at Patea the volume of cheese handled is so great that it is absolutely impossible for the freezing-works to store it all in cool chambers. At the Bluff no attempt is made to store the cheese at all, notwithstanding the fact that the industry has grown enormously in Southland during the last few years. It is true that a new cheese-store is being erected in Wellington; but, unfortunately, arrangements are not at present being made for controlling the temperature of it. Large quantities of cheese from both North and South are centralized in Wellington, much of which is carried to this port in steamers provided with absolutely no means of cooling the holds; and with such a valuable product as cheese this should be tolerated no longer. At present during the busy season thousands of tons of cheese are collected in the Wellington Harbour Board's sheds and held at ordinary temperatures while awaiting shipment, and in many instances it has been found that cheese bearing a first-grade stamp had deteriorated to second grade in quality before being placed on board the ocean-going vessels.

Although during the last few years many of our dairy companies have spent large sums of money in building up-to-date curing-rooms for their cheese, in which the produce is protected from excessive heat and the temperature maintained at a degree which gives the best results in the curing of cheese fresh from the hoops, it is a most regrettable statement to