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Milk Production and the Farmer

IN an interesting speech delivered at the Taranaki Agricultural Society's Show on March 8, Lord Bledisloe, Governor-General of New Zealand, discussed the questions of the proposed dairy products quota to Great Britain and the removal of the embargo on the importation of pedigree live stock from Great Britain. Lord Bledisloe pointed out that, while the British farmer must insist that the dairy industry should be made a paying proposition, there is at the present time on the British market much imported foreign third grade dairy produce which is causing the slump in prices. It was agreed at Ottawa that, subject to the salvation from ruin of her own dairy farmers, Great Britain would not stand by and allow New Zealand farmers to suffer permanent impoverishment either in dairy farming or in any other branch of husbandry. The future of the Dominion depends upon its successful and progressive methods of pastoral husbandry; and while the standard of quality in New Zealand produce is already very high, it is being still further improved by scientific methods.

The case for the removal of the embargo on the importation of live stock from Great Britain rests on the necessity for the introduction of fresh blood in those breeds of cattle and pigs in which the numbers in New Zealand are low, and inbreeding prevalent. At present the cost is prohibitive through unnecessary detention in some other country *en route*; the risk of infection is small because of the short incubation period of foot-and-mouth disease and the long journey to New Zealand. High quality in her produce is the first essential to success, and New Zealand can afford no longer not to import pedigree animals direct from Britain and thus improve her live stock as her rivals are doing.

The question of the proposed dairy products quota and the apparently conflicting interests of New Zealand and British dairy farmers, which at the present time appear to threaten the existence of either one or the other, have an important bearing on present-day questions of milk production in Great Britain. Both countries are ideally situated climatically for dairy production. Up to the present time, the British farmer has looked to liquid milk consumption as the outlet for his supplies, while the New Zealand farmer, being a long way from the market, has produced mainly butter for export. Beef prices being so bad

recently, large numbers of British farmers have changed over from beef to milk production, and now there is a large amount of milk which is surplus to the present requirements for liquid consumption.

The question arises whether a quota should be put on New Zealand butter and the surplus British milk used for butter making. In our opinion this would be wrong. Under British conditions of high costs of production, butter-making on a large scale is not a paying proposition. If the price of butter is raised by quota restrictions to the level at which it will pay British farmers to produce it, then we shall see a return to the consumption of margarine by the poorer classes of the community. From a nutritional point of view this is undesirable.

What then can be done with the surplus milk now being produced in Britain? In addition to immediate action with regard to beef prices—something perhaps rather more drastic and simple than the Fat Stock Commission's recent report visualises—a large portion, if not the entire present surplus, could be consumed as fresh liquid milk and thin cream (16–20 per cent fat), if our public could be persuaded to consume as much milk *per capita* as does the average American.

No 'milk publicity campaign', however, will persuade the British public to consume more dairy products unless it shows them how this can be done. There is a limit to the amount of milk which one can take as milk puddings. But the thin cream market is virtually untapped. The only choice open to the housewife between whole milk and the type of cream that almost defies extraction from its carton is the cream that rises to the top of the milk bottle, or some tinned substitute. Few people accustomed to thin cream in tea and coffee and as an accompaniment to puddings, porridge, fruit and breakfast cereals would give it up unless forced to do so. A demand for this commodity stimulated among the middle and upper classes would suit the farming community very well, for it would leave skim milk on the farms for pig feeding—a supplementary protein feed which is badly needed to assist quality of the carcase of pigs sold under the Bacon Pig Marketing Scheme. Danish bacon produced without skim milk would lose its characteristics.

The large American consumption of milk, however, is mainly brought about by the city office workers consuming milk with their light lunch, whereas the British take tea or coffee. It is by serving milk attractively in bottles off ice that the

American has been persuaded to drink it. Tepid milk, as it is too often served in Great Britain, is not a 'clean' drink and does not quench the thirst as iced milk does: like cocoa, tepid milk leaves a thick taste in the mouth, so in the absence of iced milk the British public prefer a 'clean' drink like tea or coffee for lunch. Stimulation of the consumption of the surplus milk in Great Britain in these ways—iced milk and thin cream—would not only be more profitable to the British farmer and avoid doing injury to the business of the New Zealand farmer, but would also be to the nutritional advantage of all classes of the British community.

Leadership in Local Government*

THE very attention which the growing complexity of the problems confronting the administrator, whether in national or industrial life, has attracted, makes it easy to overlook the extent to which technical factors have become important in local government also. In the last twenty years, the powers and duties of local authorities have greatly increased. They have now far-reaching responsibilities, and the welfare of the community is largely dependent on the efficiency with which those responsibilities are discharged. Public health, education, housing, town and country planning, road construction and maintenance—these are only some of the activities of local government authorities, and more and more they require to have at their disposal officers on whom they can rely fully, both for advice on the critical questions which come before them and for the execution of their decisions when taken.

The local government service in Great Britain maintains a high standard, for which no small share of the credit is due to the National Association of Local Government Officers. This and other associations have laboured to secure improved qualifications of their members and have succeeded in developing an invaluable professional spirit and outlook. In spite of this, there are wide variations in the standards of recruiting and training of officers for local government service. No consistent efforts are made by local authorities as a whole to secure the best persons for their service and to make the best use of them. Recruitment is often haphazard and training is unsystematic. Although technical qualifications where held are usually fairly high,

* Ministry of Health. Report to the Minister of Health by the Departmental Committee on Qualifications, Recruitment, Training and Promotion of Local Government Officers. Pp. 91. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1934.) 1s. 6d. net.