

The Government Announces the Price Set for Cheese

The Season's Price Set at 21½ cents a Pound at Montreal—Purchases Now Being Made on That Basis—Grading Will be More Strict—The Rules Announced by the Commission

THE Government's announcement of the price to be paid this season for cheese, as well as the publication of rules adopted by the Cheese Commission, that are intended to govern the purchase of cheese, has gone far to clear up the very unsatisfactory situation that has existed for some time in regard to the buying of cheese in Canada. The first light on the new conditions was given by Hon. Martin Burrell in a speech made in the House of Commons last week. This was followed by the announcement of the rules which will govern the purchase of cheese that have been drafted by the cheese commission and which were read on various cheese boards of the country. Following this the Montreal exporters gave additional light concerning certain other details on some cheese boards through their buyers. Since then the cheese commission has visited the Brockville cheese board and thus met with the factory men. While there are still some points on which our dairymen will seek for further light, the general situation now is about as follows:

The British Board of Trade, acting with the approval of the British Government, has established a price beyond which cheese must not be sold in Great Britain. This price has been set at 28 cts. a lb. wholesale and 32 cts. a lb. retail. Once the British Government set this price, the Cheese Commission, which was appointed to establish the price to be paid in Canada at 21½ cts. a lb., f.o.b. steamer, Montreal, for all cheese that will grade as finest. As the freight and cartage from country points into Montreal, together with other charges, such as packing in accordance with the British Board of Trade requirements and all expenses incurred at Montreal after the arrival of the steamer, must be deducted from this price, as well as the exporter's profit, the price in the country will run enough lower to cover these charges. At the cheese boards last week the price ruled at from about 20½ cts. to 20 15-16 cts. a lb., this latter price having been paid at Madoc.

Grading Will Be Strict.

One effect of the new conditions promises to be that cheese will be graded more strictly this year than ever before. If this proves to be the case, it should have a good effect in stimulating improvement in the quality of our cheese. The Commission has decided that the prices paid will be as follows: Grade No. 1, 21½ cts. f.o.b. steamer, Montreal; Grade No. 2, 21¼ cts. a lb. and Grade No. 3, 20¾ cts. a lb. Culls will be accepted by the Commission, but the price paid will be on the merits of the cheese. Graders have been appointed by the Commission, who will inspect and grade according to quality, every lot of cheese purchased for the Commission that goes to Montreal.

In the past buyers have been in the habit, on a rising market, of accepting many cheese that they would not accept under other conditions. As the price has now been set for the season, practically eliminated and that all the buyers. Makers who have been in the habit of taking poor milk in order to win patrons away from other factories, and who, in consequence, have had to turn out some poor cheese, which they have frequently

been able to get by the buyers on account of market conditions, will run practice this season. Thus, the effect of grading the cheese at Montreal is likely to mean that the cheese will not only be graded more sharply at the factories, but that the makers will have to commence grading their milk supply more sharply.

Effect on Home Trade.

The effect of the new conditions on the home trade cannot yet be determined. There is a considerable difference in the quality of cheese bought for British consumption and that which frequently finds favor on the Canadian market. Canadian buyers are not as discerning in the matter of quality as are many British consumers. The result is likely to be that quite a little of the second grade cheese will be bought for Canadian consumption. Canadian consumers will not pay more than the British price unless something unforeseen happens, but may purchase considerable second grade cheese at prevailing prices.

Figures of Expense.

Farm and Dairy has not been able to secure, as yet, the exact details of how the difference in price between the 28 cts. a lb. which the British wholesaler is allowed to charge and the 21½ cts. that will be paid for Canadian cheese on board ship at Montreal, is made up. The figures have all been worked out carefully by the Commission, however, and we hope to be able to make them public shortly. Dairy Commissioner J. A. Ruddick advises us that those who are familiar with this phase of the business, state that there is very little margin left for those who handle the cheese on the other side. This may readily be assumed to be the case in view of the fact that ordinary freight is about three cents a pound, war risk is about 6 per cent. in addition to which there are charges for marine insurance, wharfage, switching and other similar work, to say nothing of a margin of profit to the man who handles the cheese. From the prices that have been set in Great Britain, it is evident that British retailers are allowed four cents to cover their cost for handling and profits.

In Canada the difference between the price that will be paid on the cheese boards and the price paid for the cheese by the Commission at Montreal, will be regulated by the competition between Canadian buyers for the cheese. It is altogether likely that this competition will ensure a fair price being paid to the producer. In next week's issue of Farm and Dairy we hope to be able to give further information on the situation. Incidentally it might be noted that the price that has been set for this season will average about two cents a pound more than the average price paid factory men last year. A portion of Hon. Mr. Burrell's address on the cheese situation appears elsewhere in this issue.

The Commission's Rules.

The following are some of the rules that have been announced by the Cheese Commission:

No cheese will be accepted under ten days old. Payment will be made in exchange for shipping documents accompanied with Invoices, Graders' and Public Weighmasters' Certificates, all shipments.

(Concluded on page 20.)

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