Progress In Alberta Dairying

A Talk With Dairy Commissioner Marker. Alberta Butter Now Controls British Columbia Market. Cheese Trade Growing.

EVER since the dairymen of Alberta have acquired the habit of sending butter to our largest exhibitions in Eastern Canada which carries away the chief awards there has been a marked increase in respect felt towards the dairymen of that province, as well as a desire to know as much as possible about the reasons for the remarkable success they have achieved. As the reasons are numerous I took advantage of the opportunity while in Calgary recently to learn all that I could about them, as well as about the growth that is taking place in the manufacture of cheese. Dairy Commissioner C. Marker furnished much interesting information.

"The increase that has occurred this year in the manufacture of cheese is due entirely," said Mr. Marker, "to the increased price that has prevailed for cheese this year. This, in turn, has been due to world conditions. The increase has taken place mainly around our large cities. This year our largest creameries, such as the Edmonton City Dairy, and the Woodland Dairy Co. of Edmonton and the Calgary Central Dairy and Creamery Co., and the Carlyle Dairy Co. of Calgary, have found it possible to use the surplus milk of the summer season for cheese-making purposes. Thus they have been enabled to pay their shippers better prices for their surplus than formerly, and this has tended to increase the supply of milk.

"I expect that we will manufacture about 1,000,000 lbs. of cheese this year as against 750,000 lbs. last year, or an increase of about 33 1-3%. Our cheese is sold almost altogether on our local markets, although we are now beginning to ship some to the coast, which in the past has been supplied by Ontario cheese."

The Creamery Situation.

When asked what he attributed the success of Alberta butter to chiefly, Mr. Marker replied that he believed it was its mild flavor and fine or close texture and low content of free moisture. "We attach a good deal of importance to the lower percentage of moisture," said Mr. Marker, "as it means less loss in weight when selling. In salting we use 1½% to 2% as compared with about 2% in the east. The quality of butter we are now manufacturing has grown out of the demand of the consumers in British Columbia for such butter.

At one time British Columbia imported as much as 7,000,000 lbs. of New Zealand butter in a year. In order that we might find a market for our butter we had to manufacture a grade of butter that would hold its own with or even supplant the New Zealand product on the British Columbia market. This we have succeeded in doing, as now British Columbia imports very little from New Zealand. In the process we have learned a good deal, as the style of butter we are manufacturing is similar to that which was imported from New Zealand and which they had developed through shipping butter to Great Britain. Thus our grade of butter is adapted not only to the demands of the consuming public in Alberta and British Columbia, but to the British markets as well. I am satisfied that it is a style of butter which is bound to grow in favor.

Better Keeping Qualities.

"One advantage I believe our butter possesses, is that it has better keeping qualities. We have adopted a higher pasteurizing temperature than other provinces or states, in fact, our methods are considered to be out of line with the generally accepted ndards set by leading investigators. In other words, we are going a little farther along certain lines than it has been considered safe to go. As a result we are turning out butter that can be stored for eight, ten or even twelve months, and come out of storage as good in quality as when it was put in. Of course there is no reason why butter should be carried that long, but the fact that our butter can be so kept shows its keeping qualities, and these qualities are given to it during the process of manufacture.

Two Important Factors.

"The two outstanding factors that make for keeping quality are low acidity of the cream and high pasteurizing temperature during the process of manufacture. In deciding to favor high temperatures we worked on the basis that there are two known classes of ferments in milk and its products—the organized and unorganized. Investigators have worked out relative temperatures for different systems that were supposed to be about equal in efficiency. The two chief systems are the continuous and the vat system.

"These comparisons have generally been made on the basis of bacterial count. Since the deterioration of butter in storage is largely due to the action of unorganized ferments, it appeared to us necessary to employ temperatures sufficiently high to destroy or at least to make inoperative the majority of the unorganized ferments or enzymes.

Careful Tests Conducted.

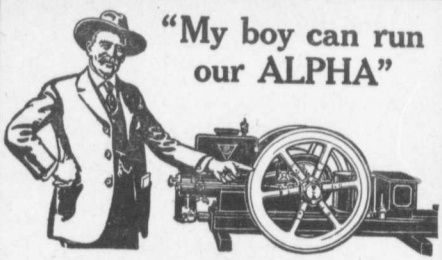
"Before advocating the use of high temperatures we tested their results thoroughly privately until we felt that we were sure of our ground. It was not, however, until the beginning of last season that our creameries were urged to adopt this method in a large way. Our object was to eliminate flshy flavors and to give the butter improved keeping quality. We knew that if we could do this the trade would have more confidence in our product, and the whole industry be placed on a better basis.

"Were it not for the fact that our creamery managers, and I might also say our dairy farmers, are an unusually progressive set of men we would not have met with the success that we have in introducing this system. The cost of equipping a creamery so that it can pasteurize its cream runs from $1,000, in the case of a small factory, to as high as $10,000 for the larger ones. Naturally our creamery men had to be convinced that it would pay them to make such an investment before they would consent to do so. As one of our large manufacturers said to me, "You are asking me to bet $10,000 that what you are advising me to do will turn out to my benefit." This man took the bet. Six months after the system was installed I asked him how his bet was coming out. He replied that it did not owe him a cent.

Great Benefits Derived.

"I believe that the direct benefits derived from the adoption of our present methods are at least ten times greater than the cost involved in securing the necessary equipment, while the indirect benefits that grow out of the increased confidence of the trade and the knowledge that it can feel absolutely safe in handling our goods may be placed at figures as high as you care to make them." When asked what proportion of the butter in the province was made according to the new method, Mr. Marker replied that last year about 85% of the output was made of pasteurized cream, and that

(Concluded on page 37.)



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