Huge Storage Modern Freezing Capacity Wor S With

STORING butter, cheese and a little milk powder until shipping is available to carry it overseas may not seem a big job, but it is. It is one of the biggest jobs in Taranaki and if you think that sounds a little imaginative just have another look at the size of the Taranaki in Producers' Freezing Works Co. Ltd.'s huge plant next time you are on the way to the New Plymouth port. When a new addition comes into use shortly the company will have a total storage space of close on a million cubic feet.

A freezing works actually started operating in New Plymouth in 1895 in under the control of the private Tarabinaki Freezing Works Co. Ltd. and it was in 1901 that it was purchased by the Apresent company. In 1904 the original inbuilding was destroyed by fire and five months later a new and larger works nook its place.

New Plymouth is a registered grading port and each truck and wagon is met by a Department of Agriculture grader. A box of butter from each churning and a cheese from each vat turned out is taken to the grading rooms for rigid tests that ensure exports of a uniform

quality.

In the grading room the butter is graded by taste and smell and then samples go to the laboratory for moisture and salt tests. The cheese is graded on flavour, body, closeness and texture. Butter is graded into three classes and cheese into four and 4 per cent. of the total products handled are checked for weight.

The graders' department consists of a chief grader, three assistant graders, six dairy produce testers and a clerical staff of two. Naturally, they are busiest in the flush of the season, which started last month and will continue until April or May, but, says the chief grader, Mr. M. Syron, there is plenty to do all the year round.

The freezing works employ a permanent staff of seven engineers and between 20 and 25 storemen, while in the
flush of the season or at shipping-out
time as many as 50 are employed. Storing and loading on to railway wagons
for transport to shipside is assisted by
two mechanical loaders on each side of
the works and two tractors.

The cool temperatures in the threestorey storage buildings are maintained
at the correct levels by an ammonium
refrigeration system controlled by three
electrical coolers. The refrigeration
machine room is, perhaps, the most interesting in the works.

In the first place it is the only part of the re-built works of 1904 that is left to-day. Secondly a compression machine that was steam driven in 1895 to cool the works, is still in use to-day. It survived the fire of 1904 and is now electrically driven to compress the ammonia. Another compression machine has been in use since 1927 and the third is a modern one.

cond machine also in use in 1895 in a side room. To-day it is used

Like the Patea freezing works and others in the Dominion the New Plyps mouth works is controlled by the contriabuting dairy companies. Each year the companies' delegates elect their directors.
Advice of shipping due and the allottel ment of cargo is received from the New Yee Zealand Dairy Products Marketing Comks mission.

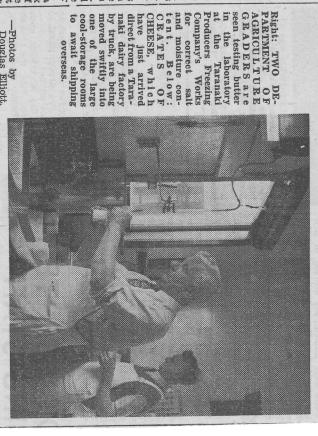
These figures of the boxes of butter and crates of cheese handled since the company commenced in 1901 indicate the growth of the works along with dairying in the province:

Boxes of Crates of Butter Cheese

1901 176,210 9,530
1911 173,276 126,796
1921 210,133 146,237
1921 302,995 253,895
1941 158,717 435,996
1952-53 490,700 411,280
(The decrease in the amount of butter handled and the corresponding increase in cheese in 1941 was the result of the war, which was responsible for some companies reverting to the production of cheese for a time.)

Pe As shipping space available need not coincide with the large seasonal influx of produce the works have busy shipping-out periods all the year round. The huge storage chambers keep butter and cheese in perfect condition and eliminate any need for costly storage space in dairy factories.

Appropriately, too, the works are it land wisely they were started with ample land for development. A large new three-storey building to be brought into use shortly will considerably increase handling capacity and will provide for the future expansion of dairy output in the district. Erected on an historic site, where in February, 1832, the large Otaka or Nga-motu pa was besieged by the Waillord by the heroic help of Dickey Barrett, John Love and their whalers, the works er have in 52 years grown to become one of the biggest and best-known in New Zealand. Altogether in this period the works have handled over a million tons of the butter and cheese.



-Photos by Douglas Elliott

