

REPORT ON OCTOBER MEETING

(Dairying - The Quiet Achiever)

Our guest speaker, Mr Boxsell, claimed that the dairy industry was the "engine" for settlement and development in Illawarra. The Illawarra district (for dairying purposes) included the narrow coastal strip to the north, and also included Dapto, Albion Park, Shellharbour, Jamberoo, Kiama and south to Nowra and even beyond.

Dairy product was not a problem, but supplying it to Sydney in those early days was. Achievements started with the supply of butter and good returns brought with it the development of butter factories set up to use mechanical separators, developed at about the same time in Germany.

Transport was by sea and so ports at Shellharbour, Kiama and Gerringong were built. It was significant that the local dairyman developed a suspicion about marketing agents in Sydney and with the encouragement of Mr Weston, the Kiama newspaper proprietor, dairyman established co-operatives, firstly to produce butter and milk and then other dairy products. The co-operatives marketed these products. The co-operatives premises were and remain landmarks throughout the district.

Mr Boxsell in his account covered progress in the industry that accompanied the advent of refrigeration, rail transport and the distribution of milk in the Sydney area. He acknowledged the debt the industry owed to the co-operative movement and the industry's growth in New South Wales and in more recent years the organisation of the industry into zones, and the introduction of quotas to share the market opportunities and to control supply. Even today, he said, changes are still occurring with complete deregulation to occur in the not too distant future.

The questions demonstrated a lively interest in his address and Mr Boxsell was well-received.

He was enthusiastic about his subject to such an extent that he thought a recent publication, "Milk for the Metropolis" deserved pride of place in the Museum archives and so made a presentation of it to the Society.

Peter Daly