

contracts were made for certain standard weights, and in some cases inferior sheep had been taken simply because they came within the weights. Their Chairman had stated that he did not consider that the Argentine sheep could compare with the quality of New Zealand sheep. Last year he (Mr. Roberts), when going through the cold-meat stores and shops in London, saw that they were now importing from the Argentine an extremely useful style of sheep—sheep not perhaps up to the weights we sent, and shorter in the carcase, but nevertheless an extremely useful sheep; and the best of them compared most favourably with the New Zealand mutton itself. In the Argentine they were increasing their breeding with the long-wools, and in the course of a few years more the mutton from the Argentine would improve very materially. As far as the competition of the Argentine and Australia was concerned, he thought the proper course to take would be that suggested by Mr. Brydone—namely, to still further improve the quality of New Zealand mutton. Our name went a long way, and, if we continued to send good mutton, that would stand us in good stead when the competition became more severe. Mr. Brydone had referred to the freights paid to the shipping companies from this colony. He had said that, if the companies in Australia were shipping meat at $\frac{1}{2}$ d., why could they in New Zealand not get a corresponding advantage by shipping at the same rate? He (Mr. Roberts) thought that the Australian meat companies were under contract to ship a certain number of tons throughout the whole of the year; and they were under an obligation, if they failed to supply the necessary quantity of mutton, to pay for dead freight. He questioned very much if the companies in New Zealand would not rather pay 1d. a pound than take the lesser rate, and be compelled to send Home, summer and winter, a certain number of tons. He understood the contract in Australia was for 700 tons a month, and that the Australian companies had been obliged to pay freight when a less amount was sent. Possibly it might be in the long-run a higher rate than they paid in this colony. He did not say they should not make an effort to get the rates reduced; but he had made these remarks to qualify what Mr. Brydone had stated with regard to the Australian freights— $\frac{1}{2}$ d.—and to show that these were not given on the same terms as in this colony. The paper was concisely and curtly put, and, as the Chairman had stated, was a very good and correct *résumé* of the trade since its initiation. He (Mr. Roberts) had been alongside the enterprise since it was started. He had been continuous chairman of a freezing company since it began, and from the beginning of the trade very many difficulties had had to be dealt with. They could get very little information about freezing and isolation, and had to put the works up at Burnside in the absence of sufficient information from the makers of the refrigerating machine. But, seeing that the company had paid for the machine, and possibly that no return would be made in any circumstances by the maker, they felt inclined simply to risk it, and use the buildings they had put up, which had on the whole served their purpose very well. Seeing that they were groping in the dark as a pioneer company, he thought that the architect had a right to be congratulated on the work done.

Sir J. HALL asked if Mr. Roberts knew when the Haslam patent expired.

Mr. ROBERTS said he did not know. Mr. Brydone had not touched on the freezing-machines in his paper, and if he had done so the paper would have occupied a much longer time. Mr. Brydone and himself had been deputed in England to inquire into the various freezing processes. They had taken a great deal of trouble in ascertaining the respective merits of the different machines. After going fully into the matter they came to the conclusion that it was better to refrain from committing themselves to anything, as they did not quite see their way to say that one machine was better than another. There was no great urgency as far as their works were concerned, and, that being so, they thought the more prudent course to take was not to commit themselves to any new machinery until others had tried it. He thought waiting was better in the long-run, as pioneers in matters of this kind generally had to pay for their pioneering.

Mr. BRUCE (New South Wales) asked what would be the cost for plant and buildings to turn out a thousand sheep a day.

Mr. ROBERTS said it depended very much upon the buildings, situation, and other things. Under ordinary circumstances, roundly speaking, it would cost between £18,000 and £20,000 for machinery and buildings.

Mr. GORDON (Queensland) said they had several companies in Queensland, the shares being held mostly by stockowners. They had works at Brisbane and Townsville. The Brisbane works were capable of turning out a hundred and ten bullocks a day, but the capacity was supposed to be a hundred bullocks. The works had cost a great deal more than Mr. Roberts had estimated. They had had works at Rockhampton for a great many years; there they had tinning-works, and only recently had taken to freezing. The works had been bought by a Melbourne company, and were very extensive. It had been said that they had paid for themselves twice over already. They had also tinning-works at Darling Downs operating on a number of ewes, and also another establishment for boiling down cattle for making the Liebig extract. This year ten thousand bullocks had been consumed, and the average price paid to the owners was £4 a head. As far as Rockhampton was concerned, if a breeder wanted to realise a fair average price for his stock he must not depend upon one consignment. He knew one case where a man had received account sales averaging £8 a head for his stock: that was an exceptional case, for he knew a first consignment that only realised 12s. 6d. a head. He did not think New Zealand need fear very much competition from Queensland in the matter of freezing sheep; so far it had not been a very great success.

Mr. ROBERTS asked if Mr. Gordon had heard of any complaints from London in reference to "bone-stink" in Queensland beef.

Mr. GORDON said he had never heard of any complaint in reference to Queensland beef. He had heard nothing about the matter until about two months ago, when he saw a reference to "bone-stink" in beef from New Zealand.

Mr. BIDWILL said, in reference to frozen meat, he thought Mr. Gordon had hit the point very well where he said shippers should take the average price realised during the whole of the year: no doubt that was the case, especially with beef. He, with others, had been large shippers of beef for years, and they found it essential, in order to get uniform prices, to ship right through the summer