

Canterbury sheep—say, a 65 lb. wether?—That is a question one can only answer indirectly; but I should expect to find a difference between a 65 lb. sheep, such as we grow, and the best 65 lb. Canterbury sheep of 4s. or 5s.

8. We are speaking of sheep fit for freezing purposes?—Yes.

9. Can you account for this: It has been the experience of men in the North Island that they have sent sheep to Christchurch, and after having paid the necessary expenses, amounting to nearly 3s. a head, the sheep have realised in Addington yards considerably more than they were offered for them here?—Yes, that is quite explainable. You refer simply to the fact of sheep sent from here realising more than if they had been sold here?

10. Yes?—That is simply accounted for by the butcher's-shop figure in Christchurch. The meat sells at from $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 1d. per pound more than for North Island sheep. I imagine that difference in the value of mutton is determined in Christchurch by the butchers freezing mutton, and you may take it as a fixed point that 90 per cent. of the sheep going from the North Island find their way to the butchers' shops—that is, all the big sheep that are sent South. I have had complaints myself on the same ground. I have had a man offer 5,000 sheep in a line. He picks out 250 of the 5,000 and sends them down to Canterbury, where he gets a good price, and then holds that up as an example of what a low-down man I must be to offer him so little for 5,000; but it is an absurdity, of course.

11. How do you account for the difference in price between the meat in Christchurch and here?—From the fact that $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 1d. per pound higher is obtained for it, and the best North Island sheep are sent down; but that is no criterion as to these big sheep comprising all the mobs of sheep sent forward. I have been told by the people who have complained to me that they know these sheep are frozen. I have asked them how they knew they were frozen, and they have replied, "Because the Christchurch Meat Company have bought them"; but my informant does not know that the Christchurch Meat Company are the largest butchers in Christchurch, and the sheep they buy are not mixed with their own sheep. It is ridiculous to say they would sell their own sheep in their shops while the North Island sheep are good enough.

12. You say the best of our North Island sheep go to Christchurch. Do you mean to say they are only second-grade sheep that are exported from the North Island to the Home market in a frozen state?—If you compare them with the best Canterbury ours are distinctly second grade.

13. You say there is a difference of 4s. or 5s. in value?—Your question involves two points. You asked me about a 65 lb. sheep for freezing purposes, and then the difference between sheep sent from here and sold in Christchurch.

14. How do you account for this, that in the London market a first-class North Island sheep will bring within a shilling of a first-class Canterbury sheep?—I am not aware that that is so.

15. A halfpenny or a penny per pound is the difference between North Island and Canterbury mutton?—That is not exactly so. The difference has generally been, for the last year or so, about $\frac{3}{4}$ d. That is the cable quotation, but even cable quotations do not cover the whole ground.

16. I think you will find that $\frac{3}{4}$ d. is the difference between the Meat-export Company's brand and prime Canterbury, which is about 8d. a sheep?—I would remind you that it is not always $\frac{3}{4}$ d. It has been $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and $\frac{3}{4}$ d. during the last few months. The cable quotations are always of necessity somewhat misleading. I have been at Home many times myself and have found there the difficulty there is in saying what is exactly the figure to cable. I have been in the office of my own company in London when we have had to determine the figure to be cabled out here. It is a difficult thing to settle, but you may take it as a fixed point that there are a considerable number of sheep sold both above and below the cabled price. The nearest average they can get at is cabled, and the Government Agent says that is the average; so that there may be always a few thousand sheep which would probably show a difference not only of $\frac{1}{2}$ d., but of 1d. and $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. between some Canterbury and some North Island sheep, and sometimes $1\frac{1}{2}$ d.

17. In that case the cable messages are not of very much use to us?—They are not of very much use to the producer, but they are of great use to men like myself. I know exactly how to interpret them, but the public find a great deal of difficulty in interpreting them in the way they would wish. To the man who can interpret these cables they are of value. But another very important item in the difference between the best Canterbury sheep for freezing purposes and the North Island sheep is this: It comes back to the breed once more. For the breed of sheep grown from Merino crossed by a Leicester to-day the value of the wool is 9d. to 10d. per pound; from my own premises at Tomoana our Lincoln is worth $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound in London; and not only so, but we get nearly all our sheep frozen when there is a very small amount of wool on them. We get an average in six months of $3\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of wool valued and sold in London at from $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 5d. a pound. The high-class Canterbury sheep, due to better feeding and attention, grow such an enormously better fleece that there is not only $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 5d. per pound paid for ours, but 9d. to 10d. per pound for theirs, which is just double the price.

18. That does not affect the market at Home for the sheep?—I had to explain to you why a frozen sheep was worth 5s. more in Christchurch, because part of that value was made up at Home and here. There is an enormous difference in the wool, amounting to several shillings, because in Canterbury their sheep are killed later than ours, and there is more wool on them, while the wool is more valuable. Added to that the sheep is very much better fed, and produces three times the amount of fat. They are full of fat, whereas our sheep often have practically none. Our average of fat during the whole year is $4\frac{1}{2}$ lb., while in Canterbury sheep it is a very common thing to have from 12 lb. to 14 lb.

19. You said that the fleece of a Canterbury sheep, taking the ordinary sheep used for freezing, is worth 2s. or 3s. more than a North Island fleece?—Yes; but you must not take it at all stages