

I do not think there can be any great difference between the actual value of the by-products. You might have a fine-wool sheep, where the wool would be of greater value, but the number of pounds of wool would not be so great. I am told that the internal fat would be larger in South Island sheep than in North Island sheep—especially in lambs. There cannot be 5s. of a difference. If you take a South Island sheep as worth more per pound in the carcase, say, a 65 lb. sheep at 3½d. a pound and a North Island sheep at 3d., you would find that the buyers will always take the biggest.

13. According to the last London quotations the difference in value between the Meat-export Company's freezer and the best Canterbury freezer was ¼d. per pound, which, in a 60 lb. sheep, would be 7½d. Assuming that the difference would be ½d.—that is, 1s. 3d. on a 60 lb. freezer: Do you think the difference in value of the by-products in a North Island sheep as compared with a South Island sheep ought to account for the difference being paid for the North Island sheep in Christchurch and that paid here? There is a difference of 1s. 3d. We know that a North Island sheep sold in Wellington fetches less by about one-third than it would fetch in Christchurch—that is to say, say a sheep fetched 10s. here and 15s. in Christchurch, that is a difference of 5s. We know that the value of the meat accounts for 1s. 3d.: would the difference in value of the by-products make up the difference?—It would be impossible, I think.

14. Do you consider that the price paid here is lower than it should be, in view of the price obtained for our sheep in the Old Country?—Yes, and I think that must be borne out by the returns of the two companies who trade exclusively in our sheep.

15. *Mr. Hornsby.*] If a previous witness before this Committee stated that there was no monopoly or understanding between the Meat-export Company and the Gear Company, would you say that he was well informed?—There may not be any actual written agreement, but it is a certainty that there is a sort of understanding whereby the two companies invariably give the same price. They have never been known to differ.

16. You can never get them to alter their price?—No, they always have the same price. If you send for the buyer of one company as against the other you know that the price will be actually the same. There is no competition at all.

17. If a witness has stated to this Committee that the farmers in the southern portion of the Wellington Province had really no grievance and were doing extremely well from the price they were getting for their sheep and the conditions under which they were selling to the companies, what would you say to that statement?—I do not know what to say, except that it is absolutely contrary to what is really the case. We are doing worse than those in other portions of the colony. You have only to cross into the Manawatu and get a price from another buyer of the same company to prove this. There is no boundary-line, but take the very next farm, for argument's sake, but where the buyer does not come into the other man's ground, and he will give 1s. more.

18. Then, you think the farmer has a grievance?—Undoubtedly, in this portion of the colony, at least.

19. Do you think it would be a good thing if a good style of brand could be got? Would it be an advantage to brand meat going from New Zealand?—I think so, because I have been told by reliable people—friends of mine—after they have come back from the Old Country, that New Zealand meat is continually being sold for other than it is, and I think it would stop or check that largely if we could have some brand showing that it was New Zealand meat.

20. Supposing a large meat buyer and exporter were to say to this Committee that the prosecuting of people at Home—that is to say, dishonest traders who sell Argentine mutton for New Zealand mutton—that the prosecution of these swindlers was a waste of time, what would you say of his statement?—I should simply contradict it, because I cannot see how that could be borne out in the case of any man who was committing a fraud, and I cannot but think that if he were prosecuted it would lead to good results. I fail to see how a man can say that a person committing a fraud is benefiting, for instance, the New Zealand trade.

21. Have you ever seen any returns published in the *Lyttelton Times* regarding sales of lines of freezers from the North Island?—I have seen reports that come through the *Evening Post*. I have seen the weekly-sales reports in the *Post* and *New Zealand Times*.

22. You know, as a fact, that lines of freezers have gone from the North Island and been sold at Addington yards at as high a price as 15s. 7d. and 16s.?—I have frequently seen those prices quoted.

23. And you knew that those were lines of freezers?—Yes, by the quotations; I have not seen the sheep. The only ones I have sent myself have been stores. I have never sent fat sheep.

24. Are you in a position to say whether there is three times as much fat in a fat Canterbury sheep as there is in a North Island fat sheep—that is, in prime sheep?—I do not know what internal fat there is in a South Island sheep.

25. You have seen the telegrams that come out from London—from the Agent-General's Office, for instance?—Yes.

26. Do you regard it as a good thing that these prices which are sent out by the Agent-General should be differentiated—that is to say, what is commonly known as North Island and Wellington Meat-export Companies' prices?—I have never really considered the point.

27. The Press Association's cabled message which comes from London merely says: Canterbury mutton so-much a pound, South Island so-much a pound, North Island so-much a pound. Now, the Agent-General differentiates in this way: Export Company's meat so-much, Canterbury meat so-much, and North Island meat so-much?—That ought to be of some assistance to the Meat-export Company.

28. The point is this: The Dunedin, South Island, and Meat-export Company's meat brings the same price—that is, about ¼d. less than Canterbury, while other North Island meat brings sometimes ½d. or ¾d. less?—I do not see why the Export Company should be better treated than