

be treated on your own account and the company have a thousand sheep themselves to treat, it is hardly reasonable to expect them to treat yours first. Your sheep would probably stand in the yard for a few days, and would deteriorate.

81. Have you thought of starting a company yourselves?—Not down here; they have further North.

82. Have you any reason for thinking personally that a small man would not have much chance at the other end?—I have never shipped myself.

83. That is a mere speculation?—Yes. We have no confidence that shipping on our own account would be advantageous, unless we had a certainty that the sheep would be handled at Home by an independent person.

84. You would be content to have your meat graded by Government and pooled?—Yes. If you have a guarantee that it stands as Nos. 1, 2, or 3, as the case may be, you know what to expect. If the Government fix a standard and your meat is No. 1, and you get an A 1 price for it at per pound, I fail to see that there would be anything wrong in that.

85. Speaking as a farmer and the representative of the Farmers' Union, would you favour the proposal of the Government taking up the whole trade?—I do not believe in the Government starting freezing-works.

86. But taking up the trade at the other end?—I would not object to it if it was considered feasible; but I was thinking it would be too large an undertaking altogether for the Government. That is my only objection. If it could be made feasible I think it would be a good thing to do.

87. Do you think it would be any earthly use for small farmers to ship to any person the Government might pick up?—I think small farmers shipping in that way would, by combining, do better than by shipping through the large companies.

88. *Mr. Flatman.*] You spoke of fat being worth half-a-crown; what weight of sheep would that be out of as a by-product?—The average of North Island sheep is 72 lb.

89. The fat would be worth half-a-crown out of that sheep?—That was what I was going on.

90. How much would a 70 lb. sheep be worth?—That was basing it at 12lb. At present prices it would be worth about 2s. 7d.

91. Is raw fat worth that amount?—No, not raw fat.

92. Then you cannot get half-a-crown out of the sheep?—I think many of our North Island sheep would have more than 12lb. of fat.

93. Is it worth 3d. a pound?—Not in a crude state.

94. Could you get space ahead for 100, 200, or 1,000 sheep—say a month ahead—if you wanted to freeze for yourselves?—I dare say it could be done, but they are very chary of doing these sort of things, because the companies have so many thousands that they freeze for themselves.

95. Do you know of any instance where it has been refused?—No, I cannot give any instance, but I know of several instances where sheep have been kept in the yard waiting until the companies have frozen their own.

J. R. STANSELL, Chairman of the Te Horo Branch of the New Zealand Farmers' Union, examined. (No. 3.)

96. *The Chairman.*] You know the object of this Committee: would you care to make a statement to the Committee, or would you rather answer questions that may be put to you?—I wish to be as quick as I can, and I have a statement that I can make, and account sales that will verify my statement. From February, 1900, is the first shipment I tried. The reason I tried this shipment was because I was not satisfied with the price given by the local buyer as compared with Addington prices. I had been told that the quality of the sheep was superior at Addington to those in the North Island, and I, like a great many more flats, believed it. I do not believe it now. I had a line of ewes which I sent to the Addington sale-yards. They were sold alive. I had a line of 119, but I sold the pick of them—ten of them—to Mr. Richards, the last witness, for 7s. a head. I sent the balance down to Addington because I could not get 6s. 9d. here for them. On sending them to Addington they realised 12s., 12s. 1d., and 13s. That was in February, 1900. You will see the difference in the gross values of the two places. I reckon they would lose from 1s. to 1s. 6d. in value in transit—that is they would deteriorate. There is the trucking to the ship, trucking again from the ship to the railway, then drafting and yarding in the sale-yards. That line was sent through Messrs. Murray, Roberts, and Co., of Wellington. In the next year, February, 1901, I shipped 140 ewes and lambs. The ewes fetched 14s. 8d., against 10s. 2d. here; the lambs fetched 9s. 1d., against 5s. here. In February, 1902, I sent 170 down to Addington. 157 lambs fetched 6s. 8d. each, and the wethers 10s. 5d., while two woolly lambs brought 7s. 1d. The disparity in these prices was not so great in this case as in the last shipment. In every instance the price has been bigger, and the first price was the biggest. What handicaps us to a large extent in getting better value is the price of the Union Company's freight. For the first lot, I think it was 1s. 6d. per head, but they raised it to 2s., and they now charge 2s. for full-grown wethers, and the same price for lambs, which do not take up so much room; and I think if it is too much for wethers it is a great deal too much for lambs. I made one of a deputation from the Farmers' Union to interview the Government with regard to overcharges made by the Wellington and Manawatu Railway, and also the Union Company, to get a reduction rebate on their over-charges. The first lot I sent to Addington were not special sheep. They were sheep that I had made a great noise over. I bought them as ewes in lamb. I bought 200 of them, and got six lambs from them. I did not like it, and my neighbours laughed at me, and I did not like that, so I went to Court over it and won the case. To show you that they were not special sheep these were the returns that I got for them. I mentioned the matter in the Press. Mr. Lewis stated through the newspapers that they were ewes sold for breeding purposes. A neighbour sent some of his wethers to