

make up part of the truck, and for his wethers that he could not get 9s. 6d. for here he realised at Addington 15s. 5d. I told Mr. Lewis that he could hardly claim that these were sold for breeding purposes, and he did not reply.

97. *Mr. Haselden.*] Have you ever sent fat sheep to Addington?—No. I sold ten out of this line, as I say, to Mr. Richards, for which he gave me 7s., and he said the others were not fat, in his opinion.

98. You do not know whether they sold them for fat sheep or stores?—No.

99. *Mr. Flatman.*] What is the difference in the cost of freight for sheep on the Government railways and the Manawatu line?—It is the same.

100. I understood you to say that you had a grievance with regard to railway freight?—Not on the sheep. It was a matter connected with the Manawatu line, but since then we have had a change.

101. You know something about the weight of sheep: you have killed a large number in your time?—Yes.

102. Taking the by-products, what weight of fat would you get out of a 70 lb. sheep, including the kidney fat?—About 10 lb., I should think, but sheep vary. Merinos are different from cross-breeds.

103. What would that be worth at per pound to-day, or, say, an average for the last twelve months—the fat in its raw state?—I could hardly tell you. The market is subject to fluctuations.

104. Do you think 14s. a hundredweight would be an extravagant price?—No.

105. What do you think would be the value of it?—It is always worth within a halfpenny of what it is at Home.

106. What would you like to give per hundredweight for it?—It is many years ago since I was butchering—not since 1869.

107. Then you do not know what fat would be worth at the present time?—No, I could not tell you. You could get it from the market quotations.

108. *Mr. Field.*] Are you aware that there is general dissatisfaction throughout the sheep-growers in this part of the North Island as to the price they are obtaining for their sheep?—Yes, there is, more especially since I tried this little experiment in shipping. They all believed as I did that the sheep were superior in the South Island to those in the North. That was always the “gag,” and I believed it, among the rest of the flats, but I do not believe it now. Mr. John Gillies, the well-known stock-raiser, told me that our sheep were inferior, but I said the South Island sheep were inferior in some respects.

109. It has been alleged that there is a combination existing between the two companies, and perhaps other companies, and that these companies in the North fix the price of live sheep, and that price is lower than it should be?—That is the only possible construction I can put upon it. They send buyers from Addington, and how can they give these prices unless there is something of the sort? The companies fix the prices for the farmers, and have some clever way of doing it which the public cannot understand. That is our opinion, rightly or wrongly.

110. Are you aware, as a settler on the Coast and as a grower of sheep, that the prices go up and down which are paid by the two companies, precisely at the same moment?—Yes.

111. It has been stated that the sheep which go from here and are sold in Addington at very much advanced prices than are obtainable here are sold to the butchers there for local consumption? Do you believe that to be the case?—I know that the butchers compete there. I have been twice there myself, and it is quite an eye-opener to see how things are conducted there. If you go to Addington and then come up to Johnsonville on the Tuesday, you would think you had got to some out-of-the-way place where there was no population. It is a sight for one who has not been out of this Island to go down to Addington. This place ought to be better than Addington on account of its position, and yet we have the most miserable sale at Johnsonville in the whole of the Wellington Province. We are jammed. If we send stock down to Johnsonville we have to sell it—there is no taking it back. I know people who have driven their stock all the way from up above Pemberton, and in one case the buyer offered him more than 6d. locally for them more than he realised at Johnsonville Sale-yards; but he could not take them back again. That was Mr. J. D. McGregor.

112. Speaking generally, would it be a fair thing to say, judging by the experience of those who have shipped their sheep down South, that you get about half as much again as you would get for them here?—The expenses for my first lot were 3s. 7d. per head. The difference between the 6s. 9d. I mentioned and, say, 12s. would be about half as much again.

113. Assuming that to be true—that is to say, a butcher here can get a fat sheep at 10s., and a butcher in Christchurch has to pay 15s. for it—it would appear as though the consumer in Christchurch would have to pay considerably more than the consumer here for his meat?—It would seem so.

114. Do you know if that is the case or not?—I do not.

115. Assuming that the price paid by the consumer here for meat is the same as that paid by the Christchurch consumer, the natural deduction would be either that the butcher here was getting paid too much or that the Christchurch butcher was getting too little?—Yes. The companies make the profit here. I do not think there are more than four or five independent butchers in Wellington.

116. *Mr. Hornsby.*] You say you went down to the Addington Yards?—Yes.

117. Lately?—I was there last year, I think.

118. Did you see any North Island sheep being sold there on that occasion?—I did not observe whether there were North Island sheep. I saw Chatham Island sheep there, and they fetched more than we are offered for ours here—the biggest scrubbers.

119. As a practical man who knows a sheep when he sees it, do you think there is 5s. difference
4—I. 10.