

12. Through what area of country does your purchasing extend?—From Hawera in the north to Feilding in the south, and inland to Mangamahoe and Hunterville. Generally speaking, our supplies are drawn from within that area.

13. You do not come nearer to Wellington than Feilding?—We have occasionally done so; but it is very seldom that we do.

14. You do not buy further afield because there is plenty of stock available in that radius?—At times there is a shortage; but it is only when stock is scarce that we go further. For two or three months in the season we have more than we can do with in that area.

15. Is there any arrangement between your company and any other company for the purpose of fixing a standard price?—Not at all.

16. You simply compete openly there?—It is just open competition so far as we are aware. There is no agreement.

17. Do you consider that the treatment of our meat at Home is fairly satisfactory: that is to say, that the middlemen's profits are not more than they should be; or do you think there is room for a great deal of improvement?—I think there is room for improvement; there must be. Speaking personally of our particular meat, we have very high charges to pay as regards storage. Whether it is absolutely necessary to store for the time the meat is stored or not I do not know; but the charges are very high, and the meat is very much deteriorated by the storage. Some of the stores at Home do not seem to be so good as they ought to be. We have had meat damaged in the stores, and we had to instruct our agent that our meat was not to go into any store in which damage had occurred.

18. Do you think the rates charged by the shipping companies for freight are pretty satisfactory?—We would like them to be lower; but whether they are able to carry for less I cannot say.

19. It is generally reported that there is a ring among the shipping companies: does that ring, if it exists at all, extend to the Tyser Company?—I do not know if there is a ring.

20. You have heard it stated that there is a ring?—Yes, I have heard so.

21. For the purpose of improving the market at Home, have you ever considered whether Government control or assistance of some kind would be of benefit—say, Government grading, Government branding, Government cool-stores, and Government means of distribution?—As regards the distribution at Home, there might be some benefit; but my company is not in favour of Government grading.

22. There is a feeling among a certain section of the farmers—particularly small farmers who are afraid to freeze on their own account—that they might do so, and with advantage, if the Government were taking charge of the shipments, arranging for stores in the Old Country, for supplies and for distribution, so as to get direct to the consumer: do you think anything could be done in that direction?—Yes. I think it is against the interests of the trade that so many small lots should go Home and get into so many different hands. If it were possible to bring these small lots into larger lots it might be possible to deal better with them.

23. You think that if all the shippers in the colony were acting in unison, so as to arrive at a combination, we should be able to do far better than we are doing at the present time?—I think it is reasonable to think so. If anybody had control of the shipping going from New Zealand he would be able to deal better with the trade.

24. Are you in the habit of entering into long contracts—five or seven years contracts—with buyers at Home?—No.

25. Are you aware whether that is done by other companies?—No, I am not.

26. Do you know anything of the South Island sheep?—Yes, I had about five years' experience in the freezing business down South. I was there very soon after the starting of the industry. I was engaged in receiving and drafting stock.

27. Are the South Island sheep superior to the North Island sheep?—There is no doubt about it—for freezing they are.

28. What do you consider would be the difference in value between a North Island freezing-wether and a South Island freezing-wether?—The difference in value on an average line is rather big. For one reason, the sheep as freezers are better shaped and they cut out much better. But, independent of that, there is a very much larger percentage of sheep bought here as freezers which, when slaughtered, turn out to be not fat. Down South about 2 per cent. would cover the whole of the rejects—that is, bad colour, deformed, and grown sheep that are bought as freezers and rejected for those reasons. It would take quite 7 per cent. to cover the rejects in the North Island, taking one year with another. This year our average was  $6\frac{3}{4}$  per cent.

29. There is that difference after the buyers have made their purchases?—Yes. Again, on that line of sheep bought in the South as freezers, 2 per cent. would cover the lot not frozen; but, after taking out 7 per cent. of our sheep, we have another lot of sheep that are not suitable for freezing, owing mostly to their being coarse, patchy, and wasteful. You might take such a sheep to be a big-framed coarse sheep alive, but when he is slaughtered he turns out to be very unsuitable to be sent to the freezer. We find it best to cut that class of sheep up and make the best we can of the joints.

30. What would be a fair estimate of the difference in value between the North Island and South Island freezers?—I make it 4s.—that is, taking the difference in wool, the difference in weight of the inside fat, and the number of sheep that have to be dealt with otherwise than by freezing, and also the difference in the value of the meat.

31. You reckon in that difference the trouble you have in weeding out so many?—Not only the trouble. Supposing that the whole of the joints of the sheep are fit for freezing on a sheep that is not suitable for freezing as a whole, the legs fetch so-much per pound more than a frozen sheep, the loins and shoulders fetch so-much less, so that the average price might be very little, if