

88. How do you account for the markets being so large a feature of the Canterbury trade and regulating the price throughout the whole of the province, while on this coast the markets appear to be a mere bagatelle and do not affect the value of sheep?—Because there is no good system of marketing the sheep. Lines of sheep supposed to be fatts are put through the yards and are not fatts: they are simply a mixture.

89. Do you consider that if at Wanganui, Palmerston, and the other centres the sheep-farmers were to enter into an agreement that they would yard a much larger proportion of sheep than they now do, and if the owners adopted the Addington plan and thoroughly classified the sheep in the pens, that would have the effect of raising the market all along the coast?—I do not think it would raise the value on the farm, but it would be very much cheaper for us to go into a central yard and secure a big line of sheep on one day, provided they were ready for us.

90. You spoke of your company making a loss during the period when they were freezing sheep for Nelson Bros.?—No, I did not say that. I said we did not pay a dividend. The company was just in its infancy, and could not see its way to pay a dividend.

91. Were you freezing for Nelson Bros. at a rate per pound?—Yes. 90 per cent. of our sheep going through the works were for Nelson Bros., who had a contract with the farmers at so much per pound, and our company did the freezing for Nelson's.

92. Yet while freezing for outside people you did not pay a dividend?—No. My company started in a very small way.

93. How does the charge you make for freezing for owners compare with the charges at Belfast?—I do not know what the charges are just at the present time. It was 1½d., and our charge comes to a trifle less than that. That is taking the summer rates. It would be less still taking the winter rates.

94. Do you say your charge if you freeze for owners is less than the Belfast Company's?—I believe the Belfast Company has reduced its rates lately, but our charges up to this summer have worked out a trifle less. We have a different way of working out our charges.

95. But you cover the same work as they do?—Yes, I think so.

96. What is done with the 7 per cent. of rejects?—We sell some of them to the butchers. We treat them to the best advantage.

97. You spoke of the difference in the value of the South Island sheep as compared with those of the North Island as being 4s. more?—Yes.

98. What is the difference in value in the by-products, taking the skin, inner fat, and everything?—The difference in the skin is 9d., and I make it out in this way: The wool, owing to its fineness, is worth 3d. per pound more, and, taking the average weight of wool on the skin at 3 lb., that gives the 9d.

99. What is your experience as to the quantity of the inside fat of a North Island freezer as compared with a South Island freezer?—I should put it down as quite a pound, and I think I am understating the case—I certainly am as far as the time I was down there is concerned; but I think possibly, if they have still got the Merino strain, it is what it was when I was down there. I should put it down at 2 lb.

100. Not more?—No.

101. Then, including both meat and by-products, what do you estimate to be the market difference in the value of a prime North Island sheep as against a prime South Island sheep?—Well, working it out myself, without reference to a chart I have here, I make it at least 4s. But taking this chart [produced] as a guide, it would make the difference much greater.

102. You had a good deal of experience in the South Island. Now, is it a fact that there is a large difference in the value of the sheep itself in the South Island? Supposing, for example, you take the values of sheep in Southland or any parts of Otago, is there not a considerable difference in valuation between those prices and the price obtained at Addington?—Yes. The Southland sheep at Home are worth less than Canterbury sheep. I believe there is as much difference between Canterbury and Southland sheep as there is between Southland and North Island.

103. And consequently the sheep do not bring in Southland the same price as Canterbury sheep?—No.

104. How would the average value of sheep in the North Island compare with the average value of sheep of the same class in Southland?—I should take Southland sheep as between the two. Taking the difference between the North Island sheep and the Canterbury sheep as 4s., I should take the difference between the North Island and Southland sheep at 2s.

105. Then, there is a variation in value even in the South Island itself?—Yes. For the six months ending the 30th June, 1892, there were shipped from Lyttelton as Canterbury sheep 327,440, and 4,402 pieces; from Wellington during the same period there were exported 306,617 sheep and 348,660 pieces—that is, Wellington exported 10,831 sheep less and 344,258 pieces more. These figures show what a different class of sheep is put through the works at the two places.

106. *Mr. Haselden.*] What is the average weight of the Southland sheep as compared with the North Island sheep—are they heavier or lighter?—I should say there is not a great deal of difference—the difference is in the quality. I would like to point out that the difference between the sheep is not only in the sheep itself as you see it hung up. You see the two different classes together. The North Island sheep is a long-legged, unshapely sheep, not evenly-fatted—a sheep without very much quality. The Canterbury sheep, on the other hand, is short in the leg, small in bone, showing plenty of bloom and quality. But the difference does not end there. The two sheep cut up vastly different. In the Canterbury sheep you find a good proportion of lean and fat, but evenly distributed, and the fat is nicely mellow. But the Lincoln when you cut him, although in good condition, is long in the leg; and when you come to cut him up there is a little bit of lean and a lot of fat on the top of that, and the fat is tallowy.