115. What would that be worth per pound?—It depends entirely upon the London market. It would be worth perhaps 2d. or 2½d. per pound. Of course, it has been very high lately.

116. You would doubt a statement that the fat of a 70 lb. sheep is worth half-a-crown as a by-product?—I do not think so.

117. You are acquainted, of course, with the markets for live-stock?—Yes.

118. What is the difference in the price of ewes at Johnsonville and Addington at the present time, for sheep of a similar weight?—I could not say. I do not compare them. It varies so much every day.

119. *Mr. Field.*] Supposing your company or any other company were buying lambs, but not in large quantities—that is, assuming that lambs were offered for sale and they did not want to buy the lot but were prepared to buy some—which would they prefer to take from the farmer, the heavy- or light-weight lambs?—They would want lambs going from 35 lb. to 36 lb. We do not like them too heavy or to go over 36 lb., because they very often grow into tegs.

120. Can you conceive of a buyer going into a flock and taking those of 40 lb. weight and leaving the others?—It might have been done for butchering purposes. For every heavy-weight lamb you get ½d. or ¼d. less per pound in London, but that is made up in other things.

121. You could conceive of a buyer here selecting heavy-weight lambs out of a flock?—Yes.

122. You said you could not get wethers last year: Did you try to buy in this district?—We sent up as far as Woodville, because we were very short of the right sort of freezers. I sent a buyer right through the Coast, and he found all the sheep were engaged. He could not get any in the Weber district, and found the sheep had been pledged up to Woodville.

123. Why not buy nearer Wellington: Is your buyer not allowed to come so far?—We do not as a rule. We should have been very glad to take them if any had been offered.

124. The farmers here would be very glad to get outside buyers?—I did not get the slightest hint that they wanted to sell. I sent a man up specially, as I said, but it is very expensive to do that. It cost from £1 to £1 10s. a day. The Belfast Company freezes 750,000 per annum at £400 a year travelling-expenses, and it costs us about a couple of thousands for railage and so on. We reckon it costs us £500 or £600 a year for each man. If the farmers sent their sheep to us, as they do in the South, it would save these expenses. Unless I send men out, I cannot get the stuff. At Addington the cost of railage is deducted from the farmer's account.

125. And the sheep are properly classed at Addington?—Yes; splendidly classed.

126. The sheep-farmers complain that there is no market and only one buyer, and I know from my own experience that that is so. They also think the price offered is not a satisfactory one. They are asked why they do not freeze on their own account, but the answer to that is that they are very small men, and do not care to run the risk when they do not know how their meat is going to be dealt with when it gets Home?—Just so.

127. If there was some kind of Government asssistance or control of the meat and its distribution in the Old Country, do you not think some of the small men might be encouraged to ship on their own account?—I think the representatives of the freezing companies at Home are honest men, and I know they will sell a hundred sheep if they are put into their hands. Our representatives are paid to do their very best for our clients, and I believe they do their best. When my company started about fifteen years ago, for two years we did nothing but freeze on owners' account, and the company was started with that object in view. There was no intention of taking the market risk, but the third year we could not get any one to freeze on their own account.

128. At any rate, the small men would not take the risk, and probably took the price offered?—Yes.

129. And it is very galling, is it not, to be told that, "That is the price, and you cannot get a penny more"?—I quite agree with you. I am a sheep-farmer myself, and have one or two places myself. I sell both large and small lines, and I quite agree that it seems hard; but at the same time I think that if the sheep-farmer took more trouble in fattening his sheep, and keeping the trade going all the year round, the freezing companies could do more for him.

130. *Mr. Lang.*] Do you think it likely that any freezing company would give instructions to their buyers not to buy lambs of under 40 lb. weight?—No, I do not. Of course, the difficulty is to get buyers who can tell the weight of a lamb. The buyers in the North Island are not so well educated in that respect as they are down South. They have not been on their own "hook" and bought their experience, and it is quite possible a freezing company might say to their buyer, "You are not to take anything under 40 lb.," probably well knowing that his 40 lb. lamb would pan out about 35 lb.

131. The reason you think that is because your buyers are not competent men?—No, not that; but because it is a difficult thing to tell. When men tell me that they can tell the weight of a mob of sheep I conclude that they do not know anything about their business, because there are not two sheep exactly alike; they differ as much as people do in appearance and weight. No man who knows his business can tell the weight of a sheep to a pound.

132. It has been stated before this Committee that the buyers for the freezing companies in the Wellington Province are given instructions not to buy lambs for freezing purposes under 40 lb. in weight?—That would be my explanation of it that I have given.

133. A member of this Committee put that question to Mr. W. Nelson, who was representing a freezing company, and he said that if any one told him that a buyer was instructed not to buy lambs under 40 lb. in weight he simply would not believe it. He was very emphatic about it. Does it not seem unlikely that any freezing company would give such instructions?—I do not think they would make any restrictions unless it was to a buyer of the class I have mentioned.

134. Surely, if the buyer was not a judge of lambs he might err in the direction of underweight as in overweight?—Up this way it depends a great deal upon the season as to how the sheep will