

business at Gisborne and across to Waitara, and all through the North Island. They have trade connections at Home who can absorb North Island and South Island meat.

99. Can you draw a comparison between Lincoln and Romney mutton, as to which is the best?—I think the Romney would be the best.

100. From your observation do you believe there is anything in the climate of the North Island which would prevent us growing as good mutton as you do in the South?—I generally understand that your climate is damp and your feed is too coarse to grow the same class of mutton as we do, and that you are affected by foot-rot.

101. Would that apply to the Wairarapa and Hawke's Bay?—There are portions of the Wairarapa to which it would apply. We grow so much artificial food that we really have to send four-tooth sheep away.

102. Can you give us any percentage that would explain the number of four- and six-tooth wethers that you kill?—No; but it is a rare circumstance to see anything like four-tooth sheep in Canterbury. I do not think we have seen a six-tooth sheep in our works for some years.

103. Do you know what is the average value of 36 lb. lamb which has been returned to the grower?—This year the returns are not yet made up; but, whether they are sold either on their legs to the factory or whether they are sold on a factory certificate, I should say a 36 lb. lamb this year would have netted the grower something between 14s. and 14s. 6d.

104. And what breed would those lambs be?—To a very large extent they have got a dash of Down in them.

105. Would they be out of half-bred ewes?—Yes, half-bred ewes by Down rams.

106. And they are worth about 14s.?—About 14s. to 14s. 6d. this year.

107. *Mr. Lang.*] I understand that the best quality of your sheep is sent Home as "Prime Canterbury"?—Yes—that is, from our works; and from Islington they are sent Home as "Eclipse."

108. And I think you said that sometimes you get inferior sheep in Canterbury which you put into another grade?—Yes.

109. What is the name of that?—"Diamond"; and I think a crown.

110. Are they sent away as Canterbury mutton?—No, there is no "Canterbury" about it; it is simply "Diamond." There is nothing to show that it comes from New Zealand beyond the Government certificate at the back of the "Diamond."

111. And that might include sheep from all parts of the colony?—Yes.

112. *Mr. G. W. Russell.*] What do you do with sheep that are brought to Canterbury from Otago and Southland?—I stated that wherever we get them we brand them under a distinct brand.

113. Then, sheep from other parts of the South Island are not frozen and sent Home as "Prime Canterbury"?—Not by us.

114. Your company, I believe, simply freezes on owners' account?—Yes.

115. Does that apply to both factories?—Yes.

116. What is your percentage of rejects?—Last season we rejected alive from Belfast a little over twenty-five hundred sheep and lambs. That would be out of about four hundred thousand. In connection with that our farmers, I may say, have become quite expert in the art of drafting before the sheep are sent for freezing, and the result is that the rejections are comparatively small. Frequently farmers take a day at the works and see what we reject.

117. Roughly, what percentage do you make of rejects?—That would be less than 1 per cent. The rejections after killing would only result from deformity or bruises.

118. We had it stated here yesterday that the rejects from one factory amounted to 19½ per cent.?—Our farmers do not believe in driving sheep to the factory and having to drive them back again.

119. I suppose you attend the market at Addington from time to time?—I have not done so recently.

120. I suppose you are aware that there is a very careful system of drafting there before the sheep are put into the fat pens?—Yes; they have men to do that.

121. And when sheep are put into the fat pens it is a guarantee that the sheep are what they purport to be?—Yes; and after that is done the auctioneers draft them into the small pens.

122. What is the average value of Otago and Southland prime sheep as compared with prime Canterbury?—That is a question I cannot answer. My company does not buy, and I do not keep myself in touch with the values down there.

123. You are aware that a number of sheep have been bought in the North Island and exported to Canterbury?—I believe so.

124. Is there a tendency for that trade to grow?—I do not think so, unless we get short of ewes next year.

125. Do you think if a lot of North Island ewes were imported into Canterbury it would tend to lower the standard of Canterbury sheep?—I do not think so, if the number is not too great.

126. Does that not indicate that there is a shortage of the right class of sheep in Canterbury?—I do not think it will matter so long as they can be distinguished.

127. Do you think that the high price in Canterbury, as compared with that in the North Island, is caused by a fair difference in value?—I think there are local circumstances to be taken into account. There are so many slaughter-yards about the country; and the facilities for getting stock to the works, and the competition amongst the different buyers being more keen in the North, are factors that have to be considered. The farmers in Canterbury seem to look after themselves better than they do in the North Island. I think these are circumstances which influence the price more than the intrinsic value of the stock.

128. Have you any complaint to make, as representing the freezing companies, against the Government so far as freights are concerned?—So far as the freight on frozen meat is concerned,