

trucks is not sufficient, and we do not consider that they are kept sufficiently clean. The reason why I mention that is because, if a truck is not clean, the sheep and lambs are apt to be thrown in the truck and become bruised. I also think there ought to be some provision made for separate stock-trains, so as to avoid so much shunting. Every time shunting takes place it probably means that a lamb is thrown down and bruised.

174. Do I understand you to mean that these trains should be run solely for stock purposes?—There should be a great number of stock-trains. I do not say that no ordinary trains should take stock, but at the present time there are no facilities for running stock-trains.

175. That is to say that stock is run as ordinary traffic?—Yes.

176. You are aware of the system adopted in the United Kingdom in regard to the River Plate frozen meat—that is to say that the companies send an agent each morning to fix the price for the day?—Yes; I was at Home last year, and studied the operations of the London meat trade very closely.

177. How did the Argentine trading system compare with that generally adopted by New Zealand?—I think the River Plate system is an ideal one.

178. Could it be adopted with advantage by New Zealand?—If the farmers would trust the freezing companies sufficiently it could, but that is the trouble.

179. Apparently you are speaking on behalf of a company which favours concentration of supplies in London. Are your efforts in that direction barred by reason of the opposition by private exporters?—It is mostly by the small consignments sent there by irresponsible agents, such as more particularly the banks, or those who have no recognised agent at Home.

180. Is this continual in its operation from month to month?—Yes, you might say it is continual; but it is felt more at particular periods of the year.

181. You are aware of the movement here some years ago to combine the Canterbury meat companies—some ten or twelve years ago?—That was just before my time.

182. You are aware that that was a failure?—Yes.

183. Following on my question with regard to the concentration of supplies in London, I am to take it that, generally speaking, you would consider the concentration of supplies a great advantage to the placing of our produce on the United Kingdom markets?—Yes, undoubtedly.

184. In your opinion is there any possibility—is it practicable to adopt such a system?—I think it will come round to that, because the tendency is that way already. You have already heard Mr. Waymouth's evidence to the effect that the farmers are giving his company more consignments to handle. The result of my visit Home was that we opened our own London office for the purpose of receiving farmers' consignments and placing them with the various distributors at Home. I may mention that I am not in favour of any monopoly, or one controlling body or corporation. I think the more you have of the spirit of rivalry in trade the better will be the result; but if farmers would declare to the freezing companies the agents to whom they are consigning their meat, so that the freezing companies at the other end, through their own particular representatives, could watch that these consignments were properly dealt with, or report an instance of when any particular consignment was put on the market—to slump the market, to use a phrase generally adopted at Home—a remedy would very soon be effected. I may mention an instance to show how by a little concentration the Canterbury lamb market was worked up last year. It was thought the market would remain steady, but suddenly it was broken down to the extent of 3d., and that was traced to one small consignment of lambs of half a hundred which had been thrown on the market.

185. Coming to the question of storage in London, does your company find the storage there sufficient and suitable?—The storage is ample now. I do not know that it is suitable, or what I should like to have seen. It was a great pity that the storage there was lost through the operations of the sheep-exporters in Canterbury, and that the companies did not see their way to be represented in London and watch the business from the start. But the business has been established on certain lines, and it would be a very difficult thing to move it. We can only deal with it as it is at the present time.

186. You think that better facilities might have been obtained with more concentration of effort?—Yes. I do not know that any one was to blame for that, because no one could have believed that the trade would grow to the extent it has. I do not think it was ever imagined that there would be over three million carcasses of mutton and lamb sent out of New Zealand annually. The business has grown far beyond the expectations of even the most sanguine.

187. With regard to storage and sale charges in London: is there any improvement you could suggest with regard to time storage or charges made?—I think the storage rate on frozen meat in London is too high, but from the fact that there is no concentrated effort on this side it is impossible to get it reduced. If there was concentrated effort also in London we might take exception to some of those heavy market allowances that are in practice.

188. Can you make any suggestion to this Committee in the direction of a scheme which would prevent a single individual lowering the market price current, or which would prevent slumps?—I think any one freezing stock on his own account should declare to the freezing companies who he has to put it through as his agent.

189. *Mr. Haselden.*] Do you think that Government assistance in the direction of concentration would be of use in London?—I do not think so in the least. I think it will have to come from the farmers. The strength and advantage of the Canterbury system is that the farmers have taken up and retain large interests in the freezing companies. We have something like four or five hundred farming shareholders in our company, and the farmers have all along taken great interest in the trade. The Christchurch Meat Company caters more for the small farmer, and thus our system is a little different from that of the Canterbury Meat Company.

190. You think concentration is an ideal system?—The ideal system is that the farmers should freeze and consign their stock through the freezing companies.