

235. Is there a difference of $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. a pound?—I should think quite that.

236. *Mr. Hornsby.*] Can you give us any information as to something which appeared in the Christchurch papers some little time ago? There was an illustration in the weekly *Press* of a big line of sheep bought in the North Island—lambs, I should say—that were to have the “Eclipse” brand put on then?—I was at Home last year, and I did not have my attention called to that.

237. With regard to this question of heavy-weight lambs and tegs: it has been stated that a good deal of these heavy-weight lambs and tegs have been sold at Home for Welsh mutton?—I quite believe it. I think that is the reason why we get so good a price for our tegs.

238. If that is a fact, it would account for the companies giving instructions to their buyers to get a certain weight of lamb?—I have never seen the buyers refuse a good weight.

239. I have had it from several witnesses that the buyers invariably choose to take the heavy-weight lambs, say, from 40 lb. upwards: you think there would be a bearing between that and the fact that the heavy lambs and tegs would be sold as Home mutton?—Undoubtedly. I think the market for the tegs at Home is largely owing to the fact that they are sold in place of Scotch mutton.

240. Supposing we could get a brand without disfiguring the carcase: would you be in favour of branding the meat?—No, because I do not know any food product that is branded. I have gone a great deal into the question, and this fact was brought prominently before me: that there was no food branded with any indelible stamp.

241. For instance, take butter and cheese, those products are branded here and sent Home. Has not that been an influence for good so far as our produce is concerned?—It is the butter-boxes and not the produce that have been branded. In going through the market I saw a lead-wire stamp. It is a piece of lead which passes through the shank and joints, and when this wire is put in, this lead is pressed together with a steel. For instance, we would have “C.M.C.” as a brand, and that would provide all that is wanted. The person who wants to be protected, and the butcher, would not be inclined to cut that off. But I think it would be a great mistake for us to brand our tegs or lambs with an indelible stamp. I know that a good deal of that meat is sent to the West-end of London, and the person who puts it on his table does not want to see “New Zealand lamb” stamped on it when he wants his friends to believe that it is the best Welsh mutton.

242. Then, you believe that because of the sale of a good deal of New Zealand mutton as English it favourably affects the price for the producer?—It undoubtedly does in Canterbury, from what I saw at Home, for the West-end butchers and large restaurants paid from time to time for the pick of the meat.

243. *Mr. T. Mackenzie.*] Would they pay 2d. a stone more for that?—Quite that, I think.

244. *Mr. Hornsby.*] Then, do you regard the prosecutions by the New Zealand agent against the retailers who sell Argentine meat as New Zealand as a mistake?—I think it is, for this reason: that the prosecutions, from what I am able to gather, were in districts where we are not likely to sell New Zealand mutton. The River Plate people have catered more for the lower classes, and I have always advocated that we want to get into the middle-class trade.

245. Take Fitter and Sons’ circular: the only difference there is given as $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per pound between the price of lamb and mutton, and you see that the Wellington meat is quoted there at the same price as Otago and Southland meat. Seeing that there is only a difference of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the price paid to the producer, is not that commensurate with the amount of meat sent on the market?—The difference in price is very seldom so low as that. The difference between Canterbury and other marks bears very largely, not only according to the amount of meat on the market, but on account of the price Canterbury people are asking. If our people are asking a high price, the other prices will approximate for the other meat, and if Christchurch meat is down the other prices go down also. I disagree with what Mr. Waymouth said in reference to this. I think this is the price for what is called “W.M.E.” and Dunedin and Southland meat, and does not include North Island meat.

246. You are aware of the fact that Otago, Southland and Meat-export Company’s meat is generally so-much, and that North Island is generally $\frac{1}{4}$ d. lower?—Yes.

H. D. BUCHANAN, Sheep-farmer, Kumeroa (representing the Woodville Agricultural and Pastoral Association), examined. (No. 15.)

247. *The Chairman.*] Would you care to make a statement, or would you rather that you were asked questions in the nature of a cross-examination?—I will make a short statement as to what I consider the leading points, and then I shall be happy to answer any questions that may be put to me. The great factor in the dissatisfaction and agitation that has been going on throughout the North Island in reference to the frozen-meat trade is in consequence of the absolute fact that our sheep in the North Island are worth from 4s. to 6s. a head more in the Addington market than can be obtained for them in the North Island. It is asserted by people whose interests lie in the continuation of things as they obtain at present that the quality of our North Island sheep is at fault. They also maintain that the North Island sheep are big heavy weights, and that there is only a butchers’ demand for them in Christchurch, and that that is the reason why they fetch more money than we have got for them here. Well, it is obvious that these statements are not correct, because the sheep that the local companies have been freezing for many years are this very class of sheep—that is, the fat sheep. It is not the fat sheep only that are bringing the price in addition, but also the store sheep. There are very many thousands of store sheep which have been sent South during last year, and they have brought the same price in Canterbury. I myself sent both fat and store sheep down there, and realised 4s. 7d. more for my fat sheep than I have obtained here, and 5s. more for store sheep. These are gross prices, and would have to be reduced by 9d., because of the cost of delivering from my place to the door of the freezing-works