

there will be a heavy increase in their lamb-supplies every year. If this is so, it will be a bad look-out for us. I was very much surprised to see the good quality of the Argentine lamb; it is certainly not so well finished as ours, but, I am sorry to say, good enough to do a great deal of harm to our trade. From what I can learn here the general impression is that New Zealand lamb has seen its best, and that lower prices will have to be accepted in future." Now, sir, in face of a letter like that, I maintain that the Government must do something. The matter cannot be left over any longer. If you leave it over until next year it will be more difficult to accomplish. Now, the Argentine people have not a very great supply of lamb, and if we enter into competition with them at Manchester and other ports they will need a great supply to compete against us; but in another year or so, as they are improving the quality of the meat, we shall not be able to stand against them at all. We have allowed the thing to go on too long already, and it is time that something was done. I think that is about all I will say in reference to that. There is something more referring to the London trade that I may speak of later.

58. Your statement has largely gone in the direction of suggesting shipments to provincial ports in the United Kingdom as a better way of disposing of our frozen meat there?—Yes.

59. Taking, for instance, the port that you spoke of more frequently than others—the Port of Liverpool, and that practically includes Manchester—are you aware that the Argentine people have practically a monopoly of the butchering trade in the North of England in regard to frozen meat?—Yes, it has this monopoly, and we want the Government to assist us to break it down.

60. One firm dealing with Argentine meat largely, although they deal also with New Zealand meat, have six hundred shops in the North of England to supply?—Yes.

61. Are you aware that it is practically impossible for New Zealand exporters of frozen meat to obtain a market at Manchester or Liverpool at the present time?—I think with the Government guarantee we could fight them.

62. You are of opinion that with that guarantee and a certain amount of sacrifice the difficulty could be overcome?—I think with the Government guarantee it would be suicidal for our competitors to continue the fight, because the grocers sell a lot of mutton, and would distribute it in any of the provincial towns at a lower rate than they do in London. It costs 9d. per head to send the mutton to Manchester, and how much would it cost us to send it to Glasgow? They send Argentine meat from Liverpool to London at 13s. 4d. a ton.

63. Assuming that your contention is correct, that a Government guarantee would practically insure the New Zealand exporters breaking down the monopoly in the North of England and put New Zealand produce on equal or better terms than Argentine frozen meat, do you think it practicable to get the exporters and freezing companies to come into line and take up the work you suggest?—Yes, with a Government guarantee. There are two of the largest exporters—Messrs. Cunningham and Grant—who are both willing to ship to the ports I have mentioned.

64. The feeling in South Canterbury, in your opinion, is that they would be willing to take up any proposal for concentration of supplies so long as they were guaranteed against loss?—Yes; they would ship to those ports if they were guaranteed the same price as is obtainable in London, and there is a chance of getting better prices.

65. Do you think the exporters in South Canterbury would approve of accepting any proposal of the Government, a company, or a combination, as the case might be, to put on a certain tax per carcase as a guarantee against loss? Do you think they are prepared to support a proposal of that sort?—I think so, but it has not been ventilated yet. I got that wrinkle out of another scheme. I got a good deal of information in Christchurch when waiting for the steamer to come through. The other suggestion I got from a copy of Mr. A. H. Turnbull's scheme. It was for an association to be established to work outside the freezing companies, with power to fix prices. In that scheme there was a clause providing for ½d. being levied on the carcasses put through the freezing companies to be collected for expenses in London and in the colony. I have not had time to put this matter before the farmers, but I will do so.

66. You are of opinion that it would be practicable?—Yes, I am. I see no difficulty in it. The proposed penny tax, on the output of last year, would amount to £12,000. It is a simple thing to put 1d. on the carcase, because it would prevent a loss of £64,000 in lamb alone in twelve months. I have not gone into the matter with regard to mutton, but that also came down through the large shipments, with consequent loss.

67. *Mr. Field.* We have had it in evidence that it would be very unwise to ship our meat to any other port than London. The meat is distributed from that port to other places where it is said they want a special class of mutton?—I have said that there are vested interests in London which are likely to oppose this scheme. The C. and D. Company have three hundred shops. They get their orders in every morning, but there is all the railage to be paid, and it has been stated that the meat arrives in a very unpresentable condition, and with all the bloom gone.

68. Do you think these difficulties would be overcome by shipping to the other ports direct?—Yes, I think so; because you would not have the long railage, and could supply it out of the cool-stores. There would not be so much handling. There is more handling in London required than at any other port. We need not put it in large quantities, but gradually, into the market. The steamers are prepared to deliver as small a lot as ten thousand carcasses. Now, we could send a steamer to several of these ports, and distribute the meat from them. There are good stores at the ports mentioned, and we could put the meat into the market gradually. We could go slowly, and where would there be any loss? We could send one steamer to Glasgow, Liverpool, and Cardiff, and another steamer to Leith, Dundee, and Hull, and there are more ports with cold-stores.

69. Do you think there is any difference in the class of meat required for those different ports? Would the class of meat which suits the London market also suit the other ports?—In