

Manchester there is a good deal larger percentage of the poorer people in the population who would use Argentine meat; but in all communities there is a middle class, and they would use the same kind of meat as is consumed in London. In fact, you would see from Mr. Anderson's evidence that the people like good meat, but even Canterbury meat would not arrive in a good condition after a long railage.

70. You think there would be no difficulty from that source if we shipped direct from this colony and sorted the meat out in the various parcels required for the different ports? Do you think you could gauge accurately enough the class of meat required for those ports at this end?—I think all the meat is required. There are people who take the same meat. They take our lambs.

71. You think there are upper and middle classes everywhere?—Yes. There is certainly a larger percentage of the poorer classes in Manchester, and that is why our tinned meat sells so well. There are a great many factory hands there who do not take time to cook meat, and, therefore, use a good deal of tinned meat. It is the best market there is for tinned meat.

72. You say that the Argentine system of dealing with frozen meat is a better system than ours; or, rather, that they have a system and we have not?—Yes. They distribute their meat in different parts while we dump ours down in one market.

73. Do you think we should be able to follow something like the same system that they have adopted, even at this late stage?—That is a very difficult question to answer.

74. We have been told in evidence that it is now too late to do it?—I will give you some evidence later, when dealing with the London trade.

75. You spoke of the Government assisting by way of guarantee. I should like, if possible, for you to amplify that a little. Is that all you ask the Government to do—to guarantee shippers against loss?—We just want the Government to guarantee shippers the London price, and not to do any work at all. We would ask the Government to select a respectable firm of salesmen to whom all shipments should be sent, so that we should not have one competing against the other as we have at the present time.

76. It would never do to allow the Government to guarantee that unless the Government had some control over the concentration and regularity of supplies?—I think the Government would need to have some control over the consignees of the meat.

77. Would it not have to take some part in the matter after the meat arrived in London?—No. One respectable firm would be appointed, and the meat would be consigned to them to sell.

78. And you think that would be quite satisfactory?—I think so. We should have the London prices to go upon to guide the firm.

79. As to the regularity of supplies, do you think that we in New Zealand, with the Government guarantee that you speak of, could hold our own: would not the fact that we were not acting in concert with the Argentine and Australia, and other countries from which the meat reaches England, have the effect of upsetting our attempts to regulate supplies—they might upset things by putting in a large quantity when it was not convenient?—We would not put in large quantities; we would distribute our supplies to different ports, and would be able to bide our time. If we put in large quantities we should just supply our customers to keep them going, and not force sales.

80. Have you any opinion to express concerning the development of the South African trade?—No; I have not gone into that much. I think the South African trade will only last a year or two. I think the money spent in the ports I have spoken of, where the markets would keep on improving, would be much better spent.

81. In view of the fact that the Argentine supply is increasing rapidly, you think it behoves us to look to other countries for our trade?—Yes; I am not against opening up South Africa, but I think getting a footing in the ports referred to is more important.

82. Are there any complaints that you have heard about the Railway Department in regard to freight?—I do not think so. There is always a little growling about the rates.

83. We have had it in evidence that people drive their stock long distances along the roads because it is too expensive to send it by train?—There may be a little of that done, but I have not experienced it. Mr. Wilson, I understand, drives his stock down the road instead of railing it, because it is a little cheaper.

84. *Mr. Flatman.*] You have some knowledge of North Island sheep as well as of those of South Canterbury?—Not very much, but I had a visitor down my way last autumn—a large farmer from Feilding—and we were always arguing about the difference in price between the North Island and South Island sheep. He said there could not be so much difference in the quality. Before he went away I took him to the Smithfield Freezing-works and directly I took him into the cooling-chamber he said, "I see the difference now. Your sheep are far more meaty and not so tallowy." When we went into a place where the sheep were hanging up, he saw an old wether hanging up, and said that was more like the North Island meat.

85. You did not go into the difference of prices for freezing purposes?—No. I think where the dealers and freezers might have an advantage is in the weights they get. They get heavier weights for the money.

86. Now, when people buy sheep from the farmers, do they take the biggest of the lambs in all cases?—Well, they never leave a big one. The extra weight makes up for the quality.

87. And the same applies, I suppose, to freezing-wethers?—Yes. Even if they are overweight and go into the second quality the extra weight makes up the price more per head. Say a 54 lb. sheep at 4d. a pound and then a 72 lb. sheep at 3½d. I suppose it would run into more money.

88. But what is the general weight buyers approve of in sheep?—The best quality is from 48 lb. to 56 lb., but owing to bad fattening this year we did not have so many of the 56 lb. weight.