

89. The average weight of lambs is what?—36 lb. is considered a good average weight.

90. Would you mind explaining to the Committee more fully what you mean by the guarantee the Government would be asked to give?—A simple guarantee to the shippers that they would receive the London price at the date for the same grade for mutton or lamb. These prices can be had every day, and the same day when the meat was sold in London would be the price in Manchester, Glasgow, or any of the ports I mentioned. If it was sold below the London price on that date then the shippers would claim for the balance, and if it sold above the London price there would be no claim.

91. If it fetched less in the provincial ports than in London you would expect to be paid the price obtainable in London?—Yes.

92. And you suggest that 1d. per carcase should be levied to meet that charge?—Yes. We would not guarantee it for more than one year, because it would be self-supporting.

93. Do you suggest that the penny per carcase should be paid into a Government account?—Yes; and the freezing company would be empowered to collect and pay it into the Government account as a stand-by. It would not be collected from the shippers when it was not required.

94. Each shipment would then have to be disposed of on its merits?—Yes.

95. That is to say you would not allow the Government to reserve anything out of one shipment to meet a possible loss on another shipment?—Perhaps it might be worked out to a general average for a shipment, but that is going into details.

96. *Sir W. R. Russell.*] Do you think a single year would test the northern markets you referred to?—Yes. I think if we got hold of the markets for one season we would keep them without any guarantee.

97. And supposing we were not able to upset the Argentine trade in a year, what then?—I would suggest going on another year to make up the deficiency, because the sum proposed is a mere trifle, and the loss this year on lambs alone for three months amounts to five times 1d. a carcase on the export.

98. Do I understand you wish to levy the penny per carcase on every carcase exported from New Zealand, or only on shipments sent North?—On every carcase shipped. On the basis of carcasses of lamb exported last season, 1d. per carcase would bring in £12,000. Then the beef would require to pay its share too, and the amount I propose should be 3d. per quarter.

99. Do you imagine that the outside liability of the colony would be £12,000, or what do you think would be the total loss in trying to cut into the Northern trade?—I am under the impression that there would be no loss. I think the fact that the Government guarantee was given would show that we were determined to have a footing in the trade, and that would cause the Argentine people to conclude that it would be suicidal on their part to commence to cut prices, because they would see that they would meet with certain loss. We would simply ease our sales if they cut prices and keep our stuff in the stores, while they would have to sell at a loss.

100. If there is to be a Government guarantee, have you any idea of the extent—would it be £50,000, £100,000, or £200,000?—The amount of money required would be trifling. There would be only the difference between the London price and the price obtainable in the ports referred to to be made up.

101. Have you estimated what that sum would be?—That would be impossible, because we do not know what the mutton would sell for. If the Argentine people fought, more money would be required than otherwise.

102. Before the Government is asked to give a guarantee, can you not form some idea of the sum of money that would be involved?—I do not think we can. We can form an estimate of the amount of stock that would be shipped under the guarantee, but not of the loss there might be.

103. But to push the trade you would be prepared to fight, and to put our mutton into the markets if necessary?—Yes.

104. Well, have you no idea of what number of carcasses, or what liability the colony would have to undertake to meet that guarantee?—Say we shipped 311,000 carcasses of lamb in the month of May, we shipped a hundred thousand lambs too much; and in the month of June we did the same. If we had kept them away we should have saved £64,000 to the colony alone. If those two hundred thousand lambs had been sent to other ports under guarantee, and lamb was selling at 5d. a pound in London, and the Argentine started to cut prices, and this lamb was sold, say, in Manchester at 4½d. per pound, then the guarantee would be ½d. per pound on those carcasses.

105. But you are recommending a scheme, and I want to know what your view is as to the possible liability?—It is impossible for me to tell. I maintain that there would be no monetary loss at all. It would be merely a guarantee, and unless the Argentine people showed strong fight there would be no losses.

106. But supposing they did fight?—We would put, say, twenty thousand carcasses in Manchester, and the same quantity in Glasgow and Cardiff per month, and, supposing they did show a strong fight, I do not see why we should not beat them. We do not have so much stuff there, and we could put it into the cool-stores and then on to the market gradually.

107. Is not the London market in competition with the River Plate people in the whole of the trade?—Yes. We rail to those ports that I have spoken of, and to inland cities, but we pay 9d. a carcase for lamb, and 1s. 1d. for mutton.

108. How many ports of shipment would you advise?—I would be favourable to putting it in all ports where the steamers would go, at which there was cold-storage.

109. Would you advocate cold-storage being built?—I would leave that to the people there. Mr. Mackenzie will tell you that most of those ports have cold-storage. They are making storage at Leith and Dundee.

110. Do not the London buyers try to supply meat to the northern and midland counties?—Yes, but the London port is the most expensive port in the kingdom; and, as Mr. Anderson