

141. You got 16s. ?—Yes.

142. What were the weights ?—About 60 lb. or 62 lb.

143. They would be good sheep ?—Yes ; good nuggety sheep.

144. Now with regard to the prices cabled out from the Agent-General's Office to your Department : in those cables they differentiate, as requested by a large number of farmers in the North Island. Can you tell us the reason why the Agent-General's office does differentiate, and separates the Canterbury and Meat-export Company's prices from the other prices? Can you tell us why that is not done by the associated companies through the Press Association's cables ?—I could not explain that. Mr. Cameron thought the Meat-export Company's brand was sold slightly higher on an average rate than other North Island mutton.

145. You are aware that the Dunedin, Southland, and Meat-export Company's meat generally brings more money on the market ?—I know that the Dunedin mutton brings the same price as Christchurch mutton.

146. And that what is honestly called the North Island brand is invariably $\frac{1}{4}$ d. a pound lower than Wellington ?—Yes, that is so.

147. It has been stated to this Committee by several of the witnesses—mainly those who are in a big way or connected with a freezing company—that it would be detrimental to the interests of the farmers of this country who freeze meat to put on the carcasses a distinguishing brand, because of the amount of meat that is sold in the London market as English. Then, they also state that the prosecution of the sellers of Argentine meat as New Zealand meat is a waste of time and detrimental to the interests of New Zealand. Now, I would like to have your opinion on that matter. I see that Mr. Cameron deals with it, and I am going to suggest that his report should be attached to our report. But I would like to ask your opinion in reference to that ?—Undoubtedly there is a quantity of our mutton sold as English mutton, and there is also a large amount of Argentine meat sold as New Zealand and Australian mutton. It is a question whether we should stop it by branding, and prevent sellers of New Zealand mutton selling it as English mutton. From the reports that we get from Home I have been able to form an opinion, and I should like to see our mutton go Home and be sold on its merits.

148. *Mr. Haselden.*] You are of opinion the grading and branding by the Government would be an advantage ?—Thus far we are doing a large c.i.f. business, and in some of the works they can manage it very well, but in other works there is a great deal of trouble on account of the reclamations. If you could get independent persons to grade the mutton as first and second class before it goes Home, the thing would be finished. We do the same with butter, and there is no trouble about the marks. People can go to the bank when they get the graders' certificates and get their money.

149. Do you think that the Government can assist us in the frozen-meat trade, or do you think the farmers should take the matter into their own hands ?—I think the farmers should do something, and that the Government should assist ; but you must have legislation to empower a levy on the sheep in the colony or on exported sheep. I should prefer to see it levied on every sheep in the colony.

150. *Mr. Field.*] Have you any opinion on the subject of sending our meat to a number of ports instead of sending it all to the Port of London ?—I think it would be an advantage to get it away from London, because there are a large number of ports which have a large population close to them ; and if you could get it taken direct to those ports it would save a great deal of handling and be put on the market in a more favourable condition. I should be in favour of doing that.

151. It has been stated in evidence that a fair estimate of the difference in value of a North Island and South Island freezing-sheep would be from 4s. to 5s. ?—I know this for a fact : that if you kill a North Island sheep you do not get the same quantity of fat as from a South Island sheep, and the skin is not so good. I know that the inside fat is several pounds less.

152. Do you think, taking the fat and skin into consideration, the difference is so much as 4s. or 5s. ?—I do not think so ; but the Canterbury sheep have got a name now. Southland sheep come up and are frozen and are sent Home as Canterbury, the same as with North Island sheep—they go Home as Canterbury. I do not think there is a margin of 4s. or 5s.

153. *Mr. Flatman.*] You spoke of making a levy and getting legislation for that. Do I understand you to say that you propose a levy on the whole of the sheep in the colony ?—The people, I think, are making more out of store sheep than they are after they are fattened, and I think we should levy on the whole of the sheep in the colony. You would not want the money at all. You would only want the guarantee. If you had a board here and a board in London, you could work it out and see what would be required.

154. Do you think that in the Mackenzie Country, where they fatten no sheep and are only breeding them, they would get any advantage ?—Undoubtedly.

155. *Mr. T. Mackenzie.*] What would you do with the money you raised by the levy ?—I would not raise it at all unless it was wanted.

156. What would you want the money for, then ?—You would want an advisory board at Home, and to send ships to outports, and generally to open up the trade. To do that you would want an advisory board at Home. You might not want any money, or you might want a good deal.

Extract from the Report of the Produce Commissioner, London, dated 17th November, 1899, in regard to a Shipment of Twenty Sheep from New Zealand to London branded with Brown and Staples's Indelible Brand.

On receipt of bill of lading, I made arrangements with Mr. R. Keil, the manager of the frozen-meat department of the C. C. and D. Company (Limited) to receive the sheep on arrival and have them stored in the cold-air chambers of that company at Lambeth. At these stores there is every facility for making a careful inspection of meat.