

127. *Mr. Aitken.*] Is the amount of animal food consumed during the months of June, July, and August at Home as great as in the winter months?—No.

128. Is the difference in proportion considerable?—In winter beef and mutton are consumed in larger quantity than lamb. In the summer months the consumption of lamb is much larger. Lighter food, such as game and poultry, then competes largely with the meat-trade.

129. Would not that indicate this: that larger shipments of mutton should go into the market in the earlier part of the winter, and through the winter rather than through the summer months?—I think, the quantity of New Zealand mutton being on the whole a very small contribution to the total meat requirements of the British market, that is really immaterial. It would be better to have regularity of shipment all the year round.

130. *The Chairman.*] Have many ships been fitted up with Arena's recording thermometers?—None.

131. Do you think the system of tests, even going Home, is sufficiently satisfactory in regard to temperature?—I think so. It is perfectly satisfactory if we could rely upon the records being entered in the log-book correctly. Of course we assume that they are recorded correctly.

132. Regarding these sorting-sheds, are you in favour of sorting-sheds being established at the docks?—I am.

133. Do you think it fair to the people up-river, who never make any claim on their meat, to go to all this trouble?—I think it would be in favour of the New Zealand meat trade generally.

134. You say that there is great risk of damage in taking meat up the river, but there is a large cold-air store at the dock—the Victoria Store?—Yes.

135. Are you aware that damage has been declared in that store, whereas meat out of the same hold as that going into the Victoria Store has been taken up to Blackfriars and no complaints have been made in regard to it?—Probably.

136. Would you say that was the fault of the barge or the cold store?—I would say that probably the conditions under which that meat had been kept in the cold store had been bad. Probably that meat had been placed in a chamber that was repeatedly opened.

137. The point is this: If damage was declared on meat in the Victoria Store, which is right against the ship, and the meat going up-river by barge was not damaged, where would be the advantage of having sorting-sheds at the docks?—The sorting-sheds would minimise the damage often occasioned to meat through sorting to marks in the hold of the vessel.

138. Take the meat that goes to the C. C. and D. Company in large quantities: Is there any delay in sorting that meat when it comes in their own ships?—There is no delay, for this reason, that their own ships carry their own meat, and that meat when being discharged is taken out "on a face." There is no sorting to marks.

139. Very well; should an enterprising company like that suffer the infliction and the cost, risk, and delay of having to pass their meat through a sorting-shed at the docks?—I grant that it may seem rather hard.

140. What object is there in it?—The object is this, the welfare of the trade generally. Some one may possibly suffer from any alteration that is introduced in the trade.

141. I suppose that the C. C. and D. Company must pass through hundreds of thousands of carcasses during the year?—Yes.

142. Does not the great bulk of it come in their own ships?—Not so far as I understand, but I cannot speak from personal experience.

143. Would it not be a great drawback, without any advantage to a large proportion of their meat, if it had to go into sorting-sheds at dock? Would you have all this meat that they land go into the sorting-sheds, too?—No, for this reason: that, being all their own meat, carried in their own ships, going into their own sheds, it would be unnecessary.

144. It would not require that all their meat should go through excepting small lots?—No; all their lots that arrive in other vessels would require to be sorted into marks.

145. Do you not think that a lot of the damage complained of is often rather due to the buyers who have bought the meat than to the fact that it has gone up-river—that certain men claim for meat whether it is damaged or not, and get an allowance? Have you ever made any analysis of the class of men that claim?—I do not say that all damage has occurred in the barges. I say that is one of the reasons for damage.

146. Are you aware then that there is less meat, comparatively no damaged meat, that goes into the Blackfriars Stores compared with that that goes into other stores in London?—Yes; that is because most of that meat has not been handled during discharge by the sorting of the marks.

147. If less damage occurs to that meat when it goes into that store than when it goes into stores right against the ship, does it not argue that their system is more perfect than any other in London?—I admit entirely that the C. C. and D. Company is a model in that respect.

148. Is there no rail delivery to Smithfield—is it not connected by rail with the dock?—There is a system that goes pretty close—the Great Eastern Railway, and there is also the Metropolitan.

149. Is there no meat railed to Smithfield?—There may be a small quantity, but it has to be transferred to horse-van. It is not found suitable to send it in that way.

150. What proportion of New Zealand meat is sold as English?—It is difficult to say. What is sold as English is the proportion that is considered the finest quality of meat.

151. Is it 5, 10, or 25 per cent.?—It would only be a guess on my part to say.

152. Would you think a man who shipped an enormous quantity Home would be in a position to say how much was sold as English?—I think not. I believe the only men who could most correctly say what it is are the Smithfield salesmen.

153. *Mr. Waymouth*, in his evidence last year, said that fully 25 per cent. was sold as English?—He does not know. He can only say second-hand.

154. You admit that Smithfield salesmen would know, and does not a Smithfield man handle *Mr. Waymouth's* meat, and is he not in close connection with him?—Possibly.