

shall have been given to the purchaser at the time of sale, on which must be clearly marked a recognised trade description of the quality of the meat. Now, it is almost impossible to get any one, knowing that, to give you such an invoice. A man at Home may open a shop and put over the door, "New Zealand Meat Company"; he may advertise widely throughout the district that he is selling New Zealand mutton. You may go to his shop and ask him if he is selling New Zealand mutton, and he may tell you, "Yes." You may say to him, "Weigh me a leg of New Zealand mutton." He does so, and you pay him. You ask him to give you an invoice, and he gives you one, marked "One leg of mutton." You may be able to prove that it is River Plate mutton, but you cannot convict him of a fraudulent sale because the invoice is not marked with any trade description indicative of the source of origin.

134. I am afraid you have not answered my question—namely, the method by which you could practically stop the fraudulent sale of Argentine or other meat in place of New Zealand meat?—The only method under the present English law is to do as I have just said, get an invoice giving the trade description.

135. What the Committee would like to hear from you is whether you have a practicable plan by which these fraudulent sales can be stopped?—The only proposal that I can make for stopping the fraudulent sales is by branding our meat with a neat, clear, indelible brand. That would stop it immediately.

136. Would not the presence of this brand on cooked meat spoil the appearance of the joint?—It is not observable when the meat is cooked and on the table.

137. Is there any other company that you are aware of which brands its meat in this way?—There is no company at present branding its meat, but meat from the Continent comes to the Home market branded.

138. *The Chairman.*] Is not that merely a guarantee that it is sound?—Yes.

139. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Is this Health brand affixed to any prime portion of the carcase?—I cannot say particularly. I merely instance that as showing that branding is done, and that it is no detriment to the sale of the meat coming from the Continent on the market.

140. How can you say that, when you say the brand is put on an unobtrusive part of the carcase?—It is not on an unobtrusive part; it is on an obtrusive part. Suppose it is a quarter of beef that comes across, it would be stamped on the shoulder or buttock, or on the leg of a sheep.

141. Have you any knowledge of the number of pure-bred stock bought and shipped for South American owners?—I have not got a statement with me, but I could get it. I know a large quantity of pure-bred stock goes there.

142. Would you be surprised to find that in five years the Argentine imported 28,478 pure-bred sheep, and 4,138 head of cattle of a value of nearly half a million of money?—No; and I consider that is a very strong argument for doing our utmost to keep New Zealand meat in front in the competition with the Argentine.

143. Following that question would be this: Is there any reason to doubt that the proportion of Argentine meat, which you now acknowledge to rank with the best North Island mutton, will not be enormously increased in a very short time?—I consider it will be enormously increased, and that New-Zealanders must do something energetic to improve their trade in view of the competition which they will have to face.

144. *The Chairman.*] Just a question about selling-agents and those who deal themselves: Do you know any men on the market who are purely vendors and not dealers?—I do not know any.

145. Do the Colonial Consignment Company approach that position?—I consider the Colonial Consignment Company the best of the distributing companies in Great Britain.

146. Is it not a fact that they only buy to fill up in the event of their own meat not coming forward, and are not dealers?—I understand there is a clause in their articles of association under which they can only buy up to certain limits.

147. *Mr. Witheford.*] In regard to your statement that the selling-price of New Zealand meat had not reached 10d., are you aware of a prosecution in a Court at Home where it was given in evidence that the seller bought New Zealand meat at 3½d. per pound and had sold it for years to a purchaser at 1s. 2d. per pound?—He was selling it as English meat, not as New Zealand.

148. The man had to disgorge £70,000 to the Grosvenor Hotel Company for selling New Zealand meat as English, and for other informalities of a like nature?—That was a case of fraud, of course.

149. How is it that New Zealand has not benefited to a greater extent through the recent war? It was not until Mr. Seddon telegraphed Home, calling attention to the neglect of New Zealand as a source of supply to South Africa, that anything was done. Have you done your best in that direction?—The Agent-General, Mr. Kennaway, and myself repeatedly waited on the War Office authorities and did all we could to get as much New Zealand produce taken by them as possible.

150. How was it that you did not get incorporated in the tenders a clause favourable to our meat?—War Office contracts are always on c.i.f. terms, and contractors in the colony wanted f.o.b. terms. The War Office authorities said they would rather pay more for c.i.f. deliveries than take the trouble incidental to f.o.b. sales.

151. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Are you aware that tenders from New Zealand for these War Office contracts, at the lowest possible rates they could quote, were considerably under-tendered by the Argentine tenderers?—I do not know who tendered, there were so many.

152. That is not the question: Are you aware or not that the Argentine tenders were lower?—I am aware that the Argentine tenders were lower. I am aware that tenders were sent in lower than the ruling price for New Zealand meat at the time the meat was tendered for.