

111. How would you do that?—By holding over certain portions of the shipments from the season when there is a large quantity available until the season when the sheep are going forward in smaller numbers, shipping them regularly all the year round, and holding the surplus in store at this end.

112. Who do you propose should do that?—Well, the producers themselves, or the freezing companies by arrangement with the shipping companies.

113. Supposing the freezing companies agreed amongst themselves to combine to regulate the quantity forwarded to London monthly during the whole year?—They would have to come to an agreement.

114. Would that not be practically a ring or combine?—I do not think so.

115. If the freezing companies all combined here to ship regularly, would they not have the producer at their mercy in the matter of price?—I do not say they must purchase the stock.

116. But if the freezing companies combined to store the meat here and send regular supplies to London on behalf of themselves and their clients? The greater portion, I hear, is purchased from the producer by the companies?—No; by the shippers, who freeze.

117. Well, in order to regulate supplies it would require combination?—It would require an agreement.

118. Would they not have the producer to a very great extent at their mercy with regard to price?—I do not think so. The producer can freeze—he need not sell.

119. Do many of them freeze now on their own account?—I understand there are many shippers.

120. I mean producers—the men who grow the sheep?—I suppose there are a good many who do ship.

121. If the parties engaged in the frozen-meat trade here combined together to send regular supplies Home, would they not have the producer at their mercy when they combined and had no competition?—I do not think that would follow.

122. You think this matter of combining together to regulate shipments would not be a ring or combine?—No; it would be an agreement. Instead of the sheep going Home in large quantities at one time of the year, regular quantities would go all the year round, the balance being held in store.

123. Do you think you could get them to do that without combining with regard to the price they would give for the sheep?—I could not say what they would do.

124. Unless you had this state of things brought about in New Zealand you would not be successful with your shops—that is, unless you could get regular supplies. What would you do—would you let your customers go and buy Argentine meat?—I am quite in agreement with this: that before our trade can be put on a satisfactory footing at Home regular shipments will have to be arranged for.

125. Then, they would have to be arranged for before you started the shops?—Yes; that would have to be arranged for.

126. *Mr. Field.*] When Mr. Buchanan was questioning you you volunteered the statement that he did not understand your system of distribution: would you like to amplify that statement?—I said the system of delivery was to wrap the joints in parchment-paper, and to wrap them afterwards in brown paper, sending these neat parcels out properly labelled and addressed.

127. Do I understand that you are in favour of opening Government shops in the Old Country?—Yes; for advertising by demonstration only.

128. That is part of the system of advertising you recommend?—Yes.

129. And it is only by advertising that you think the Government can assist the producer in this colony?—Yes; I think that is the best means for assisting the producer—making a specialty of our meat at Home.

130. If I heard Mr. Buchanan aright, he stated that we had arrived at this position: that the present state of things was satisfactory, and there was no occasion for Government interference or assistance?—I say that the present prices are very satisfactory, and if we could only get some guarantee that they would continue so in the future it would be unnecessary to interfere with the trade as at present conducted, except to do as I say, advertise.

131. In many of the reports you have sent out from year to year you have recommended changes in our methods: have you in any of those reports recommended any change which you do not recommend now?—No. In the report which has already been before the Committee are embodied all the suggestions I have previously made. Advertising and branding have been the two things I have advocated rather more strongly than any other.

132. And combination in London?—Certainly; sending consignments Home to recognised representatives of the freezing companies, and not to dealers.

133. Do I understand that you were butchering in Manchester on your own account?—I was.

134. Before you got the Government appointment?—Yes.

135. And you have worked out the figures in this estimate carefully and well?—Yes.

136. And on the safe side, you consider?—I do. I am thoroughly certain I am on the safe side.

137. Mr. Buchanan suggested that he had certain evidence of butchers from the Old Country upon which he examined you: do you consider those statements are likely to be actuated by self-interest?—I do not say that, but I say they are extravagant.

138. Would they not come from persons who would be strongly against any change in our methods?—I have no idea who they are from.

139. If they are butchers interested in the trade, would they not naturally fight any proposal for change?—Butchers trading at Home are under a mistaken conception of the proposal.