

statement that the committee should be a representative one fixing prices according to the conditions ruling in the different parts of the world. The New Zealand farmer is entitled to a fair thing, but the conditions ruling in all parts of the world will have to be taken into account.

94. Where would you suggest the representation committee should be?—The Old Country would be the best place, because they have the reflex of the pulse of the whole world.

95. Would you suggest that the Dominions should be strongly represented on that committee?—Yes, the representation should be equal between the Dominions and the British Government.

96. Are you quite satisfied that we cannot fight these trusts by a combination of the farmers—you consider it must be by a combination of the Governments?—Whatever we might do at this end would probably be counteracted by the trust at Home. They might put the stuff on the market at a price which would make our operations here unsuccessful.

97. We are told that America has practically thrown up the sponge, and are not prepared to fight the trust. Seeing that America has come into the war, do you think there is any chance of their joining with us?—From what I have been reading I do not think that such a suggestion would be unwelcome to America.

98. You think they would be quite willing to seize the opportunity?—I do not think they would consider it unfriendly.

99. Do you regard the United States in the future as a pretty extensive market for our meat?—I think they would mostly buy from the Argentina. Our experience in regard to shipping to the west coast is that our meat is a little bit too fat. The meat companies in the Argentina are a very close corporation, and America has reciprocal arrangements with the Argentina.

100. From a market point of view we have not very much interest in the American market?—I do not think so. I think our interests in Great Britain can be developed enormously, and after the war our meat will be sold at a fair price.

101. As to the European markets, I suppose we can hope that some other countries will want meat from us, and therefore our markets will have to be extended?—I have suggested in my statement that that will have to be taken into consideration in fixing the price. The Imperial Government can handle meat in the same way as they are handling wool, and ship it when required.

102. In regard to freezing-works and their capacity, do you think there are sufficient in this country at the present time to do all the work that is necessary now and for some years to come?—I think so; but there is still a lot of room for expansion in the production of meat, &c.

103. As far as you know, do you think the freezing companies would be willing to do the freezing and get a fair return for the work done in that respect—for freezing only?—I have not discussed the scheme with them, but I once mentioned it to Mr. James Borthwick, and he thought it a very good one.

104. Speaking for the Gear Company, can you say that is so?—Yes.

105. They would be quite prepared to do freezing only?—Yes. I might say that the Gear Company has never frozen for any agents; we always thought we might be helping some of those acting for foreign principals.

106. Do you know if any action has been taken by other Dominions in fighting this trust?—No, I could not say that.

107. You have not heard what Queensland is doing?—They endeavoured to pass legislation enabling them to buy the freezing-works, but the Upper House threw it out; and then the Government went to the country to do away with the Upper House, and the whole thing has been hung up.

108. In regard to the huge profits referred to by Mr. Witty, between 9½d., 10½d., and 2s. per pound, is that still continuing or has a check been placed upon it?—I cannot say personally. I understand Lord Rhondda is going to fix the price from the 1st September.

109. *Mr. Reed.*] Would it be satisfactory, pending arrangements with the Imperial Government, to continue the present system, or would it be better for the Government to act at once with a view to putting the proposals in concrete form between the Imperial Government and ourselves?—I take it that the Government here would have to get authority from Parliament to negotiate in that direction, because three months after the war is over the present scheme would lapse.

110. Unless there was an extension agreed to?—Yes. The Government have no power to make an extension except as a war measure or by mutual agreement.

111. The best thing would be to take legislative power at once?—To take power for the Governments to negotiate.

112. Is all the capital in your company local capital?—Yes. Well, when I say “all” of it, I think there are two or three shareholders who have gone to Australia, and perhaps the same number have gone to live in England; but we have no outside capital at all.

113. *Dr. Newman.*] You consider that the meat trade of the River Plate is practically controlled by the Meat Trust?—From what I have read I should say so. The British companies must work in harmony with the Meat Trust or there is trouble.

114. So that the Meat Trust can fix the price to the farmers in Argentina?—Yes, I should say so.

115. *Mr. Pearce.*] You say the present arrangement with the Government might be continued on the same lines?—With the modifications I have spoken of as to grades, &c.

116. But would not this be the position: that now, of course, there is a fixed war price for all time, and in any future arrangement the price would have to be fixed perhaps once a month?—Yes, from time to time, but the variation would not be so great as under the old system. According to the chart I have produced the prices have varied from week to week, whereas under Government control they would be much more regular.