

34. What company do you represent?—I am a meat-exporter. I kill at nearly all the works in the North Island.

35. Those cases you mention and of which you gave the figures, are those exceptional cases?—No, I do not think so. They are practically borne out by all the returns put through. The manager of the Longburn Works told me he was losing 1s. to 2s. per head on all mutton put through, and the same thing applied to lamb.

36. The exporters buying beef at 50s. were losing money?—Yes.

37. Unless there was some other source?—Yes.

38. What would be that other source?—I do not know. I do not think they would do it from philanthropic motives or for the good of the country.

39. They are keen enough to buy at those prices, are they?—Yes; they would take all that was offered to them. Their buyers would go round endeavouring to get all the best stuff offering. I think, as far as the Gear Company is concerned, probably they were giving that price for their local trade here in Wellington—I do not know that they were very keen to give that for export; and the same might apply in other cases. Where the price was paid it was for the local trade, but there is no doubt that certain firms did give that price for export.

40. Well, considering that the retailers have the opportunity of getting the meat from the freezing-works at the Government price, how has it paid the Gear Company to give a higher price than the Government price for their shops?—I do not think the New Zealand consumer had been educated up to liking frozen meat. They prefer to pay a higher price for fresh meat.

41. Not necessarily frozen meat—they may get that fresh-killed before it is frozen?—Well, the Government opened retail shops in Auckland, and I think also in Gisborne, but for all that the local butchers seem to be able to continue business and pay a higher price for meat.

42. You do not know how to account for that?—No.

43. In connection with the nominated meat at Home, what happens to the meat which is not nominated—the meat of all farmers would not be nominated?—Unless the farmers instruct the freezing companies whom to nominate, the freezing companies would nominate their own agents.

44. All the meat that goes from here is nominated?—Yes.

45. *Mr. Dickie.*] What happens to this lamb that the Government is not taking over—what happens to it when it reaches London—that is nominated, is it not?—It passes, first of all, into the hands of the agents who may be nominated. They sell to the wholesalers, retaining 2 per cent. commission, and the wholesalers distribute it amongst the retailers.

46. You would nominate to whom a line of meat was to go at Home?—Yes.

47. I thought the Board of Trade did that?—No, it is all done from here.

48. Do you think the Board of Trade gets anything out of that?—No, I do not.

49. Whom does the Board of Trade consist of?—Sir Thomas Robinson is the Chairman, then there is the High Commissioner (the Hon. Mr. Mackenzie), and Mr. Nelson.

50. They are all connected with the freezing industry in New Zealand except Mr. Mackenzie?—Yes.

51. It has been suggested that they made something out of it?—Personally I do not think so.

52. *Mr. Talbot.*] You think the Board of Trade get nothing out of it except sufficient to pay expenses?—I think probably they would have sufficient to pay the cost of storage and handling.

53. You think that Sims, Cooper, and Co. get their money from Chicago?—That is my own personal opinion.

54. Is there not a chance of their having got it from any big trust at Home—Vestey's, for instance?—Vestey's are now an American firm. They left England, and are established in America.

55. *Mr. T. A. H. Field.*] You mentioned two cases in which commission had been handed back: will you tell the Committee the names?—I will tell the Committee, but I want it to be considered confidential. [Names mentioned.]

56. *Mr. Anstey.*] I understand you are acting as a meat-exporter only, and not connected with a freezing company at all?—Yes, that is so.

57. You buy a good deal of meat direct from the farmers?—Yes, or act as their agents. In most cases we act as agents.

58. You give them the Government price?—Yes.

59. Do you ever buy sheep and cattle on the farm?—Yes.

60. And what do you base your values on?—On the Government price.

61. You gave us several instances of where Sims, Cooper, and Co. had made losses in purchasing small individual lines?—It was not Sims, Cooper, and Co. I was referring to: the farmers made the losses on those lines.

62. Do you ever make losses yourself in buying?—Yes.

63. The object in putting in those statements of losses was to show that people were paying more than a fair price?—Yes, more than the legitimate price.

64. Do you happen to know whether the people made more than the Government price to make up those losses?—No, they could not realize more.

65. A firm like Sims and Cooper, and yourself, buying on the farm could buy cheaper than the Government?—We might buy cheaper, but unfortunately we cannot do so now.

66. You were quoting those low prices for the purpose of showing there was some improper inference. I ask you whether it is not a fact that they do make up those losses by buying lines cheap?—If the farmer was foolish enough to sell at a lower price than he could get elsewhere.

67. Do you suggest that these firms are buying at a loss? If these firms are constantly buying at a loss, there must be some ulterior object?—Judging from my own personal observa-