

“Sydney, 24th April, 1914.

“Wellington Farmers' Meat Company (Limited), Waingawa Works, Masterton, N.Z.

“DEAR SIR,—

“Referring to the undersigned's recent interview with Mr. Cooper, in New Zealand, with regard to the purchase of your output next season, our Australian agents, Birt and Co., 7 Macquarrie Place, Sydney, will be pleased to open negotiations in this connection when the time comes, and if you will communicate with Mr. Owen Cox, c/o Birt and Co., as above, the matter will be dealt with as expeditiously as possible.

“Yours faithfully,

“ISAAC M. HODGKINSON,

“ARMOUR AND CO. (LIMITED),
“London.”

The letter which followed that was as follows :—

“Sydney, 30th April, 1914.

“The Manager, Wellington Farmers' Meat Company (Limited), Waingawa Works, Masterton.

“DEAR SIR,—

“Mr. Hodgkinson—a director of Messrs. Armour and Co. (Limited), London—has been in communication with you regarding the purchase of the output of your works next season, and has informed you that we—as Australasian agents for Messrs. Armour and Co. (Limited), London—will be glad to negotiate with your company for your next season's output of meat. We, of course, recognize that it is yet early to talk definite business, but as the season approaches you will, no doubt, communicate with us, and we shall be pleased to go into the matter with you.

In the event of your having any parcels of meat available this season at any time, we shall be glad to have an offer of same f.o.b. or cost and freight.

“Yours truly,

“BIRT AND CO. (LIMITED).

52. You say the Argentine is getting a better price for their meat than New Zealand for beef from the Home Government?—Yes.

53. Why is that?—I do not know. I take it they had not the same sentimental reasons for assisting the Old Country as we had, and they viewed the matter simply as a business concern, and made the best contract they could.

54. Is not that giving the producers of a foreign country an advantage over the producers of the Empire?—Yes. Where the stuff is on board the difference in cost of carriage is only so-many weeks extra.

55. Can you tell us the prices offered for beef?—5½d., when we were getting 4½d. Mutton I did not inquire into.

56. *Mr. Anstey.*] You say that the American banking system of giving credit is apparently much more favourable than the British system?—Yes. I also desire to hand into the Committee a booklet issued by Armour and Co., in which they state that they control works in New Zealand.

TUESDAY, 21ST AUGUST, 1917.

DONALD GEORGE SINCLAIR examined. (No. 10.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A fat-stock buyer for Armour and Co. in North Canterbury.

2. *Mr. Witty.*] How long have you been with Armour and Co.?—Nearly twelve months.

3. Have you been buying for them during that twelve months?—Yes.

4. What company were you with before you joined them?—Thomas Borthwick and Sons.

5. Have Armour and Co. any works for freezing their own stock?—No, they have no works.

6. Where do they freeze?—At all the works in Canterbury.

7. Then they are operating in a good many places in New Zealand?—Practically all over New Zealand.

8. Can you tell me if they or any other company are giving a higher price for stock than has been given by other companies—that is, by New Zealand companies?—We have not.

9. Are you aware of any companies doing so?—Well, I think other companies were, because I could not buy against them.

10. What companies?—The New Zealand Refrigerating Company and Borthwick and Co. That is, last season.

11. Can you tell us for whom the Refrigerating Company are shipping, or whether they have sold any large portion of their shares to outsiders?—I could not say. It all goes to the Government now.

12. But I am speaking of shares?—I do not know anything about that.

13. You do not know if the personnel of the company has changed or not?—No.

14. Has your company agents in the Old Country?—I think the head of the firm is in London—that is, as far as I know.

15. If you buy lambs, for instance, they go to your company in London, although the Government buy them?—Oh, yes.

16. And all your meat is tagged?—Yes.

17. And what is not taken by the Imperial Government goes to your agents in London?—Yes, as far as I know.

18. It is not divided up with other meat amongst other agents, is it?—No.

19. Do you think your company is making much headway here?—Well, they have not this last season.

20. They have not started works of their own yet?—No.

21. It is an American company, is it not?—Yes.