

25. *Mr. Pearce.*] That is a matter entirely for the Home Government—they have made those regulations?—No; I would respectfully suggest to this Committee that it is for us to draw the attention of the Imperial authorities to this matter.

26. We have done so for the last twelve months?—Well, that is the statement of the Board of Trade of London, who are the delivering authorities; and should not the attention of the House of Commons be drawn to the fact that the statements in the report are not correct? This is reflecting on us and on our trade.

27. It is entirely a matter for the Home Government: we have sold the meat and got the money when it is f.o.b., and they do not acknowledge us at all?—Well, I suggest that if we find that is acting detrimentally to us we should point it out. It is putting out of the business all the small retail shops and allowing the big shops to control the position. I now desire to place before the Committee a printed copy of General Regulations for the Sale of Frozen meat on account of His Majesty's Government. They are as follows:—

GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR THE SALE OF FROZEN MEAT ON ACCOUNT OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT.

1. On the arrival of cargoes of frozen meat from Australia and New Zealand, any meat not required for the Forces is to be disposed of through the ordinary channels, at the market rate of the day, of sale for consumption by the civilian population.

2. The firms to whom the disposal of the meat is to be entrusted on behalf of the Board of Trade are to be those firms who in the past have been in the habit of handling the various consignments from the different freezing-works. As a rule these firms will be ascertained from the information which the Australasian Governments have been asked to procure from the freezing-works proprietors and to forward with the bills of lading.

3. The remuneration of the selling agents shall be a commission of 1 per cent. in sales ex ship, and of 2 per cent. on the other sales: this commission shall cover *del credere*.

4. The selling agent may sell either ex ship or ex store, with a warranty within thirty days after the importing vessel has completed discharge that the meat is sound as per "A1" clause in ordinary insurance policies. The meat shall be sold on freezing-works grade certificate without recourse against the sellers.

5. The selling agents shall sell the meat in the same manner in which it has customarily been sold, so that it shall, as far as possible, pass through the ordinary channels and in usual quantities.

6. If a selling agent, in addition to selling on commission, has been in the habit of buying meat on his own account for subsequent resale, either wholesale or through his own retail shops, he may sell to himself at the market price quantities proportional to those which he has been in the habit of buying, but he shall not receive any commission on such sales.

7. The selling agents shall disclose confidentially to Sir Thomas Robinson the names of the buyers in every case in which one hundred or more carcasses of lamb or mutton or twenty-five quarters of beef are sold to one buyer. In the case of sales of small quantities the selling agents shall, if required, place their books at the disposal of the Board of Trade in order that the buyers' names may be ascertained.

8. Buyers to whom meat is sold by the selling agents of the Board of Trade shall purchase subject to the express condition that they shall resell only to *bona fide* retailers. The buyers shall, if required, place their books at the disposal of the Board of Trade in order that their adherence to this regulation may be tested.

9. The Incorporated Society of Meat-importers will publish regularly in their periodical lists particulars of the prices at which meat is from time to time sold on behalf of the Board of Trade.

10. If it is shown to the Board of Trade that any selling agent has contravened the foregoing regulations, or has given undue preference to any buyer either under Regulations 5 and 6 or otherwise, or has made himself a party to any *pro forma* sales for the purpose of avoiding the foregoing regulations, he may, without prejudice to any other action which the Board may decide to take, be struck off the list of selling agents. If any buyer is proved to have contravened the foregoing regulations or has made himself a party to any *pro forma* sales for the purpose of avoiding them, he may, if the Board of Trade so directs, be refused supplies in future.

11. The selling agents shall forward to the Board of Trade account sales immediately after the sale of the meat, and shall remit to the Board the proceeds of sales as and when due.

Now, it is very significant that clause 7 of the regulations allows for the big meat-buyers to submit their sales to Sir Thomas Robinson.

28. You say that Sir Thomas Robinson is one of the largest registered shareholders in the shipping ring: what evidence have you got of that?—I have here a certified extract from the company's registration office in London of the annual return of the Federal Steam Navigation Company (Limited) made up to the 30th June, 1914, showing six shareholders as the owners of that company, and Sir Thomas Robinson is the first one on the list. It does not state how many shares are held. The shareholders are as follows: Robinson, Sir Thomas Bilbe; Hughes, Allan; New Zealand Shipping Company (Limited); Laing, Warrington; Hayeroff, George Tolman; New Zealand Shipping Company (Limited). I also desire to produce a copy of the list of shareholders of Birt and Co., extracted from the company's register in Sydney. The list is as follows:—

LIST OF MEMBERS OF BIRT AND CO. (LIMITED), ON THE 9TH SEPTEMBER, 1915, AS PER LIST FILED IN COMPANIES OFFICE ON THE 9TH SEPTEMBER, 1915.

	Number of Shares.	Amount Paid or deemed to be Paid. £
John Rogerson Anderson, Leadenhall Street, London, shipowner	2,875	2,875
Edmund Charles Beckett, Bridge Street, Sydney, merchant	100	100
Birt, Potter, and Hughes (Limited), 2 Fenchurch Avenue, London, merchants ..	21,011	21,011
Edward Owen Cox, 4 Bridge Street, Sydney	600	600
Oliver Bruce Trinder, 4 Fenchurch Avenue, London, shipowner	959	959
William Henry Trinder, 27 Leadenhall Street, London, shipowner	959	959
Arnold Anderson, 27 Leadenhall Street, London, shipowner	959	959
Walter John Gwyn, Billiter Street, London, shipowner	2,875	2,875
Robert Smith, 2 O'Connell Street, Sydney, solicitor	2	2
Federal Steam Navigation Company (Limited), 2 Fenchurch Avenue, London, ship- owners	2,600	2,600
Carolina Francesia Bethell, Surrey, England	2,877	2,877
Roy Wilson Potter, 4 Bridge Street, Sydney, merchant	100	100
John Reginald Barter, 4 Bridge Street, Sydney, merchant	100	100
George Hurst, 4 Bridge Street, Sydney, accountant	100	100
Charles John Cowan, 138 Leadenhall Street, London, merchant, and John Wilson Potter, 2 Fenchurch Avenue, London (jointly)	1,000	1,000

Messrs. Frederick Beckett Birt, John Wilson Potter, and Allan Hughes disposed of 1,000 shares jointly held by them during the preceding year. The transfer was registered on the 13th May, 1915.