

I quote that to show that the Federal Steam Navigation Company, of which Sir Thomas Robinson is a shareholder, is also a shareholder in this concern of Birt and Co., and that Birt, Potter, and Hughes, of London, hold the bulk of the shares of Birt and Co.

29. *Mr. Pearce.*] How are Birt and Co. connected with the Meat Trust?—Birt and Co. are the Australian agents for Armour and Co. The New Zealand agents for Birt and Co. are J. G. Ward and Co., of Invercargill. They carry on the Ocean Beach works. This is seen by Birt and Co.'s advertisement in the *Pastoralists' Review*. [*Vide Exhibit 22.*]

30. The evidence we had the other day was that Armour and Co. have no works, practically?—I understand Birt and Co. have leased the Ocean Beach works, and Armour and Co. are supposed to have secured rights over Borthwick and Co.'s works.

WEDNESDAY, 22ND AUGUST, 1917.

WILLIAM DOUGLAS LYSNAR further examined. (No. 11A.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You have already made your statement to the Committee, and the members of the Committee now propose to ask you certain questions in order to clear up various matters?—Yes.

2. *Mr. Pearce.*] In this statement of yours, Mr. Lysnar, you said the price quoted for meat at Home was 2s. per pound?—Yes.

3. What do you mean by that—that the carcasses have been selling at that?—No; 2s. per pound for the prime quality. That is the cable that came out in May last. In fact, I have a copy of the cable here. It is a Press cable, which I think you can take as fairly authentic.

4. Then, in your statement you make a number of remarks in regard to the profits of the Meat Trust: have you any copies of the balance-sheets to prove that?—No, nothing but data from official sources. I quoted the *Chicago Stock Journal*.

5. A newspaper report—that is the only evidence you have?—Yes, that is the only evidence I have, but coming from the official journals of the United States.

6. You then give a lot of figures in your statement in connection with the quantities of meat, showing that our meat in Smithfield has depreciated some 78 per cent. in amount?—Yes.

7. Trying to show that we can probably control the market: is not that misleading the Committee?—I do not suggest we can control the market—it is only showing our strength on that market; and I can produce the official report by Mr. Justice Street in which those figures I have quoted are contained.

8. I am only suggesting to you that the Smithfield Market does not represent the whole of the meat trade of England?—No, but it represents all the surplus-meat trade of the world, which I suggest is important to the Committee.

9. The point I want to clear up is that it does not represent the actual supply. The Australian supply represents only about 16 per cent. of the meat that is consumed in England, 70 per cent. is British-grown, and the balance is American and Australian?—Yes, of the total consumed, but when you come to the total imported that is an important point.

10. But this is not imported: you have 21 per cent. in the United Kingdom, the balance is imported, leaving only 30 per cent.?—The position is this: the great bulk of the meat produced in England has its vent for consumption as it is killed. The surplus goes on to the Smithfield Market—it is the surplus that is required. What meat is killed in Liverpool is used there, and the balance goes to Smithfield. What is not sold in any part of England for immediate consumption is sent to Smithfield and there sold.

11. I only desire to draw attention to the fact that the figures you have quoted might be misleading?—Of course you have to bear in mind that our proportion of the mutton and lamb imported was 64 per cent. of the total imported from the world during last year.

12. You quoted a lot of figures in your statement about the arrangements in regard to the releasing of our meat at Home, suggesting, I thought, that the Meat Trust had something to do with that: is it not a fact that the arrangement arrived at between the New Zealand Government and the Home Government, so far as the price is concerned of the released meat, ensures that it is entirely in the hands of the Home Government?—That is so; but there is something underlying—there is more in this matter than meets the eye. The arrangement you speak of was made between the Board of Trade and the New Zealand Government. The Board of Trade is the reflex of the big meat and mercantile firms in England, more so than of the consumers in England, and that is where we get the trouble.

13. That is your opinion—you have no proof of that?—In both my visits to the Old Country—and I think you can get no better proof, and no Committee should ask for better proof, than the report I have produced in regard to the Board of Trade, which shows that they are deliberately colouring up their statements in order to mislead the position.

14. If you were told that we had evidence that only 1½ per cent. of our meat was handed over to the Meat Trust, would you believe that?—No, I would not. When at Home I discussed the position with Sir Thomas Mackenzie, and I said to him, "My experience here in London has prompted me to give you this advice: to believe nothing you are told about meat or shipping in England unless you verify it." I made that statement in the presence of one of his own officers and one representative of the Port of London Authority. I told Sir Thomas Mackenzie that he could not live in London long without questioning them; and that very day three statements were made to Sir Thomas Mackenzie, two of which were absolutely misleading and incorrect, which I corrected. I proved to Sir Thomas Mackenzie's satisfaction that they were wrong. I considered the matter so important and so serious that I reduced the circumstances to writing next day, and hold his acknowledgment of this.