

31. Are you conversant with the book-keeping system of your company?—Yes.

32. Where do you show in your books the rebates that you give to the various firms—in the ledger accounts of those firms? Take, for instance, Sims, Cooper, and Co.'s account?—No, it would not necessarily go into the various companies' accounts.

33. Does it or does it not?—No, it would go straight into an impersonal account.

34. Is there any reason for that?—There is no particular reason for it, but I should say that would be the ordinary system of book-keeping.

35. Of course it must go somewhere—into some account?—Yes.

36. Would it go into the slaughtering charges account?—It depends how you named your accounts, for slaughtering or freezing.

37. Well, it goes to freezing or goes to slaughtering?—Yes, it depends on what you call your accounts.

38. We have information that your company has special arrangements with Sims, Cooper, and Co. in regard to rebates, and that you give them larger rebates than you give to other firms?—No, I would deny that. Of course, we might do it on a sliding scale, with others.

39. Do you do it on a sliding scale?—We have not been allowing anything—we have done so little in that line.

40. Have you arranged with Sims, Cooper, and Co. for rebates on a sliding scale?—We have made a general arrangement to that effect.

41. With whom?—With several firms.

42. Will you name the firms you have made such arrangement with?—Sims, Cooper, and Co., Mellsop, Eliot and Co., and A. L. Joseph and Co.

43. That is now Armour and Co.?—Yes; and Nevanas and Co.

44. Could you give the Committee the scale of that rebate?—It was, roughly—10,000, 2½ per cent.; 25,000, 3¾ per cent.; 50,000, 5 per cent., off the freezing-charges.

45. Would that give the large purchaser a considerable advantage in the purchasing-market as against the small purchaser?—For a purchasing concern it would not make very much difference.

46. It would not enable a large dealer to go out and give larger prices than the small man?—The whole thing would not amount to more than 2d. per head, I suppose.

47. Directly or indirectly, have you given any firm a larger percentage than that?—No.

48. You speak positively on that?—Yes, I think I am quite safe in saying that we have not departed from that.

49. And it would be possible from the books of your company to ascertain exactly what Sims, Cooper, and Co. had had in the way of rebates, would it?—I suppose it would be.

50. Would it or would it not—or is it so lost that it is just in this impersonal account that you could not say whether it is Sims, Cooper, and Co.'s or somebody else's?—I have no doubt it could be traced.

51. Have you been approached by any firms with the object of negotiating for the purchase of your works?—No, not that I am aware of. I believe there was a suggestion before I went up there—practically before the works were built.

52. Do you know on whose account?—No. I do not think there was very much in it. There was no suggestion of selling the works.

53. The rebate arrangements made with Sims, Cooper, and Co. were made with you?—Yes, practically.

54. With yourself and Mr. Sims?—I do not remember which member of the firm it was.

55. But with yourself and one of the members of the firm?—Yes.

56. Referring back to the Canterbury works, can you tell the Committee anything about rebates in connection with the company you were managing there?—No, I had nothing to do with that.

57. Speaking of the trade generally, do you consider that any of the large companies in New Zealand are encouraging large operators by giving large rebates?—I think probably that is so.

58. Do you say that the giving of large rebates to large operators should be stopped, if possible, in the interests of the trade?—If it could be stopped I dare say it might do good.

59. But do you think if it could be done it would be material in the interests of the trade to stop the giving of large rebates?—Yes, it would certainly be in the interests of the smaller companies.

60. And of the smaller buyers?—Yes. I do not know that it would make much difference.

61. It would depend upon the extent of the rebate?—Yes.

62. Do you consider all companies should be compelled in their books to clearly show the rebates made to all firms, so as to keep a check on what is being done?—I do not think there would be anything gained by that.

63. Do you not think one ought to be able to ascertain, in the interests of the trade, what rebates are being given by each company?—Who would ascertain?

64. The Government, if necessary. Do you think that would help things on at all?—I do not think it would.

65. What object could the companies have in concealing in their books in any way the rebates given if such a state of affairs obtained?—Well, I suppose each company is looking to get a turnover and get the business.

66. *Mr. Scott.* What is the primary object in giving rebates at all?—I suppose it is a custom that has grown up to keep the works busy.

67. Then if the rebates are all on an equal scale there can be no advantage in it?—No, that is probable.