

121. You find that the farmers would rather do business with the exporters than freeze on their own account?—Yes, practically every time. I suppose it is only natural if the net result is going to be the same. I suppose farmers would say, "I can sell my stuff and get the money this week, but I may have to wait a month, or more if I kill for myself."

122. There are no particular firms they wish to send to at the other end?—In a very few instances—some do.

123. Therefore there is a lot of free meat which can be operated on by yourself or at the suggestion of the big export buyers?—Yes.

124. *Mr. Reed.*] How many freezing-works are there in Hawke's Bay?—Four—the North British, Tomoana, Hawke's Bay, and Pakipaki.

125. When is this rebate ascertained—is it an arrangement before the killing is started, or is it a payment after the end of the season?—I should say at the end of the season in most cases.

126. Then with the large buyers they do not know what rebate they are going to get till the end of the season?—No, not certain.

127. And no arrangement is made beforehand?—Not definitely. It would depend on their quantities.

128. And no arrangement is made beforehand for the customer to put a certain amount through your works?—No, we have not made any arrangement like that.

129. Have you made any arrangements for space?—No. We do not book up space ahead. I rarely book anything more than killing a month ahead, at any rate.

130. Do other companies in Hawke's Bay book space ahead?—I could not say. Borthwick and Co. practically only handle their own stuff, and the North British Company freeze some clients' stuff, but I think they buy the greater portion.

131. How do your company's profits compare with last year?—Roughly, about the same.

132. In your first year did you make a profit?—Yes, we made a small profit—I think about £5,000.

133. And, roughly, what would have been your profits during the other years?—£13,000 and £14,500.

134. You did not suffer last year?—No, our shareholders have been very loyal to us all through, and most of them have killed on their own account.

135. What was the exact proportion Sims, Cooper, and Co. put through your works last year?—It would not be more than 10 per cent., I think.

136. And you say they had no arrangement for space in anticipation?—No.

137. Never more than from month to month?—No, they never had any space a month ahead.

138. And they got no more rebate than 5 per cent.?—No.

139. Did any other company in Hawke's Bay freeze for Sims, Cooper, and Co.?—Oh, yes. I think Nelson Bros. do a good deal for them.

140. Do you think the Government control of railways is a safeguard against the Meat Trust in this country?—Only partially.

141. It is a step in the direction of a safeguard, is it?—I should say so.

142. Would the State control or the local control of shipping also be a step in the same direction?—Yes, I should say so.

143. Would not the ownership of all freezing-works locally as against outside ownership be a step in the direction of safeguarding the country against the operations of the Meat Trust?—I should say it would.

144. Then would you recommend legislation prohibiting the ownership of freezing-works other than locally as a step towards guarding the country against the operations of the Meat Trust?—What do you mean by "locally owned"?

145. New Zealand capital only in the works?—What about the works that are already here?

146. An arrangement would be made by which they would be taken over?—I should then say that would be a considerable check on the American Meat Trust, because if they have trains and their own works, or an interest in works, they can handle more cheaply and compete more freely against other exporters.

147. Then I understand from your former answers that Sims, Cooper, and Co. have not been taking stock out of the Hawke's Bay District, but have been buying and freezing locally?—They have taken stock out of the lower end of the district.

148. Where it was more handy to your works and Nelson Bros.' works they preferred to freeze through you instead of taking the stock to the Imlay works?—Hawke's Bay was the handier of the two, at least as far as Dannevirke. They have been railing stuff to Wanganui, and it has not always been to the nearest works. They have railed stuff at least as far as Takapau to the other coast, whereas it would have been very much handier to Hawke's Bay as far as distance was concerned.

149. *Mr. Anstey.*] Does your company buy any meat at all?—Some—not a great deal.

150. What is the proportion as compared with what is frozen on the premises?—Not more than 5 per cent., I should think.

151. You say there are three rival freezing companies in Hawke's Bay: are they all proprietary concerns?—Pakipaki is Borthwick and Co.'s, the Tomoana works is Nelson Bros. I do not know what you call that, but there are some farmer shareholders in it, and the same with the North British.

152. Their operations are chiefly that of buying companies?—Tomoana works do a good deal of buying, and also do a good deal for exporters and clients.

153. Do you find these buying companies are attracting the trade away from farmer shippers, and discouraging the farmers to ship on their own account?—I do not know that that makes any difference. No, I think the only thing to discourage the farmers from shipping is the price they can get on the farm.