

281. And in the case of your company you have put up very extensive works at Wanganui?—Yes.

282. Can your company handle the meat cheaper than would be the case with smaller companies?—Undoubtedly.

283. You would say that the bigger and the more complete the works, if you can get the supply of stock, you can handle it cheaper than the smaller companies?—I do not think there is any question about it. It depends upon the management, because one capable man could manage the whole lot, and we have got one head office: it is all under one direction and one control.

284. That places you in a better position in regard to operating than is the case with the small freezing companies?—Yes, of course, it does.

285. As far as the meat industry is concerned, the bigger the works and the fewer of them the better it would be for the industry?—Yes, much better.

286. In regard to the meat you hold in your works at the present time on behalf of the farmers, do you advance money to them on the meat?—No, not as a rule. We do not do that as part of our business, and we have never done it. They must go to their agents or firms.

287. You say you do a good deal of farmers' business?—Yes, but that is more buying direct.

288. Do you have much meat in your works for the farmers to be sold to the Government?—No, very little farmers' meat. There is very little down South that has come in from the farmers. Most of it has come in from the buyers.

289. *Mr. Anderson.*] Regarding this visit of Mr. Murray's to Chicago, can you tell the Committee definitely that Mr. Murray did not go there with the intention of getting financial or any other support from the American Meat Trust people for the erection of any works or for the assistance of the business in any way whatever—can you say that without any reservation?—I tell you most distinctly and most decidedly that he did not go for that purpose, nor did he get any.

290. Can you give an unreserved answer to this question: that your company has not been assisted in any way at all by any British meat trust operating on the London market, either at Imlay or at any of your other works?—Yes.

291. And all your capital is local capital?—Yes.

292. *Mr. Witty.*] I understood you to say that the Americans could not operate very much here?—Yes, that is my personal opinion.

293. Do you not think they are getting a very big footing—take, for instance, Armour and Co., and Sims, Cooper, and Co., who are freezing at your company's works and at others?—You must remember that they are in competition with us.

294. But by their operations on such a large scale may they not dominate the various works eventually by being able to say to you people, "If you do not freeze our stock we will put up our own works"?—Yes, of course, that is the weak point; that is where I would like to see the Government come in. We could not compete against the American companies with their enormous capital.

295. Then do you not think that if the whole of the companies joined together and said they are not going to freeze for them, seeing that they are in their initial stage, that they would not have the same chance of dominating as they have at present or will have eventually?—Well, I must tell you plainly that I do not like that attitude at all. You can believe me, it is an international question, and at present America is our ally. Before the war commenced was not the Prime Minister himself trying to get markets in America for our produce? and here we are going to turn round and say after the war is over, "Get out—we are going to shut you out; we are going to have nothing to do with you."

296. *Mr. Reed.*] It is only the trust we are speaking of?—But it comes back to the international question.

297. *Mr. Witty.*] Would it not be better to say, "If you are coming in, well, open your own works and do business as the American Trust?" Every one would then know whether they were selling their stock to American firms or whether it was going through your company?—If they put up their own works. One gentleman said, "We know what the farmers are—we will sell to them."

298. I think you said you gave no secret rebates?—Yes.

299. But you do give rebates?—Yes.

300. It has been stated by some witness that all is secret and nothing is in writing?—Yes.

301. Would you mind the Chairman of this Committee seeing one or two of those agreements?—Certainly not; that is what I would like.

302. Clarkson and Co. are not freezing so much as they did previously, are they?—No.

303. Are they still buying for your company?—No; they do not buy for our company.

304. They used to so originally, did they not?—That was in Gilbert Anderson and Co.'s time, but they have never bought since I have had anything to do with the company.

305. Your company has received the largest sum of any from the Imperial Government: do you nominate your meat at the other end?—Not that I know of. That is left entirely to Mr. Boyes, the London manager. We send all our stuff to him.

306. You have shops in London, have you not?—No, we have not.

307. Everything is nominated either to Mr. Boyes or by him?—Yes, he has the control.

308. Then he will have the power of nominating to certain people?—I suppose he has. I am not too clear as to the dealings at the other end.

309. If you have agents at Home, and the meat is nominated to them, do you get any benefit between the wholesaler and the retailer?—No; all we get is the 2 per cent. that is allowed to our London agent if there is any surplus meat.

310. You get nothing between the wholesale and retail price?—No, only the 2 per cent.