

311. It has been asked why your company changed its name?—Well, perhaps it was a sentimental reason. I myself did not like the name of the Christchurch Meat Company—it seemed more like a butcher's shop; and the reasons for changing the name of the company were fully put forth in a circular that was issued at the time.

312. *Mr. Scott.*] Do you think the time has arrived when the Government should take some action to prevent the operation of trusts in New Zealand, it being assumed that the trusts are operating?—Yes, I do; but I think it will be better to leave it till after the war. They cannot do anything now, but it is a question that does require Government action.

313. Can you indicate to the Committee any direction in which legislation would be necessary, and on what lines?—Not any further than I have already done. They should legislate to prevent the American companies controlling any capital or interest in the freezing-works.

314. Prevent foreign capital coming in?—Yes; but that might be awkward, and we had better wait until after the war.

315. Do you think some action in conjunction with the Home Government would be necessary?—There would have to be something done in conjunction with the Home Government—that is absolutely necessary. There is no use doing it only at one end.

316. And for them to control the meat until it reached the consumer?—That is a big order. I do not know that with forty million people they could do that.

317. *The Chairman.*] Has there been any suggestion of any kind that your company should sell out your business or transfer it to any other undertaking—has there been any negotiations at all?—No.

318. Have you been approached by any one to purchase the business?—No.

319. Not by any firms in America?—No, by no one at all.

320. Then during Mr. Murray's stay in America were there any discussions or negotiations of any kind on that point reported to you?—No, nothing was reported to me of that kind. I have faith and trust in my general manager, and I think nothing like that could have gone on.

321. *Mr. Pearce.*] What induced you to put up those very large works in Wanganui?—Simply because our trade in the South Island was principally lamb. We wanted mutton and beef to complete it, and there seemed to be an opening.

322. Did you want to ship it, or sell it, or what?—The trade in the South Island is principally lamb.

323. But in what way has it affected your company—you have not shipped it Home?—No, but you have an all-round business and an all-round commodity to sell.

324. Where do you sell your stuff in London?—Through our London agent; but if he has only lamb to sell he is tied up.

325. Is it not a fact that when you put the works up you were guaranteed that the works would be kept full by an outside firm?—No, not that I know of. We have no such guarantee.

326. I am alluding to Sims, Cooper, and Co.: I think you freeze their stuff there?—But there is no guarantee. They took it for granted that they were not going to be allowed to kill anywhere else.

327. Would you be surprised to hear that Mr. Murray, your general manager, said he did have a guarantee to support your works?—Did he? There is a difference between supporting the works and a guarantee to supply.

328. Did Sims, Cooper, and Co. take up any shares in your company when you built those works?—No, those were debentures—not share capital.

329. I thought there was some of each offered?—No. To build further stores we are now calling up the unpaid capital. I could not say if they took up any debentures or not—they may have taken up some—but I am going to forward to the Committee a list of the debenture-holders.

330. You have two lots of buyers out—one set for the New Zealand Refrigerating Company and one set for Sims, Cooper, and Co., who profess to buy for those works?—We have our own buyers, and Sims, Cooper, and Co. have theirs.

331. Can you tell the Committee whether you have any arrangement with Sims, Cooper, and Co. as regards competition between their buyers and your own buyers—both buying for the same works?—No. Of course, in all buying companies the price is fixed according to the commandeered price and the price of the offal, is it not? That is a basis to go on. If our buyers know that the meat is coming into our works, naturally the competition is not going to be quite as strong as in the case where the meat is going past our works. Is that not business? It is not Sims, Cooper, and Co. particularly, but any one who is putting stock into our works.

332. Have you any knowledge of meat which has been bought by your own buyers or the buyers of Sims, Cooper, and Co. at considerably over the commandeered price?—I can say that meat has been bought at over the commandeered price.

333. Would that be by your own buyers or the buyers of Sims, Cooper, and Co.?—I should think both.

334. *Mr. T. A. H. Field.*] I understand you to say that your company freezes for farmers?—Yes.

335. If anybody said that you practically shut out the farmers by saying that your works are full, what would you say?—I would say it was an absolute falsehood.

336. *Mr. Reed.*] Might it not be, without being a falsehood, that you had the space allotted and it would not then be available?—I do not think so.

337. You said it was an absolute falsehood; but the position might be that your works were not absolutely full, but that the space was allotted?—I took it that the question was that we shut out the farmers.

338. What is the cost of the extra storage you are putting up?—We estimate that it will probably run into £100,000 if we can get the material.

339. How much increased capital are you raising?—I think, about £163,000.