

Refrigerating Company has been to be more or less a freezing company—they have bought only to ensure that their own works would be supplied up to their full capacity, and that they would prefer that exporters would put so much meat into their works as to allow them to run the business purely as a freezing company; and I think they looked to Sims-Cooper to keep their works at Wanganui employed.

155. Do you think they would have erected these works but for this arrangement with Sims-Cooper?—No, I do not think so.

*Mr. Pearce:* But the company have as many buyers out as Sims-Cooper have; I know this as a fact.

156. *The Chairman.*] You do not think these works would have gone up except for this arrangement?—I do not think the company would have put them there unless they were assured of big supplies of stock from some firm.

157. And the erection of these works has enabled Sims-Cooper to operate as far north as Whakatane?—It has enabled them to increase their operations in the North Island, where they had been restricted before.

158. We have been told that because of the operations of Sims-Cooper various small companies have practically had to close down?—I presume this refers to Taihape. I do not know much about those works, because we do not buy for them, but they seem to be in a hot corner, with the Auckland competition on the one side and the Wanganui competition on the other. Of course, the company owing the Taihape works are not a buying company, and they rely wholly on other people to put stock into the works for freezing.

159. Do you not think the operations of Sims-Cooper indicate an intention of getting control in that district even at a loss?—I would not say “of obtaining control.”

160. Well, of obtaining a very strong control?—Yes, certainly.

161. If they extended their operations throughout New Zealand they, or any trust—it would not be long before they had control?—That is so.

162. Following that there would be small prices to the producer?—Yes, that is the way trusts work. They might proceed by restricting output, and restriction of output is worse than low prices. They restricted output, as you know, in Argentine.

163. You have no knowledge of any rebates being granted to Sims-Cooper?—No, we have only surmised that.

164. How do you show rebates in your company—are they shown in the ledger accounts of the people or firms who get the rebates?—I do not know—I am not in close touch with the book-keeping part of our business—but I know they are shown in our own annual balances.

165. *Mr. Pearce.*] Since the war shipping has been handled by the Government, but prior to the war did you not always ship through one company?—Not exactly prior to the war. Some years ago we worked only through the New Zealand Shipping Company—we had a contract with them. Later we had a contract also with the Shaw-Savill and the Federal companies.

166. None of these companies have any interest in your business?—No. The reason why we had a contract with only one company was that we had then only two works, and it was not necessary for us to have a contract with more than one company. Afterwards all the exporting companies had contracts with the two shipping companies.

167. You had a special freight with the one company?—No, we paid the same freight as everybody else.

168. No interest in your firm is held by the shipping companies?—No, none whatever.

169. Your firm knows as well as anybody what has occurred in South America: I think you said that your firm had either been bought out or squeezed out?—Yes. I do not think we ever had works there, but we were interested in works there; at any rate, we got supplies from there, but I am not certain how. It was long before my time in the company.

170. Have you discussed the question as to whether this same process will not squeeze you out of New Zealand?—Yes, we have.

171. What is your opinion on that?—You want my opinion as to that?

172. Your firm's opinion?—They are thoroughly against the trust coming here.

173. Do you anticipate being crushed out?—Yes, we do.

174. You have acknowledged in your evidence that they have increased prices to such a level that you have made a loss in a large district?—I did not put that down to the trust.

175. But if it is continued for two or three years will not that force you out of business?—Yes, that may be so. It is quite true that we are afraid of the trust.

176. If that is so what do you suggest to prevent it from operating in New Zealand?—We have not been able to suggest anything tangible so far.

177. You are prepared to continue the contest and lose money?—No; but we are not putting it down to the trust since the war started—we do not consider we have felt the trust yet.

178. I think your evidence showed that Sims-Cooper are making you lose money?—Yes; but we do not say they are the trust.

179. *The Chairman.*] They are big operators then, and that is the same thing?—Oh, no, it is not the same thing.

180. *Mr. Pearce.*] Do they not send all their meat to Swift's?—No, they do not. As a matter of fact we buy a lot of meat from Sims-Cooper ourselves in England. We sell about two million carcasses a year, and we buy ourselves here only about a million carcasses. We buy meat from Sims-Cooper, the New Zealand Refrigerating Company, Clarkson's, and other firms. Sims-Cooper were certainly selling a lot of meat to Swift's, but I do not say for a moment that Sims-Cooper are the trust.

181. *The Chairman.*] You have a letter which I understand you are willing to give in evidence?—Yes, I have here a letter of date 13th March, 1914, from a gentleman who is a high