

19. Where would these rebates appear in your books?—They are just “come-backs,” as it were. It is generally understood that these exporters in order to live have to get some concession on account of the quantity they handle, or on the amount of business done.

20. If we wanted to get full details of these rebates, could we ascertain them from your books?—Yes, they could be ascertained.

21. Do you get special concessions as against the small men, enabling you to give bigger prices for stock?—I do not suppose for a moment that the concession would be large enough to make any difference in the price that could be paid for stock. There is not the margin in the freezing business. You could not give a man a big enough concession on the freezing-charges to give him such a pull.

22. Do you know whether Sims-Cooper have been buying stock in this Island at prices which would represent a loss to them?—I do not think so, but until you get their balance-sheet you cannot say—you can only judge by results.

22A. The Christchurch Meat Company put out a circular the other day to their shareholders, and they say to their shareholders, “We have done very well” or something to that effect, and yet you say that the other companies say that they have not done well?—As a business man I would look into the causes of that, whether it is a question of bad management or what it is. That is the whole thing: it is a question of efficiency. You take Sims-Cooper’s position in the trade in New Zealand—they have nothing in bricks and mortar—

23. They have approached no company here with the idea of obtaining any of their works?—That is information I cannot give.

24. Mr. Sims might be able to give it?—Yes.

25. *Mr. Anderson.*] You said, I understood, that your fellmongery-works had been closed down owing to the action of the Requisitions Committee?—Yes.

26. Were any other fellmongery-works closed down in Christchurch in the same way?—As far as I know we are the only one.

27. Is it not a fact that the institutions in which Mr. Hill is concerned have not been closed down?—Yes, his works are still going.

28. His works are large ones?—Yes.

29. Is it not a fact that Mr. Hill took a prominent part in the negotiations with the Government and the Requisitions Committee?—I believe so. When the negotiations were going on the Woolston Tanneries were not asked about them in any way; we were side-tracked; nobody took any notice of us at all.

30. Is the closing-down of these works prejudicial to the farmers in this district?—No, I would not say that.

31. Is the concentration of the scouring and pelt work in fewer hands prejudicial to the interests of the farmers?—It cannot be prejudicial to the farmers, because the Government come along and give a certain price. The question is whether the Government are getting an even deal.

32. In your opinion are the Government getting an even deal?—My opinion is that they are not.

33. Do you think that too big a price is being paid for preparing these pelts?—No, the prices for pickling the pelts are too small.

34. I am talking about turning out everything?—I can say that the price for slipping wool is, in my opinion, a big price.

35. Bigger than it would be in open competition?—Well, the question is whether a man is to make a profit at all. I think a man is entitled to a profit. While they were getting a good price for slipping they did not get enough for pickling. I should say that the two balance one another.

36. In your opinion the farmer has not been prejudicially affected by the action of the Requisitions Committee?—I do not think so. I am not going to say that the prices are on a parity with the wool prices. I cannot say how the fellmongery scheme and the commandeering of wool works out. There are, as you know, two schemes, one for the buying of sheep-skins and the other for buying the wool.

37. In your opinion is the Government prejudicially affected?—My opinion is that they are.

38. *Mr. Scott.*] You mentioned the Meat Trust several times in your evidence: do you think that the American Meat Trust is operating in New Zealand, or representatives of the trust?—Of course, we have got Armour’s. They do not disguise it; but Armour’s as they are now—well, as far as Sims-Cooper are concerned, they do not bother about them.

39. As they are at present?—That is as far as I know. They only start level with anybody else, buying in the open market. If they had control of the shipping and the freezing-space it would be another matter, but at present they are only buying. I am only giving you my ideas about them; they are these: that in a very large organization such as theirs, while you gain in having control of money you lose in administration.

40. But if your firm continues expanding as it has done in the past few years do you not think you will be in the same position as Armour’s in regard to being a large concern?—As I said before, Sims-Cooper have nothing in bricks and mortar, and they might get out at any time. They may be a large concern, but a large concern properly run gives the best results and the best service. A monopoly gives the best service if it is honestly run for that matter, but there cannot be a monopoly in the meat trade in New Zealand—the competition is too keen. There is always a man waiting to cut into the meat trade if things are down.

41. Is your company interested in any of the meat-works in New Zealand?—Not to my knowledge.

42. Do you freeze with any companies?—Probably there are some companies that would not freeze for Sims-Cooper.