

60. I think you said that if this agitation goes on Sims-Cooper might have to transfer their operations elsewhere?—I do not think I said that exactly. What I wanted you to infer is that you cannot expect young men with active minds to sit still—they will go on with their business whether this country wants them or not. When I said that I was referring to the Woolston Tanneries. We can easily pack up our traps and go. I am not referring to the meat—that is Sims-Cooper's business.

61. In addition to the uneasiness about the capital of Sims-Cooper there is also a certain amount of uneasiness about the figures for their export from this country. We have here a return from the Imperial Supplies Department to show that they have exported £437,000 worth of meat from the Dominion. [*Vide Exhibit D.*] Would that be anything like the extent of their operations here?—I should say that that would be small.

62. It would be on the small side?—It is not a big thing to export £400,000 worth of meat. Here you have a little company like the Auckland Farmers' with £500,000, and Sims-Cooper have not done as much as that.

63. My point is that in reality their operations must have been very much larger than that, and that something must have been covered up in some way. Their operations must have amounted to many times that amount?—I do not know who gave those figures.

64. They are from the Government Supplies Department, and they show the amount paid to Sims-Cooper?—What I should say about the figures is that it would appear from the figures that Sims-Cooper had had a bad deal in the matter of shipping; that other companies had had more than their share, and that Sims-Cooper must have a lot of stuff still in the stores.

65. Of that side of the business—the allotments of space made to you—you know nothing?—No; but that is the inference that I would draw from these figures.

66. We have had it in evidence that Sims-Cooper in bargaining for rebates will have nothing done in writing; that the rebates are secret, and that nobody but the secretary of the company knows what they are—that even the chairman of directors does not know: do you know if there is anything in that?—I know that that will probably be correct. My knowledge of the firm of Sims-Cooper is that on principle they never put anything in writing. What they say is this: that if they have to make every arrangement watertight business is not worth doing. If they make an arrangement they always keep their side of it, and if the other man does not keep his bargain they just cut out the business. The only thing they put in writing is a memorandum to record absolutely what the arrangement was. If a man insisted on having something in writing they would give it to him, but they would never ask for anything in writing. That is the way they do their business. Their business is too large to bother about small things. They say that if you cannot do business on trust they need not do it at all, and it does not take long to find out who are the people they cannot do business with.

67. Are Sims, Cooper, and Co. dealing in store sheep at all?—I think they were dealing in stores some years ago. I do not know what they are doing at present.

68. Do they deal with wool and other New Zealand produce?—Of course, they would get their wool through slipping. Sometimes they would buy wool.

69. *Mr. T. A. H. Field.*] Do I understand you to say that you think American meat companies are operating in New Zealand?—I only said that Armour's had openly announced their presence.

70. Do you think that if the American trust is operating it will be a menace to the producers?—If they are operating surreptitiously I do not think that you need care a snap of the finger for them. If they get control of ships and freezing-works that is another thing.

71. It would be a menace to the producers if they did that?—Yes, if they did that and used their power. But you take the Union Company, for example. It is a big company and gives a very fine service. By reason of its size it has got a monopoly. This is from my point of view. Say any one started in opposition to the Union Company, in a small way, would the company reduce all its prices to squeeze out one man?

*Mr. Anstey:* They have done it.

72. *The Chairman.*] They have done it locally?—There must have been something in it. That is not the way we run our tannery. Some one may come to me and say, "So-and-so is selling under me." I say, "I do not care if they are. Do you think we are going to reduce all our prices to try and interfere with any one man?" We do not care what any man is doing. Things cost so-much to produce, and we have to make a profit on them. I do not think that any business man will knowingly sell at a loss. I know you hear about that sort of thing.

73. *Mr. Field.*] Sims, Cooper, and Co. have agencies in practically every district in New Zealand?—They have one at Palmerston, one at Timaru, one at Christchurch, and I think some agent in the Napier district.

74. You say that if that is all the business done by the firm, as shown by the return, you are surprised?—Yes, I am. Of course, this says "meat paid for."

75. You say that Sims, Cooper, and Co. have nothing in bricks and mortar?—No.

76. Have they ever offered to put up works or to help other people to put up works?—That is a question I said before I could not answer. I do not know anything about it. Mr. Sims will give you any evidence on that.

77. *Mr. Anstey.*] With regard to these figures, do you think that sum of £437,000 which is here stated to be the total money Sims, Cooper, and Co. have received for meat since the inception of the Government purchase scheme necessarily represents the whole of the money they have received for shipped meat? Is it possible that some of their meat is included in the amounts shipped through banks and freezing companies?—Here are figures put out by responsible people. They are figures prepared for a Government Department. I cannot say offhand if a mistake has been made. You have to assume the figures to be correct.