

108. You have no knowledge?—No.

109. That is quite satisfactory. I am not probing you with any antagonistic intention. We have had other evidence before, and you are here on behalf of Sims, Cooper, and Co. to clear these things up?—With regard to this question Mr. Sims will answer for himself. I think he will be surprised at the statement about Mr. Morgan. Of course, he has been associated with so many rumours.

110. Does this Committee understand that if it picks two independent members of the Committee, not connected with any freezing-works, you will prove to them through the managers of the Bank of New Zealand and the Bank of New South Wales that the money used by Sims, Cooper, and Co. does not come from American sources?—Every facility that they want will be given.

111. Can you tell us what is the capital of the London Produce Company?—No, I have not got the figures. If I made a guess it would be only guessing.

112. Is it large?—No, I do not think it is large; it is a small capital. It might be £10,000, or £20,000, or £100,000. I do not know what it is.

113. *Mr. Reed.*] Bowron Bros. got into financial difficulties with the Bank of New Zealand. You joined the board then?—Yes.

114. You joined the old board: for how long was it then run under the name of Bowron Bros.?—About eighteen months, or may be two years. I was put in there on behalf of the Bank of New Zealand.

115. When did Sims, Cooper, and Co. come into that?—When I joined the Board.

116. Were they on the board with you at the very first?—Yes. The condition was that the old board was removed. I was to go in there and take charge.

117. Were you not chairman of the old board for a time?—No; they moved out as soon as I came in.

118. And Sims, Cooper, and Co. then bought in?—Yes.

119. The money was secured from the Bank of New Zealand, was it not?—Yes. They had to buy qualifying shares.

120. How many shares did they take straight away to qualify?—I think altogether it was some thousands of shares.

121. How long have you known Mr. Sims and Mr. Cooper?—Since school days.

122. They were originally employees in the office of a freezing company?—Yes.

123. Then they struck out on their own as buyers?—Yes.

124. Were they financed by Weddel and Co. to begin with?—I cannot quite say. I do not think it would be Weddel and Co. Mr. Sims will tell you that.

125. Then they were more or less at a loose end, and were looking round for someone to finance them when they went Home and saw Gilbert Anderson?—I do not know anything about that. You mean, when one of them went Home to take charge?

126. No, he went Home looking for backing?—I do not remember it.

127. Do I understand from you that they are to-day financed locally through a local bank?—Yes.

128. Do I understand from you that the local bank is solely at their back outside their own resources?—As far as I know. I cannot see anything else for it.

129. The local bank is their only means of financing outside their own resources?—Yes.

130. The local bank looks to them solely?—Yes, absolutely.

131. Looks to them solely for their finance?—Yes.

132. They must have been very successful in their transactions to have got into the position they are in at the present time?—Of course, they have been successful.

133. Do you know that they were buying at a loss in the North Island last year?—Probably.

134. And they themselves have to stand the whole of that loss?—Rather. They have to bear any loss they make. If there is one fact I am positive about it is that; there is no question about that.

135. What bank is behind them?—The Bank of New Zealand and the Bank of New South Wales.

136. You said that we might call Mr. Molineaux?—Yes.

137. Can we call Mr. Callendar also?—I will take the responsibility of adding Mr. Callendar to Mr. Molineaux.

138. You say that you do not think the American Meat Trust will get a footing in New Zealand so long as freezing-works are locally owned and shipping is locally owned: would you advocate legislation compelling local ownership of freezing-works and a State interest in shipping?—Personally I do not care for State control in anything.

139. Say, an interest—a State interest on the same principle as was adopted in the case of the Bank of New Zealand?—Yes; if its effect was the same as with the Bank of New Zealand it would be a very fine thing for the country.

140. You would like legislation to prevent outside capital being put into New Zealand freezing-works as a safeguard?—I think that it would be advisable to have a safeguard. At present I cannot see any harm in anything that has happened here.

ANTHONY ROWLANDS sworn and examined. (No. 26.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What firm do you represent?—W. and R. Fletcher (New Zealand), Limited.

2. You are the manager?—Yes, the general manager for New Zealand.

3. This Committee has been set up to investigate the operations of any meat trusts in New Zealand. You are an expert in the trade, and the Committee would be obliged if in the first