

24. When you say they have control there do you mean that they have absolute control?—We understand so, of the frozen-meat markets, by reason of their imports from South America, and a certain amount of imports from Australia, and a certain proportion no doubt of the imports from this country.

25. I suppose a large proportion of our meat goes through British hands still?—A proportion of it—we do not know what proportion of it—that is one of the things we do not know and we cannot find out.

26. You know how the American companies worked in the Argentine and got control there?—Yes; they bought out the interests of British works in the Argentine.

27. We understand they have 70 per cent. of the trade there?—Yes, I understand so, quite.

28. And could get the rest if they chose?—I presume so.

29. You do not think there is danger of the same thing happening here?—There are a larger number of companies here, and I do not think there is the same danger of their obtaining the proportion of them that they did in the Argentine.

30. Are their operations increasing here?—We do not know. We do not know what their operations are.

31. You cannot tell us where Sims-Cooper get their capital?—No, I cannot. We freeze for Sims-Cooper. We do not know anything about them except that they nominate or consign in normal times all their meat to the London Produce Company.

32. You do not know where their capital comes from?—No. Equally so we do not know anything about Armour's. We know that they nominate to a certain firm in England, but not to Armour's.

33. The only evidence you have that the Americans are operating here is that Armour's have come here in their own name?—Yes.

34. We have no evidence that they operate from Armour's?—I see that they are registered here as a company with a very small capital.

35. You cannot give us any information about that at all—you cannot tell us whether they are connected with Armour and Co. of Chicago?—I do not know. I know that they do not nominate their meat to Armour and Co. of London.

36. You do not know anything beyond the fact that they have the same name—the name of Armour?—That is all, and that is all anybody knows as far as I have ever heard. It is good evidence that the Americans must have control of a proportion of the New Zealand meat, because it goes into their business there, and we do not know how it gets there or through which agents they get their meat. It is quite possible that the New Zealand agents do not know.

37. Do you know about Swift's operating here?—Nothing at all. Swift's name never appears anywhere.

38. Though you have suspicions?—No, we simply hear rumours.

39. You freeze for anybody that comes along?—Yes.

40. You allow rebates to large suppliers?—Yes.

41. What sort of rebates are they: are they on a sliding scale, or are they on a flat rate?—They are on a flat rate, in the neighbourhood of 5 per cent. Since the cost of working has gone up the rebates have been less, because we have not been able to offer so much.

42. Is it the wish of the company to go on buying, or would you prefer to confine the business simply to freezing on account of other people?—I think I should say that we prefer to freeze for clients, but we are willing to buy when we see that we have a chance of making anything out of it.

43. Has your company any complaints about shipping-space?—Oh, yes.

44. What complaints?—That we have not been able to get enough meat away to clear our stores and enable us to maintain the output on which the revenue of the company depends.

45. Have you any complaints about unfairness?—We have made complaints, but I do not know that we have alleged unfairness.

46. Have there been any instances when lamb was taken away when beef and wether mutton was available?—No, certainly not; quite the reverse. We have always shipped only beef and wethers, except in a few cases in which it was necessary to move the lamb and the ewes to get at the beef and wethers, with the result that our works are blocked with lambs and ewes, and we have actually had to refuse to receive beef and wethers later in the season. Our turnover for the year was greatly decreased because we could not get space to clear the works sufficiently to keep running.*

47. As to shipping, have you made any complaint to the Government as to shipping-charges? Do you think they are excessive for produce generally, and for meat in particular?—I do not think so—no. We think the freight on wool is very high, but I do not think I can give any good reason why the freights should not be high. We are told that the expenses of running the ships have increased, and all sorts of things, funds for different purposes have to be provided for out of the revenue from freight. I am not in a position to offer an opinion as to whether the freights are fair. We have made no protest on the subject.

48. You have never evolved any scheme in your own mind as to how the menace of the American Meat Trust might be dealt with if it becomes oppressive?—No.

49. *Dr. Newman.*] What is the name of the firm to whom Armour's consign in London?—They have changed their nominees once or twice. I cannot tell you the previous nominees, but the present ones are McLean and Laurenson, of Liverpool and London, and no other address.

* The reply to this question referred solely to our own works. We have no evidence concerning the works of other companies.—H.G.W.