

52. *Mr. Anstey.*] Do you think a firm such as Armour and Co. and other American firms have any advantage over the British or locally owned firms in regard to taxation?—Where, in New Zealand?

53. Yes?—No, I do not think so. I do not think Armour and Co. have any works in New Zealand.

54. But it is a question of taxing their income?—No, I do not know that.

55. *Mr. Pearce.*] You say you were the controller of Joseph and Co.'s meat before they sold the business to Armour and Co.?—I said I was a sort of banker for them.

56. Did you ship the meat?—We consigned it and sold it.

57. Are you acting in any way for Armour and Co. now?—No, not in any way whatever.

58. Did Mr. Kingdon make arrangements with you to buy Joseph and Co.'s business?—No; he made them with Mr. Foster, who was Mr. Joseph's son-in-law.

59. Could you give us any information in regard to Armour and Co.: what is Mr. Carney in the business?—I think Mr. Kingdon is general manager, and Mr. Carney is really the man who holds the shares on behalf of Armour and Co.

60. You said that Armour and Co. did not own works in New Zealand?—I question it, but I am not aware whether they have or not.

61. There is a pamphlet issued by them, in which they say they have works in New Zealand?—I do not know where they would be, except perhaps in the North.

62. Have you any knowledge as to whether the shipping companies here are combined?—No, I have no knowledge on that subject.

63. You seem to be of the opinion that, although you say these companies are trading here, they are not a menace to New Zealand in any way at present; but do you not know that in North America and South America they have got control by forcing up prices and then reducing the prices to the producer: do you not think the same danger exists here?—Of course there is a possibility of that. I suppose if they really wanted to get control and insisted on having control of our mutton they would make a fight for it, and if they did I suppose they would probably win.

64. If they paid a shilling a head more for our sheep, in a year or two they would probably kill the small companies?—Yes, certainly; but I wish to emphasize that I do not know of their doing so.

65. *Dr. Newman.*] You told the Committee that Swift and Co. were operating through the Christchurch Meat Company?—No; I said that the talk round the town is that the Christchurch Meat Company is taking care of Swift and Co.'s business. I take it that the whole desire of the meat companies is to have a large quantity of meat to sell in the Old Country to make it worth their while, and they probably find it cheaper to do it in that way than to come out in the open and buy it.

66. *Mr. Pearce.*] When you say that Swift and Co. are operating, I presume you mean Sims, Cooper, and Co.?—I say they are not operating openly. Mr. Sims has told others that they are out on their own and buying on their own account. They have a company at Home called the London Produce Company, and they deal through that company.

67. We have had evidence from Australia that they sold largely through Swift and Co.?—Yes, I think they do.

Sir GEORGE CLIFFORD, Bart., examined. (No. 13.)

1. *The Chairman.*] In what position do you appear before this Committee?—I am chairman of the Canterbury Frozen Meat Company.

2. You are aware of the subject with which this Committee is dealing—namely, the operations of the Meat Trust—and we should like to know if you have any statement to make?—Perhaps I had better state the position as to the nature of my company. The main function of this Committee, I understand, is to investigate the question of the trusts in relation to the meat trade.

3. Yes, that is so?—Well, the company I represent has no information to give on that subject. We are not buyers nor exporters of meat; we absolutely confine our business to converting live-stock into frozen carcasses, and therefore we have not been brought in contact with any meat trust. We are entirely an exporters' company. The company was founded by Mr. John Grigg, and the object was to keep an open door for the farmer, in order that he might not be exploited by the meat-exporters or the formation of any ring. We have adhered to that system right throughout. We freeze for anybody, whether a meat-exporter or not, but we are chiefly concerned to see that the farmer, in spite of all combinations, may have an open door for the purpose of freezing his produce before it is sent to Great Britain or elsewhere. We are not concerned with what happens to the meat after it leaves our works. That is the general principle on which the company was formed, and that principle has been scrupulously acted upon right throughout. We have not frozen any meat for export by ourselves, except one or two small experimental shipments for the purpose of increasing our knowledge of the business, and those shipments would not exceed a thousand sheep in the whole history of the company. Therefore I cannot see what information I can give you, but I can say this: that we have never been approached by any American concern with a view to entering into intimate relations with them.

4. *Mr. Witty.*] Not for purchases?—Not for purchases or for the export of meat. If anybody sends in meat to our works we freeze it for them if we have the space, but we have no dealing whatever with that meat after it leaves our works. I think that explains the position of my company quite distinctly, and it possibly explains the reason why we have not been approached by any combination of exporters to assist them in any designs they may have had, even if any such designs exist up to the present day.