5. *The Chairman.*] Have you any statement to make in reference to the trust?—I have no reason to suspect that there is any combination in New Zealand which can be called a trust. It depends, of course, upon what is the definition of a trust. If by a "trust" you mean a combination to depress prices in New Zealand in order that a profit may be made out of the inflated prices elsewhere, then I have seen nothing to indicate that any such combination as that exists here in New Zealand. It is possible that such a thing may exist without one having that knowledge, but, as I have said, we are perhaps the last company in New Zealand which would be approached in that way. However, I have no information of my own knowledge to give to the Committee, and I have no suspicion that anything of that sort exists, because, so far as I am able to see, the competition between the American buyers has been keen and hostile. With that preliminary statement I am now prepared to answer any questions that the members of the Committee may put to me.

6. *Mr. Pearce.*] You say that your company was started to prevent rings being formed: do you restrict yourselves entirely to freezing for farmers?—No; we freeze for anybody who will send in stock.

7. Might you not under those conditions be freezing for the ring or trust?—Certainly it is possible, but is not done consciously.

8. Is it not a fact that your company has been freezing for Armour and Co.?—We have been freezing for Armour and Co. just the same as we do for anybody else. We do not know they are in any trust, and they have not been asking us for any special conditions.

9. Do you not give any rebates?—Yes, the same rebate as is given to anybody else who does a certain amount of business.

10. If they freeze 100,000 sheep they get a certain rate, and if above that number they get a higher rate?—No, we have no graduated scale.

11. What is the rebate?—I would sooner not say, because I think that is not a fair question to ask.

12. I suppose you freeze for larger quantities on a lesser scale than you do for small quantities?—We give a discount, but not specially to any one firm.

13. Have you been approached by any firm with the object of buying your works?—No, not in any way.

14. You said just now that you were not aware of any combination to depress prices: are you aware of any combination which exists for the purpose of increasing prices?—No, I am not aware of any combination at all.

15. You stated to the Committee that you thought the American companies were keenly competing with one another?—So far as I can see. One firm is already out in the open, and we assume others are buying in the ordinary market. I do not know whom they are buying through, but I have seen nothing to indicate to me that there is any combination between the firms.

16. Are you not aware as chairman of the Canterbury Frozen Meat Company that in other countries the operations of the Meat Trust have been in the direction of increasing the prices in order to kill the other companies, and not to depress the prices?—I should rather not express an opinion in regard to other companies, because I have no knowledge. We have attended to our own business in New Zealand, and have not worried about what is going on elsewhere.

17. *Mr. Anstey.*] You say you freeze for any one who comes along: what happens in connection with the offal—is that handed back to the person who supplies the sheep?—Well, it varies. The skin belongs to the owner, also the fat; but the fat is bought by the company. The rest of the offal—the unmarketable portion—is converted into manure and sold to farmers, and that is the perquisite of the company.

18. In regard to the rebate which you say is given by your company to shippers, do you justify that on the lines that you are making a saving yourself?—Yes. There is a saving in the handling of large lines.

19. Does the rebate you give more than compensate for that?—The great object is to keep the average overhead expenses down, and that can only be achieved by getting in large lines.

20. Would that enable you to give the farmer a greater price?—Yes, it would make some slight difference, but the amount would hardly be calculable.

21. *Mr. Reed.*] What is the capital of your company?—I did not come prepared with statistics, but I should think about £140,000.

22. Where was that capital subscribed?—In Canterbury.

23. It is all New Zealand capital?—The company has been in existence for a great many years, and some of the capital may belong elsewhere, but the bulk of the capital belongs to Canterbury farmers or their heirs.

24. Can you say that it is all local capital except transfers made to people leaving New Zealand?—Yes, that is so; but I think there is one Australian shareholder who has lately been selling his shares.

25. You say it is a farmers' company?—It was started for the protection of the farmer.

26. Are you still freezing for Armour and Co.?—Well it is hardly fair to say we are freezing for Armour and Co., because that implies a connection with them that does not exist. We freeze their stock the same as anybody else's.

27. How many works have you?—Three—Belfast, Fairfield, and Pareora.

28. Are all the works handling Armour and Co.'s stuff?—I do not think so. I think we have had some stuff at two of them, but very little, if any, at the third.

29. Do you know whether Armour and Co. freeze at the Christchurch Meat Company's works?—Yes, they do. I think they operate all over New Zealand.

30. Did your company freeze for Joseph and Co. before the business was sold to Armour and Co.?—Yes.