

provided every facility for the treatment of stock on account of growers and owners on any lines desired. Until recently the company's buying operations were accountable for about one-third of the stock passing through its factories: the natural result, however, of fixed values created by the Government commandeering scheme has been to increase somewhat the proportion of the company's buying, as naturally there has not been the room for speculative purchase which previously existed. This last year, therefore, the share of the output provided by the company's own buying operations has risen to 43 per cent., leaving 57 per cent. of the turnover on account of clients.

"In regard to the distribution of our meat and other products, we have our own London office, controlled by our London manager, who is, of course, subject in turn to a broad control from the general management, Christchurch. Prior to the war much of the company's meat was sold c.i.f. by cable through our London office, and some on consignment and through various other channels. Since the initiation of the Government commandeering scheme no meat has, of course, been available for sale by our London office on the company's account, although their services have been utilized to dispose of such meat as has been available for civilian use, but these services have been purely in the capacity of agents acting for and on behalf of the Imperial Government. I would like to emphasize this, as many wild charges have been made, which have resulted in much misconception, and it has further been freely stated that buyers like ourselves here were reaping huge profits out of the resale of meat in London. It will be found also that the proportion of the company's own meat handled by other than what we believe to be British interests was before the war, and still is, quite trifling."

3. You have said you are managing director of the Refrigerating Company?—I am general manager and a director of the company.

4. As such in New Zealand you have a thorough knowledge of the whole of the London transactions?—Absolutely.

5. You can supply us with any details of your London dealings?—Up to a point, yes.

6. Your company buys largely at the present time?—Yes, we have always done so. Since the war, owing to fixed prices not leaving such a margin for speculation, we have found that the onus of supplying stock to our factories has been thrown more on to our own shoulders.

7. Do you freeze in New Zealand for firms connected with the American Meat Trust—for instance, Armour and Co.?—During last season we have frozen for Armour and Co.

8. Largely?—I can give you the figures if you wish. [*Vide Exhibit 17.*] Messrs. Armour and Co. froze with us at our Islington factory a total of 18,222 head of stock, which amounts to 3.28 per cent. of the factory's total stock frozen for the season. They froze at our Smithfield factory 6,066 head of stock, which amounts to 2½ per cent. of the total stock dealt with there. At Pukeuri, which is our North Otago factory, they froze 23,150 head of stock, the proportion there amounting to 8.46 per cent.; at Burnside, 31,193 head of stock, amounting to 17.04 per cent.; at Picton, 8,342 head of stock, being 13.04 per cent. The total quantity of stock frozen by Armour and Co. at all our works last season amounted to 86,973 head, being a little over 5½ per cent. of all the factories' output. I may say that they do not by any means freeze solely with us. That is the quantity of stock we happened to get from them.

9. Do you freeze for any other company or firm to the same extent?—Yes, much larger.

10. Which is the largest?—The largest firm that freezes with us is Sims, Cooper, and Co.

11. What is the total?—They froze 491,293 head of stock, or a percentage of 31 per cent. of the whole of our output.

12. Which is the next firm in order?—There are several very close. The next in order is really Armour and Co.

13. Then who is the next in order?—W. B. Clarkson and Co.—a total amount of 75,477 head of stock, or a percentage of nearly 5 per cent.

14. With reference to the released meat in London which your firm send Home, can you tell us anything about your own company's method of nomination?—All the meat sent forward from New Zealand bought by the company is nominated by us here, to be sold should it be released, by our own London office. We nominate our own London office in the first place (the London office in turn working under the control of the Committee or Board of Trade), who sell that meat on a certain proportion, which I have been informed is to approximate as closely as they can to something like the proportion of business before the commander started, so that the various firms might handle the meat to as near as possible a corresponding relation to what they handled it prior to the war.

15. Those are the firms you previously did business with?—Yes.

16. Practically keep up your original business in the same proportion?—Yes.

17. Can you give the Committee the names of any large firms to whom your company sells at Home?—I anticipated that the Committee would probably desire information on that point. I may say that these transactions on commission by our London office on behalf of the Imperial Government do not pass through the company's own accounts at all. It has been deemed advisable, by arrangement with the Imperial authorities, that these transactions should appear in a special trust account. We have simply sold on commission, and the items appear in this trust account and never go into the company's ordinary accounts at all, the only items appearing being the commission. In response to a request for information I received a long cable only last week which gives the total quantity of meat released by the Imperial Government which originally was the property of the company at this end. I am not in a position to give the Committee any information as to what has happened to the meat that passes eventually to others. Our London office has advised that since the commencement of the commander scheme right up to the present date they have had released for sale on account of the Imperial Government a total of 928,000