

20. But you do not suggest they have had any profits out of the New Zealand lamb?—No. That is also borne out in a measure by the following statement from the Empire Meat Company (Limited), Northampton, which reads, “We are of opinion that American business has no actual influence over retailers, although he generally recognizes that the Americans have too great a power in fixing wholesale prices.” In regard to the disposal of Australasian meat at Home, I have to place before you one of the invoices upon which sales are made. [Ordered by Chairman that reporting stop.]

21. *Mr. T. A. H. Field.*] By a “British trust” you mean connected with the American trust?—No, I will state definitely Vestey’s.

22. *Mr. Forbes.*] Where do Borthwick and Co. come in?—I think they are perfectly free.

23. *Mr. Scott.*] Do you think the New Zealand Refrigerating Company is connected with the trust?—Yes.

24. With Armour and Co., or Vestey and Co., or whom?—With the Chicago houses.

25. Do you know something about Sims, Cooper, and Co.?—Yes.

26. Do you think they are connected with the American trust?—If not the American trust, with the English trust, one of the two—there is no doubt about that.

27. What do you mean by “the English trust”?—Vestey’s, Fletcher’s, and the Union Cold Storage Company, and their subsidiary houses. They are all controlled by the National Cold Storage Company of New York.

28. You mentioned in your statement that you would favour setting up a Board composed of three in Wellington?—Yes.

29. What would be their duties? I take it it would be a permanent Board?—Yes. Their duties would be advisory to the Government, and be a receiving body for all information from independent sources. Supposing we got some valuable information about the Meat Trust, whom are we to pass it on to? If this Parliamentary Committee had not been sitting all the information which has been placed before you would not have come out.

30. *Mr. Forbes.*] You said there was a rebate given on the storage charges to the large exporters so as to cover the interest. How do you know there is sufficient margin in these storage charges?—In normal times there have been practically no charges for storage for frozen meat—we have not paid one penny.

31. Still, the storage costs money?—Yes, but mighty little. The machinery is running.

32. You can only say that this rebate was given if there was a margin over what the Imperial Government were paying for storage?—There is a margin. Take the companies this past season who have not bought, and who have been existing—take the Whakatu works: they made £14,000, and they do not buy on their own account. How did they make that money?

33. You know they are making a lot of money on fat?—Yes, they may be. Auckland has been paying 3d. per pound. The Farmers’ Co-operative Works at Gisborne are paying exactly double what the Canterbury works are paying.

34. You do not know definitely that this extra rebate is being made—you think it is?—It is the information which has come out. I cannot say where it has come from. At present there is no official body. The dairy-produce people have their association, and the Farmers’ Union have their associations, but the meat-exporters have no body.

35. But the freezing companies have a federation?—Yes; but I mean exporters such as Paterson and Co. and others like ourselves—there is nobody looking after our interests.

36. *Mr. T. A. H. Field.*] You have exceptional opportunities of knowing what is going on in the meat trade in New Zealand?—Yes.

37. Are you quite certain that the Meat Trust is operating largely in New Zealand?—Yes, absolutely certain.

38. Do you think that if some definite move is not taken by the Government the American Meat Trust will control the whole of the meat trade of New Zealand?—Ultimately they will, because they must get mutton and lamb.

39. You say the Meat Trust firms get the advantage of the railway tariff, they get secret rebates, and interest on their purchases?—Yes.

40. And also get inside information?—Yes.

41. And therefore they have an advantage?—Yes, over the grower and the exporter.

42. *Mr. Talbot.*] I understood you to say certain buyers had no control over the by-products?—Yes.

43. You are an exporting firm, and have you no control over the fat, pelts, and wool?—Over the pelts we have. We have no say now in the disposal of any other of the by-products than pelts.

44. I suppose Armour and Co. and Sims, Cooper, and Co. would be in the same position as yourselves—they are buying and exporting meat?—Yes.

45. And ought to stand in the same position in regard to by-products as yourselves?—Yes, they ought to. I would not count Armour and Co., but Sims, Cooper, and Co. can get information from the freezing conferences which may enable them to deal in a better way.

46. We were told that Sims, Cooper, and Co. could give more for their stock than other buyers, because they could get the increased advantage of the by-products?—Prior to requisitioning of the by-products they were in no better position than we.

47. In this conference you mentioned from which you were asked to leave were the other companies’ representatives allowed to remain?—Yes.

48. How would Sims, Cooper, and Co. get it—would they be represented?—Yes, by the delegates of freezing companies with whom they are intimately associated.

49. They would have no freezing-works?—They would have a freezing-works’ representative there.