

15. What companies do they freeze with?—We believe with the New Zealand Refrigerating Company.

16. That company is not in your district?—But they take the stock from our district to Wanganui.

17. Do Fletcher and Co. freeze with your firm?—Oh, no; they have their own works on the opposite side of the road to us.

18. Do you freeze for any other companies or meat-buyers?—Yes.

19. I mean those who export?—Yes, Nevanas and Co., Borthwick and Co., Armour and Co., Eastmans Limited, A. Fraser, a syndicate called the Meat Exporters (Limited), the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile, A. S. Paterson and Co., W. Richmond, Sims, Cooper, and Co., A. H. Turnbull and Co., and R. and F. Wallis.

20. *Mr. Anstey.*] Is the capital of your company all locally subscribed?—Yes.

21. Is it a co-operative company?—We work on absolutely co-operative lines, but we have one large shareholder in our company—Hellaby's Limited. We bought their works in Auckland, which we use for dairy-produce, some years ago, and we paid them partly in shares and partly in cash.

22. You do not make any distinction as to whom you freeze for—you freeze for any one who comes along?—Yes.

23. Including the American companies?—Yes.

24. Are there any other companies operating in your district?—Fletcher and Co., or Vestey Bros.

25. Are those the only two firms working there?—The only two companies—we have three works.

26. You do not buy any meat at all?—No.

27. What proportion of meat is frozen by the farmers themselves—any large proportion?—A large proportion is frozen for the exporters, especially this past year—I could not say what proportion. There is a number of farmers who consistently freeze on their own account.

28. The great bulk of the stuff is bought from farmers and frozen?—Yes.

29. You say you do not make any rebate to large operators?—We make rebates to all our clients, and we do not discriminate. If a man has only £5 worth of shares he gets a rebate on the stock he freezes if it is only one.

30. Do you find the buyers of firms such as Sims, Cooper, and Co. are making the prices a little too hot for the stuff to come into your works?—Yes, in the case of lambs this last season.

31. The competition among buyers is very keen?—Yes, it has been.

32. That is for the benefit of the farmers in the meantime, is it not?—Yes.

33. Have you any idea that those large prices are being paid for the purpose of getting a monopoly and then reducing the price later?—It would be only suspicion if I said that was so.

34. Do you know if the buyers of Sims, Cooper, and Co. and Armour and Co. are able to give these big prices owing to any rebates they get from other freezing companies?—I am not prepared to say that they get rebates. We hear rumours.

35. Do you think it would be a fair thing for, say, the Wanganui company to offer a rebate which would interfere with freezing in Auckland?—We would not do it, and we have never done it.

36. Do you think you would have any special cause for complaint if it were being done?—I do not see why we should complain about the way other people do their business. We go on straight lines, and we have never made any concession to one man above another.

37. Is it a fact that any considerable amount of meat is railed very much farther than to local works?—Yes.

38. Can you give us any idea what proportion that would be?—We have tried to get that information, but we cannot. We know that thousands of lambs and cattle have been railed long distances when the local works could have dealt with the meat.

39. Do you think the Government would be justified in trying to stop that? It has been suggested that it is not fair that the Government railways should be used to cart stuff a long way to the prejudice of local works?—From an economical point of view it is bad policy to rail cattle a hundred miles when you could rail them twenty miles for the same results.

40. Is there any profit to the companies by means of the offal—do you hand back the offal to your clients singly?—No; hides, fat, tongues, and tails are always credited to the client, and we deal with them.

41. And it is all disposed of at the same price?—Yes, no discrimination whatever.

42. A large buyer could not get any advantage by way of offal?—No, not the slightest.

43. *Mr. Pearce.*] Did I understand you to say that Sims, Cooper, and Co. and Armour and Co. had killed at your works?—Yes.

44. Can you tell the Committee whether Armour and Co. or Sims, Cooper, and Co. have approached you to give them a rebate?—No, never.

45. I understand that in previous years, before they took up the Wanganui works, they had frozen in the Auckland District?—Yes.

46. And they never asked you for a rebate?—No, never to my knowledge. I have been in close touch with Armour and Co., and they have never approached us.

47. Could they approach any one else but you?—No, it would have to come to me. I am in the office every day.

48. Are you freezing less stuff now since Sims, Cooper, and Co.'s purchases go to Wanganui?—Yes; but I think that is more on account of Vestey Bros. opening their new works opposite to us. The work has been divided. They are buying in the paddocks and in the markets, and our killing has been reduced tremendously this year.