

77. It might be the means of giving the trust people knowledge which was denied to their competitors, and give them an unfair advantage?—Yes; but we really had no secrets there whatever. There was no information there that was not absolutely public.

78. Is that after the others withdrew?—Yes.

79. So that there was no reason for it at that particular meeting?—No, there was nothing there but what might have been published in the Press.

80. I gather from what you said that you will after the war start an organization at the other end to control your output there?—We have our organization in operation now.

81. Will that mean opening up retail shops?—No; I think it would be very bad business for us to attempt to open meat-shops in the Old Country.

82. Your proposal would not get to the bottom of the matter if the retail shops were in the hands of the American trust?—No.

83. We have had it suggested that the only way in which the matter can be coped with is by our Government controlling it here and the Imperial Government controlling it at the other end?—I am not very anxious to see the Imperial Government take in hand the retail meat business. They are not making a good hand with the meat business. I think the commandeering of the meat business in the Dominion has been a very successful undertaking. The complaint we have is that, while we get a fair price for our meat here, the public at Home have to pay such an extraordinary price that we think the Imperial Government has handled the thing very badly. The public have to pay 1s. 8d. to 2s. per pound for mutton and beef, and where does the profit go? If the Imperial Government got it we would not complain for one moment, but for our produce to be sold at four times the amount we get for it is bad business on some one's part at the other end.

STEPHEN JAMES AMBURY further examined.

84. *The Chairman.*] The Committee understand that you desire to add to your evidence?—I only wish to say that one of the reasons why the farmers do not freeze on their own account now is that their meat has to remain in the works for such a long time. We have meat that has been in the works for seven months. These people do not get paid for the meat until it is shipped. The export buyers go into the paddocks, or buy on the hooks, or upon the open market and pay cash, and the farmer gets his return.

85. *Mr. Anstey.*] Do you think the Government ought to buy on the hooks?—Yes, I think that should be so. I think that one month after the stock is killed the Government should pay for it.

86. Would that help you against the unfair competition of American companies?—Yes. The farmers like to support their own works, but they say they cannot lie out of their money for an indefinite time. Those farmers who wish to be financed our company finance to the full amount of their meat, but we have to charge them 6 per cent. interest.

---

DANIEL LONG examined. (No. 19.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are secretary of the Auckland Farmers' Freezing Company?—Yes.

2. You have been present while Mr. Ambury has been giving his evidence, and you know the general lines on which the Committee is conducting its inquiry?—Yes.

3. Have you any statement you wish to make?—No, there is nothing I can add to what Mr. Ambury has said. I think he has covered all the various points.

4. You agree with what he has said?—Yes. I should be very pleased to furnish any information you may suggest if I can.

5. *Mr. Pearce.*] Your knowledge is similar to that of the chairman of the company?—Yes.

6. You have no outside knowledge?—No, nothing at all.

7. *Mr. Scott.*] Have you been in the employ of any other company prior to joining the Auckland Farmers' Freezing Company?—No, not any other freezing company.

8. *The Chairman.*] Do you think a freezing company, from its knowledge as a freezing company, could give information to any large buyer which would give that buyer an advantage over the ordinary buyer who had not that information?—I think not.

9. With reference to hides, pelts, offal, or anything of that sort?—No, not an ordinary buyer of any intelligence. He is on the same footing as the rest of them.

10. It was suggested that a man who was asked to leave a meeting would not get information which would be of advantage to others who were there?—I can see no reason for that. I think any intelligent buyer would have the same knowledge.

11. *Dr. Newman.*] It is said that in regard to some works the small man is shut out in favour of the big man?—That is not the case with our works. During the last three years there has been a certain amount of congestion. We have had to shut out our own shareholders.

12. In favour of whom?—Supposing a shareholder applied for six trucks, frequently we have only been able to give him one-sixth of his requirements. In such circumstances we shut out the big man altogether. The season before last we allotted 75 per cent. of our space to shareholders and 25 per cent. to export buyers, but last year we had plenty of space for all. We had no reason to refuse any one space.

13. Are the farmers freezing less and less on their own account as the years go on?—Yes.

14. Is the tendency that more and more of the stuff frozen in the works is got by export buyers and less and less by farmers?—Yes, that is our experience.