

107. Is your firm paying the same amount of taxation as an ordinary New Zealand company such as the New Zealand Refrigerating Company?—Yes; exactly the same in proportion to business.

*The Chairman:* The only thing they do not pay so much on is the annual registration fee of companies. There is an annual registration fee which is paid by each company registered in New Zealand. The income-tax would be the same.

*Witness:* I want, furthermore, to say this: that we do not ask the Government or any concern or any individual in New Zealand to give us anything more than they give anybody else who is doing business in New Zealand, in relation to taxation or anything else. We are not trying to evade taxes in any way.

108. *Mr. Reed.*] I think that the full name of your company is Armour and Company of Australasia (Limited)?—Yes.

109. It is a private company?—Yes. Here are the articles of association; I brought them along.

110. The capital is £20,000 in 4,000 shares of £5 each?—Yes.

111. You hold of these 4,000 shares 3,998?—I did hold them.

112. When the company was registered?—Yes.

113. Mr. N. W. Kingdon held one share?—Yes.

114. And Mr. O. T. J. Alpers held one share?—Yes.

115. Has there been a rearrangement of these shares since the registration of the company?—Yes; 3,997 have been transferred to Mr. J. Ogden Armour. I hold one share, Mr. Kingdon holds one share, and Mr. Alpers holds one share.

116. This is a subsidiary company of Armour and Co. of America?—Yes; I suppose that is the way you would put it.

117. If you had wanted to avoid belonging to Armour and Co. you would not have used their name?—No. About eighteen months ago I was in America, and I talked this matter over with Mr. J. Ogden Armour, and he gave me permission to use any name I saw fit to use in establishing this business in New Zealand. I said to him then that there was only one way to do business in New Zealand, and that was to put up your name and let people see who you were. That is our policy. Our policy is openness and fairness and directness.

118. Why did you use the name "Australasia" when you are really operating only in New Zealand?—We may possibly eventually operate in Australia. That was the idea in our minds when we used the name. Mr. Kingdon had been in Australia for many years, and I talked it over with him. He said, "Let us call the company 'Armour and Co. of Australasia'; then if at any time we want to operate in Australia we will be in a position to do so." There was no other reason whatever.

119. It is a fact that Birt and Co. are looking after your interests in Australia in the meantime, or rather the interests of the parent company?—I should not say "the parent company." Armour and Co. of London, you mean.

120. I do not know which is the parent company?—If you say "parent company" I should say you mean the firm of which Mr. J. Ogden Armour is president. He is in Chicago.

121. *Mr. Pearce.*] He wants to know where the body of the octopus is?—I would not use those words, Mr. Pearce. I think you have used them before.

122. *Mr. Reed.*] I take the Chicago firm to be the parent company. Is it not a fact that Birt and Co. look after the Armour interests in Australia?—No; I should say No, further than the relation between buyer and seller, the seller being in London. There is no financial interest, I should say.

123. I have no reason to say so. Who is Isaac M. Hodgkinson?—He was at one time with Armour and Co. of London. He has not been connected with them for about two years now.

124. He would know the position?—Yes.

125. This is what he writes, so I think you must see from this that what I state to you must be correct. In a letter which he wrote, and which was produced here, these words are used: "Our Australian agents, Birt and Co., 7 Macquarrie Place, Sydney, will be pleased to open negotiations in this connection when the time comes"?—I think that is not so. Armour's are Birt's agents in London.

126. He says "our Australian agents," and he writes as the representative of Armour and Co. in London. There is a definite statement from Mr. Hodgkinson that Birt and Co. are the Australian agents of Armour and Co. You do not mean to say that you have no trade with Australia?—Not as Armour and Co. of Australasia.

127. I do not mean that. You do not say that your parent company is doing no dealing with Australian meat?—As far as I can say, none.

128. It is a big field to be left out by Armour and Co.?—Yes. I really cannot answer that question; I do not know.

129. Do you not agree that Birt and Co. must be looking after the interests of your parent company in Australia, seeing the letter Mr. Hodgkinson wrote on the 24th April, 1914?—Possibly they are. I really do not know.

130. Here is a letter Birt and Co. wrote from Sydney on the 30th April, 1914, and they say, "Mr. Hodgkinson, a director of Messrs. Armour and Co. (Limited) of London, has been in communication with you regarding the purchase of the output of your works next season, and has informed you that we as Australian agents for Armour and Co. (Limited) of London will be glad to negotiate with your company for next season's output of meat." The rest is immaterial. There Birt and Co. write acknowledging the position?—I should still say from the letter that they are acting as agents for Armour and Co. of London and getting a commission.