

302. How is it, then, that these prices exist when, as you probably are aware, the Argentine meat companies are able to get better prices for their meat from the War Office than are allowed to the New Zealand producer; and how is it that in spite of this the price of stock in the Argentine is about half what it is in New Zealand to-day?—I do not know anything about that.

303. You said previously that you did?—I was speaking about my knowledge of some years ago.

304. The forcing-up of prices was years ago, but you said that the present prices were higher in the Argentine?—In my opinion they are.

305. You have made a statement that you are out to deal fairly with the producer, and to keep prices up to a fair market level?—Yes, sir.

306. Is it not a fact that the effect of the operations of the Meat Trust in North America and in the Argentine has been to reduce the price of stock to the producer?—I do not know, sir.

307. You do not know? I think the Committee know. Has not your company got authority to do it in New Zealand?—No, sir.

308. Is it not a fact that the president of the Armour Company, Mr. J. Ogden Armour, owns all the shares in the New Zealand company?—He is not a director. The directors control the company's business in New Zealand.

309. But he makes the directors, does he not?—He can shift both directors if he wishes.

310. And he can shift the policy of the company?—I am perfectly certain he will never shift the policy of the company.

311. Is that what they did in America?—We are talking about New Zealand now.

312. We must go on what the trust have done in other countries?—I say that we have nothing to do with other countries. Mr. J. Ogden Armour is not a director of our company, and he does not conduct the policy of our company.

313. But you say he has entire control of it?—He has control of it in this way, that he finances it.

Mr. Lee: He can liquidate the company to-morrow.

314. *Mr. Pearce.*] Have you not to do what he tells you as regards policy?—Why will he not do this here?—Because it is not his way of doing business.

315. It is proved that he does it in other countries?—I do not think that is so.

316. Well, in North America they were so satisfied of it that they set up a Commission to inquire into it?—And did they find out anything? They absolutely found no trust, or sign of a trust, existing.

317. Is it not a fact that I put before you about Argentine—that your company has a free run there, and that now at least the prices paid to the producers are less than they are in New Zealand? Is this not a proof that this is their method?—I think you are just as good a judge of that as I am. I am not a judge of what has happened in South America.

318. You have told us about Armour and Co. of London, but you do not send your meat to them: it goes to McLean and Laurenson. Do they get the profit?—Yes.

319. Have they any retail shops?—I do not know.

320. And you send your meat to them?—Yes.

321. And yet you do not know whether they have any shops: that is rather an extraordinary thing for the director of a company to say?—Oh, I do not know.

322. *Mr. Anstey.*] In making out your income-tax forms do you deduct from your profits the interest you pay to J. Ogden Armour?—We have not been in business a year yet, and we have not yet made out our income-tax. We will not do so until the 31st **October**.

323. Do you anticipate doing so?—I do not know. I have not seen an income-tax form. The question has never been brought to my mind before.

324. Is this money lent to Armour and Co. of New Zealand by J. Ogden Armour?—No, he does not put up the money at all.

325. But J. Ogden Armour has given the £20,000 with which this company is established: I am not talking about the credit at all?—I see.

326. J. Ogden Armour has lent the firm of Armour and Co. in New Zealand a certain amount of money to start business: do you think you will be able to deduct from your profit the interest paid on that money?—I should not think so.

327. *Mr. Anderson.*] I am going to ask the witness if Mr. J. Ogden Armour has the same controlling interest in the London business that he apparently has in the New Zealand company?—I think he has.

328. Does Mr. J. Ogden Armour profit by the increase in the prices of lamb in the English prices as compared with those paid in New Zealand by Armour and Co. here and sold by this other firm you have told us of?—I should say not.

329. What I cannot get over, Mr. Chairman, is that in business, whatever he may be privately, this Mr. Armour never appears to be a philanthropist. Now, from what this witness tells us he is a philanthropist. What business profit does he get from all these concerns?—I should say the dividend on the money he lends out—the dividend on the money he gives us to put into the business.

330. This £20,000?—Yes, sir.

331. *Mr. Talbot.*] I understand from what you say that Armour and Co. of America thought it advisable to open here in order to get the profit previously going to people they were buying from at Home, and yet you now state that your company does not sell to Armour and Co. in London, but to other people?—We have only been organized since the war, and the Imperial Government have had all the meat, so that we have not really had a chance of getting back into normal conditions. We could sell to our own people or to anybody; it would not make any difference to whom we sold.