

meat and trust organizations in order to cloak up the identity of the real owners. In the 19th July, 1917, issue of *Cold Storage*, published in London, on pages 153 to 155, it reports a rather interesting case that came before the Commercial Court of the King's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice in England, concerning a claim that was made by Vestey Bros. against the Union Insurance Society of Canton (Limited) in connection with a claim for partial damage to cargo of poultry valued at £132,600 that was shipped from Hankow to the United Kingdom on s.s. "Brodvale," of the Blue Star Line. It turns out in evidence that Vestey Bros. not only owned the poultry but also the Blue Star line of steamers, for on page 54, under cross-examination, Mr. W. G. Bundy, manager for Vestey Bros. (Limited), said that the "Brodvale" was owned by the Blue Star Line (Limited), which had a capital of £92,000 in £1 shares. Of these shares Messrs. Vestey Bros. (Limited) held 91,998, the two remaining shares being held by their nominees. There were no directors, but only a manager. The Blue Star Line were in a "protection club." He was not aware that on a subsequent voyage fifty-four bottles of gas were used. You will therefore observe that Vestey Bros. are carrying on business in this way in England, and you will notice they are steamship-owners as well as meat-owners.

If it is necessary for your Committee I would be quite prepared to make a declaration embodying the statements I have made, for submission to your Committee, or if you think it necessary I would be pleased to attend personally and give evidence on the lines of this letter. It is possible, however, that you have sufficient before you to warrant your acting in the direction I suggest without further evidence; but if you require same and think I can assist you I will be pleased to make it convenient to come to Wellington at any date you may fix.

Yours respectfully,

W. DOUGLAS LYSNAR.

E. P. Lee, Esq., Chairman Trust Committee, Wellington.

The Chairman produced a letter, dated 27th September, from Mr. John Cooper, manager for Mr. M. M. Morrison, Pokaka, Taihape, which the Committee desired should be recorded in the evidence.

Following is the letter:—

Taihape, 27th September, 1917.

LAST January I had two thousand shorn lambs for sale. I wanted 21s. each for them, but the best offer I could get was 20s. Finally the offer was increased to 20s. 6d. This was made privately when I was at the Taihape sale early in January. Sims-Cooper's buyer saw the man who made the above offer talking to me, and afterwards came up to me and said, "How much did So-and-so offer you for your lambs?" I replied, "22s." He then said, "I will give you 22s. 6d." I replied, "I will accept that." The lambs were delivered to Sims, Cooper, and Co. the first week in February. I did not shear them until the middle of January. Before delivery Sims, Cooper, and Co. offered me £400 to cry off the deal, but I refused this and insisted on their taking them. They reoffered them for sale in the Feilding sale-yards in March, but could only get an offer of 15s. 6d. for the best of them. They were finally trucked over to Hawke's Bay and sold there. Sims, Cooper, and Co. made a loss of £800 on the line. They only offered me a higher price to beat the other buyer. This is the system they are working on, trying to eliminate all other competition. I believe if I had said the other buyer had offered 25s. they would have offered 25s. 6d.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN COOPER,
Manager for M. M. Morrison.

ROBERT ALBERT ANDERSON examined. (No. 31.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are the managing director of J. G. Ward and Co. (Limited), Invercargill?—Yes.

2. Are you acquainted with the objects of the investigation of this Committee, generally speaking?—Not fully. I just understand you are inquiring into trust matters, trying to find the Meat Trust, if there is one.

3. Have you any general statement you would like to make on the subject of the trust operating in New Zealand now, or the prospect of it operating detrimentally to the meat trade in any way?—No. I saw there was a statement made by Mr. Grigg, I think it was, who said that as long as the freezing companies were owned by farmers or New Zealand people we did not need to fear the operations of the trusts. Personally I do not agree with that. I think that in nearly every district in New Zealand we have more than one freezing company, and that it is quite possible for a large combination, such as a trust, to purchase very largely in a district, put all its purchases into one works, and so be able, I will not say to get control, but at least be able to handle so much meat as to dictate terms to a company. I think that is just as big a danger as the trust owning the works. I have no particular statement to make, because we are not, as far as we know, operating with the trust. Armour and Co. are not dealing with us: they are dealing with the other company in Southland.

4. *Mr. Pearce.*] What company is that?—The Southland Frozen Meat Company.

5. Is that the Ocean Beach works?—No. We have the Ocean Beach works.

6. Is the other company a farmers' company?—Farmers and private people who own the shares.

7. I understand that J. G. Ward and Co. do not own these works: they are merely acting as agents for some one else?—Yes.

8. Who are the owners?—The Federal Steam Navigation Company. That is a London firm.

9. Have not Birt and Co. (Australasia) something to do with it?—Birt and Co. have offices in Sydney, and are the attorneys for Australia of the Federal Steam Navigation Company.

10. The Ocean Beach works belong to the shipping company?—Yes.

11. Are you aware that Birt and Co. are the agents in Australia for Armour and Co., of Chicago?—No, I have no knowledge of that.

12. It has been stated before the Committee that this is a well-known fact. If Birt and Co. are agents for your business it seems rather peculiar that you do not know of the relationship between Birt and Co. and Armour and Co.—whether Birt and Co. are Armour's agents or not?—I do not know of my own knowledge. I have heard statements made. I do not know whether it is a fact or not. We are not agents for Armour's in Invercargill. We have neither bought from nor sold to them.