

41. Do you get any communications from the Federal Steam Navigation Company, or is it all through Birt and Co.?—I have had one or two letters from Mr. Hughes himself. He is chairman of the Federal Company. He seldom writes letters, and he is a difficult man to get anything out of.

42. Do you get considerable correspondence from Birt and Co.?—No.

43. You have it all in your own hands?—Entirely.

44. *Mr. Anstey.*] Have J. G. Ward and Co. any proprietary interest in the works?—None.

45. Do they own no shares?—No, none at all.

46. Does that apply to the Federal Steam Navigation Company?—We have no shares in any overseas steamship company at all.

47. Do Armour and Co. operate and freeze in Southland?—Yes.

48. Do they put all their meat through the rival works?—Yes. The other company has two works, at Maitava and Makarewa.

49. They have never put any sheep into the Ocean Beach works?—No.

50. Have Vestey and Co. or Fletchers dealt with you?—They do not deal with us.

51. Are Sims, Cooper, and Co. operating there?—Yes; they are freezing through the Ocean Beach works.

52. *Dr. Newman.*] Are you freezing for Swift and Co.?—No.

53. Who owns the Federal Line now?—I understand the shares are held by the New Zealand Shipping Company.

54. That is the P. and O.?—Yes.

55. Do you know anything about Birt and Co. and their works at Brisbane in connection with Armour and Co.?—No; I have never been over there.

56. You know nothing of any connection that may or may not exist?—No, I do not.

57. *Mr. G. J. Anderson.*] Do you think that the American Meat Trust is working in New Zealand?—I think they are. Of course, Armour's are working openly.

58. Have you ever heard of Swift's being connected with Birt and Co. on "the other side"?—No.

59. Have you any suggestion you could make on the subject of controlling the Meat Trust?—I think if you can wipe it out you should do so.

60. That is, wipe Armour's out?—I do not care what trust it is.

61. Do you think that a British trust might be as bad for the farmers as an American trust?—I think any trust in a position to exercise control would be bad for the farmers.

62. Do you think that in going into this matter this Committee should take into consideration shipping companies as well as freezing companies and exporters?—Of course, that is a pretty wide subject. If you are going to legislate for the control of shipping it might mean opening State lines.

63. You think that if a shipping company got a preponderating interest in a freezing-works it might be prejudicial to the producers? Your company is in the hands of the Federal Steam Navigation Company. Supposing this big shipping ring obtained a controlling interest in other freezing companies, would it be prejudicial to the producers?—It might be. I should be sorry to see any concern getting a controlling interest of the freezing companies in New Zealand, no matter what it was.

64. So far you have not seen any prejudicial effects from the operations of the trusts?—No, except that I think prices have been forced up.

65. Do you think that has happened through Armour's?—I think that Armour's have been paying bigger prices than are warranted.

66. What about Sims, Cooper, and Co.?—We have not found Sims, Cooper, and Co. any trouble. They are not big suppliers to our works.

67. *The Chairman.*] Do you buy?—We buy small lots. We do not bother much about it so long as we keep the works going.

68. Do you give rebates?—We have an arrangement with the Southland Freezing Company so that we may not be shot at by any person trying to put one company against the other. We give a small rebate on freezing-charges only on certain quantities—so much up to 20,000, and slightly more up to 40,000. This is done for the purpose of preventing any firm coming to us and saying that if we do not give them a rebate on freezing-charges they will go to the other company. The two companies work under an arrangement as regards freezing-rates only, so that we shall not have people coming and saying that they can get a certain rate from the other company. We work on similar rates and on a quantity scale. We compete without any arrangement regarding prices for buying.

69. *Mr. G. J. Anderson.*] Do you give the same to everybody?—Yes, on freezing-rates.

70. *Mr. Anstey.*] Are the freezing-prices the same for everybody?—Yes.

71. You are working together to keep up the price of freezing?—We cannot do that, because we have competitors alongside of us. But we do not want to be shot at by the big speculators, and the freezing-rates of both companies turned into a loss.

72. *Mr. Reed.*] I understand that your company had a sale and an agreement with your purchasers—a sale of your works, and an agreement by which you carried on the management?—I do not quite know what you refer to.

73. The Ocean Beach works were sold—they were sold by J. G. Ward and Co.?—No; they were bought from Nelson Bros., who sold to the Federal Steam Navigation Company through Mr. Birt.

74. Then what was your position in regard to Nelson Bros.?—We have had nothing to do with them. When the Federal Company bought from Nelson Bros. they made an arrangement with us to take charge on their account.