

Some of the companies in New Zealand have paid the equivalent of 100 per cent. ?—Possibly ; I am not aware of it.

Whether is it better to study the interests of the producer or to study the interests of the big freezing companies ?—I do not think it should be necessary to have that question put to me—the answer is so obvious.

It is evident that somebody is making a great deal of money in New Zealand just now, when a freezing company can pay 100 per cent. ?—Well, I will give you reasons for that. I think I can guess what is in your mind. In shipments of meat by suppliers to the London market in the early days there were instances in which the shipper lost not only whatever was the value here in New Zealand, but he had also to pay some of the shipping-expenses outside of that. It was practically a gamble, but it gave an opportunity to any strong company to take the risk, and the opportunity came to them to make a lot of money.

Then, should they not have reduced their freezing-charges rather than extract 100 per cent. from the producers ? The freezing companies' charges have all along been reasonably low—even Armour's representative admits that, and in his evidence stated they were too low.

Do you not think that the fear of Armour and Co. coming into New Zealand is greater with the freezing companies than it is with the producers ?—I do not. The producer is not in a favourable position to get hold of the actual facts, but if he knew what was disclosed by the American Federal Trade Commission his present fear would be nothing as compared with what it would then be about Armour and Co. coming in.

*Mr. Field :* It has been suggested that we have monopoly in New Zealand as well as in the United States ? If that was found to be correct I would serve New Zealand monopolists with the same treatment as I hope will be given to the "Big Five."

You are against combinations for keeping down prices to the producer or keeping them up as against the consumer ?—Yes.

Then, your main objection to monopoly is that it gives opportunity for the exercise of human greed ?—Yes.

If that greed could be curbed by the limitation of profits, would that be sufficient protection to the producer and the consumer ?—It would be a step towards it, but we know the difficulties that are attached to such a course. You do not want to limit enterprise as long as it is fair.

Do you see any means whereby there could be limitation of profits by legislation or otherwise ?—Yes, there are various ways of limiting profits by legislation.

Do you think it would be a fair thing to do ?—I do not know how to answer that question except in this way : I look upon the limitation of profits by legislation as the least of different evils with which we are face to face.

What would your proposal be for the curing of this evil both in New Zealand and with regard to the Meat Trust ?—I am sorry to say that, much as I object to Government interference, I see no escape from the evil of monopoly but by more or less Government interference.

And what form do you think that should take—have you thought that out ?—No, I have not, because the circumstances are so varied that one could not formulate a plan without knowing the circumstances of each particular case.

Do you think a plan ought to be thought out ?—Yes, if possible.

Have you any knowledge of any American capital being utilized in New Zealand in the meat industry, except the sum which Mr. Ogden Armour has got in Armours Limited, Australasia ?—No particular knowledge, but there is little doubt that some American capital has been and is now in employment here. It is difficult to get the actual knowledge. By lack of time I have been prevented from giving an instance where one of the American packers, finding himself in danger through the inter-State law, set to work and wiped out all evidence of his ownership of a very large company ; and I have no doubt that names are being similarly concealed in New Zealand—where large purchases of meat have been made, but the purchaser's name never disclosed.

Is it fair to ask you whether you have any suspicions about Vestey's or Sims Cooper ?—No ; there are other directions, without referring to them.

I understand that the big meat-packing companies of the United States hold that a comparatively few large and powerful firms with great capital are better for both producer and consumer than a large number of small firms : have you anything to say to that ?—I have only this to say : that the Kaiser in 1914 undertook to become the supreme Providence, but the world objected to that, although it may be quite clear that a wise and impartial autocracy would be the ideal Government to deal with the world's business. But experience has taught us the extreme danger of such a course, and the same reasoning applies to the general business of the world.

Then, the whole thing necessary is to curb human greed : if you can do that you are all right ?—Yes.

In regard to this c.i.f. buying, it seems that c.i.f. buying is pretty nearly as dangerous as buying on the hoof or on the hooks for New Zealand ?—No ; there is a material difference.

If the American packers got to work and secured all the New Zealand meat by buying c.i.f., they would have the control of the price paid to the producers and the price to be paid by the consumers ? Not at all to the same extent as by freedom to buy on the hoof.

I want to know whether the refusal of the license is going to assist us very much ?—Well, an easy way of measuring that is by the urgency of the Armour application for the license. If there were not the benefit to be secured the application would not be so urgent. I measure the risk of injury to New Zealand by the urgency of the application for the license.

You think that it has a bad appearance—the fact that they are so anxious to get the license ?—Yes.

*Mr. Lysnar :* You said there was a large number of retail butchers extinguished by the packers : would you give us some details of that ?—I have the evidence here in these books, but I do not know whether I can place my hands upon it at the moment.

You said there were four hundred butchers in one district extinguished : do you know how the trust operated to do that ?—No, the details are not given. ■