

5. Have not the freights come down since the termination of the war?—There is a reduction, but even now more remunerative freights can be obtained outside New Zealand. Take coal: at the present moment £7 a ton is being paid for the carriage of coal from Newcastle to Egypt, and £8 10s. a ton to Sweden and Norway. Then, with regard to butter, I suppose it is carried by the box at somewhere about 1½d. a pound from New Zealand, while the freight one can get for butter from Copenhagen to America—a fortnight's run only—is 1d. a pound.

6. Are not freights more plentiful now, and not as hard to obtain as they were?—There is not quite so much cargo offering; but I do not think it is easy to charter a steamer. It would not be easy for any one to charter a steamer at a profit at the present rates from New Zealand. There is tonnage about, but it is looking for remunerative rates.

7. *Hon. Mr. Nosworthy.*] Are there any definite prospects in regard to shipping facilities being provided for the sending of stock and fruit to South American eastern ports, and opening up a trade in that direction?—There is a steamer leaving next month for Monte Video with stud stock, but I do not know really whether anything should be said about it. I do not know whether I am doing the people who are buying any kindness in making it known that a steamer will load in November for South America and carry five hundred rams.

8. Are you aware that some were sent to Valparaiso, or were going, some little time ago, but they had to be railed over the Andes in order to get them to the other coast?—Possibly that is so, but I have no notification of such a shipment.

9. Is the ship that you say is going a privately chartered vessel?—Yes, so far as deck space is concerned.

10. Has any notification been given to the general public of the charter?—No; because one buyer took the entire space on deck for five hundred sheep in November, and the necessity of advertising the steamer did not arise.

11. But the general public were not made acquainted with the fact that that ship was going?—No.

12. What is the position of the general breeders of the Dominion if they wanted to ship by that vessel and had no notice that she was going?—I do not think there is any space now.

13. May not the same thing occur again?—If other breeders had applied for space they would certainly have been told; but there is no use in telling them there is a vessel sailing in November when there is no space available.

14. I admit that contention; but there are many people who would like to ship stock to South America who know absolutely nothing about any boats going, and it seems a funny way of doing business. Should not those people be given a chance to send stock if they want to?—Surely the seller benefits by getting his stock away?

15. No doubt the seller will get his stuff away—he does not know to whom he is selling, perhaps; but is it not the man who buys the whole lot and ships without notification to the general public who makes the big scoop?—I quite see your point.

16. If one man is handling everything from the breeders, and there is no open competition, and he is supplying the South American market, are not the breeders generally at a disadvantage?—I must say in fairness to the people who are buying and shipping the rams that they have never asked that the matter should be kept quiet.

17. I do not say they did; but is it not the fact that the transaction is not public property?—Yes; but if we accept an offer of the entire deck space the necessity of asking for further orders disappears.

18. *The Chairman.*] Does it not give undue preference to anybody in possession of this information, if he has the opportunity to obtain outside information that the ordinary man has not?—That is so. The information may be public—I do not know; but a definite offer has advantages over uncertain possibilities.

19. *Hon. Mr. Nosworthy.*] I made inquiries through my Department to ascertain if a ship were going, and what facilities would be available for the shipment of stock, and all I know is that there is a ship going and there is to be a certain quantity of stock shipped. Is it a recent transaction?—It was only very recently fixed; the matter was made definite about a fortnight ago.

20. Can you give the Committee any information as to the likely freights for apples and stock to South America, and whether the shipping companies are going to meet the Government in the direction of making periodical calls at those ports?—It is just a little bit ahead as regards the season for apples; but London has been communicated with, pointing out the desirability of reopening the trade for the benefit of apple-shippers, and has been asked to state if there is the slightest prospect of being able to arrange in advance cargoes from Monte Video to take the place of the apples. If they cannot do that it appears to me that the rate of freight which would have to be charged for apples to Monte Video would be prohibitive, because it would mean a very high cost of coal there as compared with coal at Panama and Newport. About December last we tried if we could secure, in March or April, stud stock to take in the same steamer with apples to Monte Video, which would have had the effect of lowering the rate of freight for apples. We got no response from the exporters of sheep, but the apple people were very keen. The question was asked of London, as to what the rate of freight would be, and the reply was that on account of the extra cost of calling at Monte Video because of the high price of coal there, and after deducting the saving on the Panama coal, £8,000 would have to be added to the ordinary rate of freight to cover the extra expense. That means for apples a prohibitive freight. I wrote to London about six weeks ago to see what they can do next year; but unless we can get other cargo from Monte Video I do not see what hope there is of doing what is asked.

21. Is this ship going now entirely with stud stock?—I think it is stud stock.

22. The whole shipment?—I think so, but there may be some flock rams.

23. *Mr. Lysnar.*] She is carrying no general cargo?—She will have her general cargo; but the sheep are on deck.

24. *Hon. Mr. Nosworthy.*] The Government and the producers want to know some considerable time ahead that ships are going, and the approximate date, so that the stuff can be got ready: could that be arranged?—Are you speaking about stud stock?