

25. Yes. If a man knows a ship is sailing at a certain date he will keep the stock instead of selling it. Could you give a month's notice of the date?—Good notice will be given.

26. You are not able to give any further information as to what the freights are likely to be for apples and other produce?—Not at present. The only indication we have sticking straight out is that unless we can get stud stock in March on deck, or unless we can get some cargo arranged for from Monte Video to London to fill up the space vacated by the apples, I do not think it is a commercial proposition. The rate of freight would be too high for apple shippers. I have tried to get London to arrange for cargo from Monte Video, and await reply.

27. What are the freights likely to be for meat to the eastern ports of North America?—They are not yet fixed for next season. And the unfortunate thing is that expenses are rising, and one likes to be nearer the time before actually prophesying what those freights are likely to be. The lamb which has recently gone there has been charged at 2½d. per pound.

28. *Mr. Field.*] What is the possibility of obtaining freight space to North American ports, and of trade there?—There is not the slightest doubt that steamers will be available for trade with America; and I think it will be duly provided that any meat contract which is made should include America just as much as England. There will be no difficulty as to steamers going to America. I am led to believe that America is very anxious to take New Zealand lamb.

29. And wool?—They seem to be overstocked with wool at the present time; but it is very likely that there will be American buyers operating, perhaps not to any great extent this year, but in succeeding years. And as there will be, no doubt, steamers carrying meat, the same vessels can carry the wool.

30. You think then there are such possibilities?—Most distinctly.

31. *Hon. Mr. Nosworthy.*] A good deal of consternation has been expressed by the farmers and others in regard to the clause as to the non-responsibility of the shipping companies in handling the wool if they object?—Yes, I know the clause, and I have heard it called objectionable; but I think under all the circumstances, and considering we are living in abnormal times, it is a reasonable one. It is to safeguard the ship from being made a store-ship. It cannot be admitted for a moment that it is the duty of the ship not only to carry the wool, but if the consignee cannot find storage for it, that she may then be looked on as a store-ship and may be delayed for a month, or even three months.

32. Should there not be some reasonable limit of time fixed?—It is fixed. That clause recently received very careful consideration in London, where they know the difficulties on the spot very much better than I do, and they find it necessary to safeguard themselves in that way. They are not doing it lightly or without full consideration.

33. They are doing it for their own protection; but we claim they are disregarding our interests: is that not so?—I do not think it is quite a fair way of putting it. We have to protect ourselves. Our duty is to carry the wool, and it cannot be said it is also part of our duty to have to find storage for it after the voyage is over.

34. Have you not a duty and a responsibility to the producers so long as you have a monopoly of the trade?—There may be an admitted duty in normal times; but when times are abnormal and there is congestion in stores I think it is asking too much from any shipping company to say, "You must find storage for us." Surely it is the consignees' duty to find the storage. It would be a great hardship on the ship to make her a store-ship and go on keeping her in London.

35. The proposals set out in the clause in that respect are complained of bitterly as being quite unreasonable?—I am sorry I cannot agree with the objectors, because we are living in abnormal times, and in view of the congestion in London I think it is a reasonable clause.

36. *Mr. Lysnar.*] Do not certain companies have their own wharves in London?—We have got the wharf space and provision for discharging, but we do not exercise real control over the sheds.

37. The ship goes to the unloading berth?—Yes, for the purpose of putting her cargo into the shed; and in doing so we act on behalf of the Port of London Authority, which controls the docks. We do not receive any rent for those sheds, or charge any wharfage to the shippers.

38. You are provided with shed accommodation?—Yes.

39. Why cannot the ship put the cargo into the shed?—If it is full, how can we?

40. Have you to wait for other cargo to be cleared out?—Say that wool goes into the shed—we cannot turn it out until the consignee takes it away from us. If another ship comes along, where are you going to put her cargo if the first consignee will not take his lot away?

41. *Mr. J. R. Hamilton.*] Could you not make him?—I do not think so.

42. *Mr. Lysnar.*] Would it not be the duty of the steamer's officers to see that the cargo is cleared out of the shed?—I am afraid we cannot provide for that. We have not power to say to the consignee, "You must take your wool away from this store."

43. *Mr. J. R. Hamilton.*] That seems to be where the weakness is?—Yes. But I do not think we are invested with any power to compel consignees to take possession of their cargo from the store. It is the Port of London Authority which fixes the charges, and not we. They charge the shipper with the storage in the shed.

44. Are there not other very large stores all round those docks, apart from the sheds referred to?—Yes.

45. And is it not a matter of detail for you to arrange with the London dock authorities if the store is full?—But, unfortunately, London, and the Tonnage Committee, and I think also the Board of Agriculture, have found that all stores in London are congested. The New Zealand Government are aware of the fact.

46. Was not that the case some time ago, and not now?—I believe the congestion was quite recent and that the Government were notified here. Is that not so, Mr. Nosworthy?

*Hon. Mr. Nosworthy:* I cannot remember at the minute.

47. *Mr. J. R. Hamilton.*] Is the congestion very bad, Mr. Findlay?—Wool is going Home faster than they are clearing it in London, and I see from the newspapers that the quantity sold has been very small, and there have been plenty of withdrawals. And there is still plenty going forward every week from here and Australia.

48. *Mr. Lysnar.*] How are you going to be off for shipping for general produce during the coming season?—I think it will be quite right. I have some particulars here. Shaw-Savill expect to have twenty steamers for next year.