

Sheepowners' Federation meeting held in Wellington when a resolution was passed urging the Government to grant a license to Messrs. Armour and Co. Since then we have had another meeting in Dunedin, and the former resolution passed was affirmed.

Mr. Powdrell : What is the membership of the union ?—It is a very representative union.

Have you any idea what is the actual membership—are there a hundred members ?—Yes, several hundreds.

Mr. Lysnar : You say you attended a conference of the Sheepowners' Federation at Wellington ?—Yes.

Are you aware that there was not a North Island representative at that conference ?—There were representatives.

Who were they ?—Messrs. Marshall and McLeod.

They did not oppose the resolution ?—No, they did not oppose it.

Are you aware that neither Poverty Bay nor Hawke's Bay was represented at that conference ?—That was entirely their own fault if they were not represented.

You are aware of the tactics adopted by Messrs. Armour and Co. ?—I have some kind of vague idea.

Do you know of the amount of capital they have behind them ?—I have read of it.

What is the amount ?—About £250,000,000.

You know the conduct of their operations in other countries in regard to stockowners ?—I have read of it.

You are aware it has acted detrimentally to the stockowners in other countries ?—In past history, yes.

You know the tactics they adopt in connection with the carrying-on of their business : do they work to the detriment of the producers ?—No, I do not think so.

HENRY GASCOIGNE examined. (No. 7.)

The Chairman : Have you anything to say to this Committee, Mr. Gascoigne ?—Although I represent the Hawke's Bay farmers I am not in a position to make a statement. As I have been away we have not had a meeting, and although I know the feeling of the sheep-farmers in Hawke's Bay I am not at liberty to make any statement.

You have received no instructions in any way ?—No.

JOHN MACDONALD examined. (No. 8.)

The Chairman : What are you ?—I am a sheep-farmer.

You have a statement to make to this Committee, have you not ?—Yes. The statement I should like to make is this : When I came to New Zealand in the year 1908 two facts impressed me—one was the high price paid for land, and the other was the low price paid for stock in the markets as compared with the American price. I was also surprised at the very few buyers for the large amount of stock offering. On the American markets the buyers go right through the stock, and after the money is paid they go home the same night. I may say that the farmers as a whole right throughout the world are a great class to kick, and the same thing is in existence in New Zealand. If we got anything from the Government in America we had to kick for it. I was very much impressed with the splendid system they have in America of working up the by-products, and let me say that they have worked that up to perfection. There is nothing like it in the world that I have seen. As far as I can see our by-products are wasted here. At one of the freezing-works in New Zealand a manager informed me that there was enough pepsin running down the pipes to run the works. I believe Messrs. Armour and Co. have one of the best laboratories in Chicago. When I attended the last conference in Wellington I mentioned that I thought it would be a good thing to have up-to-date American freezing-works in New Zealand. Mr. Massey said that we could leave that matter to British enterprise. I would like to say, however, that there are some departments of British enterprise that are superior to American enterprise. This is so in connection with the cotton trade. There were 10,000,000 bales of cotton produced in the southern States for which the farmers at that time received 10 cents per pound, and the total amount received was £120,000,000. That is one instance where the British enterprise is ahead of the American enterprise. When I was in Texas there were a great many farmers who came from the southern States and I did not know one of them who objected to the Englishmen coming in and buying their cotton. I attended a good many meetings, and it was suggested that we should try and adopt some plans by which the Englishmen could be made to pay a higher price for their cotton. Now, it has been stated that the operation of the Beef Trust has driven the farmers off the land in some of the north-eastern States. It is well known that a large number of young men brought up on the farms went into the manufacturing towns, and a large number went west because the climate is very severe. I may say that in the eastern States a large number of people died through pneumonia, caused through the very severe spring weather they have there. That is the reason why the farms have been deserted there. They were not deserted owing to the operation of the Meat Trust. When I was in the United States there were some very rich Jews in New York and in London who were settling Russian Jews on these farms. In Kansas City in the year 1907 a 1,600 lb. steer brought £26 13s. 4d.—that is for live weight. This steer would go about 960 lb. dressed weight. When I came to New Zealand a steer of this description was only bringing £9 to £9 10s. at Edendale, in the South Island.

Mr. Jennings : The figures quoted by you are remarkable ; but would not that be brought about by the high freight charged from New Zealand, and the fact that they are nearer the big market ?—I do not think you could expect to get as good a price in New Zealand as in the United States, because there they have the population ; but what impressed me in America was the way in which they work up their by-products.