

“During the past month stock-raisers have been selling their animals at prices which amounted to the value of the carcase only, and have neglected to secure the money in the by-products of the stock sold. For some time past it has been possible to obtain from Home c.i.f. buyers prices for carcase meat, which prices have been quite equal to the figures accepted by many farmers for their live stock; consequently such farmers allowed fat-stock buyers to profit by the whole of the value in the by-products of each head of stock.

“When producers establish the co-operative company that is now engaging their attention they will be able to secure all of the money that it is possible to realise out of their fat stock. The time has arrived for farmers to take into their own hands the great and flourishing meat industry, and I feel sure that the majority of freezing companies will be glad to see farmers in possession of the enterprise that rightly belongs to the people who feed and sustain it.”

FREEZING COMPANIES.

On the 28th May I submitted the following proposals to Mr. Dilnot Sladden, manager of the Wellington Meat Export Company:—

“The two Wellington meat companies should form the nucleus from whence could be developed the North Island Farmers' Co-operative Meat Company. These two companies should offer their plant and premises at a price which justly represents the value of the same, the farmers to subscribe the capital necessary for the purchase of both companies' property.

“This would immediately place at the disposal of the farmers the two leading factories in the North Island, including the well-trained officers and operatives who are connected with these industries. The freezing companies should be satisfied with the actual value of their properties. The goodwill of the same may rightly be claimed as belonging to the farmers, whose products have built up the industry.

“In the event of the farmers being unable to raise sufficient money for the purchase of these works and the conduct of the business of meat-freezing as carried on by the present proprietary, the State should be asked to either guarantee or advance the remainder of the capital required.

“The lines upon which the farmers' company should be formed ought to be strictly co-operative, similar to the constitution of the company proposed by the farmers' union for the marketing in Wellington of fruit and vegetables.

“As soon as the nucleus of the co-operative company is firmly established in Wellington farmers in other parts of the Island should be invited to subscribe capital for the purchase of works in their districts, with a view to bringing the whole meat industry in the North Island under one company of farmers.

“When the organization of the industry is complete the Home c.i.f. buyers should be invited to purchase the output of meat for British consumption. If these buyers will not offer satisfactory prices, the State could be asked to assist in finding capital for the erection of receiving-depots and distributing-centres at Home.”

ORDER OF REFERENCE.

I was guided in the formulation of the proposals I submitted to farmers and freezing companies by the suggestions of Mr. H. C. Cameron, New Zealand Produce Commissioner at Home, whose report of December last formed the basis upon which I worked. The Right Hon. the Premier, when appointing me to investigate the frozen-meat industry, referred me to Mr. Cameron's report, which I used as my order of reference.

REMARKS.

On the 7th June I was informed that farmers are proposing to ask the Legislature through their union to be allowed to create special-rating areas, so that a rate might be struck upon their lands and offered as collateral security for the payment of interest and sinking fund upon whatever capital might be required beyond the sum they were able to subscribe for the purchase of freezing-works and the conduct of the meat industry.

Hawke's Bay people are also taking up the co-operative meat-freezing project, and already have the movement well advanced. It is intended to co-operate and “pool” with farmers in the Wellington District as soon as both districts are sufficiently advanced for combination. Shipping companies and merchants are supporting the promoters of the Hawke's Bay project.

A conference of farmers and freezing companies will be held in Wellington on the 2nd July, and I trust that my report will be printed and circulated before that date in order that the parties to the conference can be in possession of the information the report contains.

I have &c.,

F. T. MOORE.

APPENDIX D.

FURTHER REPORT FROM MR. F. T. MOORE ON THE MEAT-EXPORT TRADE FOR THE WELLINGTON LAND DISTRICT.

152, Tinakori Road, 25th June, 1902.

SIR,—

SHEEP.

The classes of sheep largely raised in the Wellington Land District consist of Lincoln and Romney breeds. These breeds would be much improved if Leicester or merino blood was inter-mixed, both as regards wool and mutton. Merino blood is preferable in the case of sheep bred on dry, hilly country; but Leicester blood must be used on rich or low lands, because merino strains contract foot-rot on soft soils. Very nicely flavoured mutton can be produced by crossing Lincoln or Romney ewes with the Down or black-faced sheep. The skilful farmer who keeps his sheep well supplied with feed throughout the whole year finds the Down crosses highly profitable. This is especially the case when breeding lamb for export.