

53. But if one man takes the good sheep, and will not take the bad ones?—Well, they need not sell them to him.

54. It has been stated before this Committee that it is advisable only to ship our sheep to the Port of London, and to distribute them through that port?—That is a great mistake.

55. It has been stated that different markets require different classes of sheep, and that it is necessary to sort the various classes out in London?—If you send them to London instead of direct to other places you have to incur greater expense. When they are landed they have to be lightered and put into the stores, and there are lighterage-charges to meet, and then they have to go to the different places; whereas, if you sent, say, thirty thousand sheep to Manchester, they would not require to be stored in London at all.

56. Do I understand you to say that the River Plate people have a board, and that their meat is better looked after than ours?—Yes.

57. In the case of the River Plate meat, does the Government do anything in connection with the matter?—No. I saw in the newspapers a statement that they would not buy coarse Lincolns. They were put under offer to them and were refused. They refused to buy them.

58. The River Plate system practically amounts to a concentration of supplies?—Yes.

59. And this system you say we should adopt if we could?—Yes. If you have the meat in a few hands you have a better chance of getting good markets than if you had it in the hands of fifty people.

60. Do you think the present unsatisfactory condition of things is likely to go on for all time?—I do not see how you can avoid it. The only thing you can do is to ship to some one in London direct. I think if we had a thoroughly good man to advise us as to how things are going on it would be a very good thing. As to these cablegrams, they are not of very much use. I know of one man who resigned simply because they wanted him to make the price higher than it should be. He said the price was not so. The man who controls things at Home for the River Plate has a seat on the board, and never gives any information—not the slightest. He has a seat on the directorate of one of the companies there.

61. *Mr. Hornsby.*] Would you regard the branding of meat from New Zealand—supposing you could have something like control from this end—as a useful thing?—I hardly know what to say about that. If you brand the meat here you will stop the consumption of a great proportion of it at Home. There is a lot of New Zealand meat consumed by English people as English meat, and if you branded that I think it would stop its consumption a good deal; otherwise it would be a good thing.

62. It has been stated before this Committee that there has never been any New Zealand meat sold as English meat?—That is wrong. That was said by some one who does not know anything about it.

63. Would you regard the prosecutions that are brought against the people who sell Argentine mutton as New Zealand mutton as a waste of time?—No, I do not.

64. You regard it as a proper thing that those prosecutions should be brought?—I do. Our meat is as good as theirs, and I do not see why we should not have the benefit.

65. *Mr. Lang.*] Are you sure New Zealand meat is superior to Argentine meat?—Yes, I am. They are coming up very fast. I noticed it eight years ago, and again two years ago, and I consider they are getting up very quickly. There is a very great difference in their meat now.

66. It has been stated to this Committee that the Argentine meat as is good, if not superior to New Zealand meat?—No, it is not. You can pick out a number of carcasses that are, but they are not so nice in the killing and dressing.

67. How long is it since you have seen them?—About two years.

68. With reference to the difference in value between North Island sheep and South Island sheep: do you attribute that difference entirely to the breed?—Chiefly, but not altogether.

69. Has climate anything to do with it?—The feed has.

70. Not the climate?—Probably you have more wet here. The climate has always something to do with the fattening of sheep; but I do not know to what extent that difference would be in your sheep. We have more artificial food in Canterbury, and break up our paddocks after a certain time and put fresh food down, and the sheep will do better than on the old grass.

71. Supposing they fared the same, would there be any difference in the mutton?—I will answer you in this way: I see no difficulty in growing sheep here as good as in any part of the world.

72. There should be no difference in them?—Not if they were properly looked after and you had a proper class of sheep.

73. *Mr. G. W. Russell.*] I understand that you have had experience in buying stock both in the North and South Islands?—Yes.

74. Judging from your experience in the North, in your purchases, do you think there is room for complaint on the part of the breeders here that they are not getting fair value for their sheep?—It is difficult to say what is a fair value. There is so much speculation about it. You buy to-day and you cannot say what you are going to get for your purchases. You do not know until your sales accounts come out from England whether you are going to make a profit or loss. There were hundreds of thousands of pounds lost in Canterbury last season, and, of course, you cannot always go on losing. You must keep within the market when you buy, and you cannot tell what is going to happen. A great deal has to do with by-products—that is the skin and the fat, and the price of wool goes up and down. Sixpence or eightpence a head makes a big difference.

75. This Committee is really set up on account of complaints made in the Wellington and Hawke's Bay Districts that there is a monopoly in connection with frozen sheep, and consequently the producers do not get fair prices for their stock from the local buyers or from anybody. Now, you have had a large Canterbury experience and have also had, apparently, experience in the