

110. Do you say that very little Argentine meat is stored in England?—Very little.

111. Referring to your suggestion as to having large stores here, do you think it would depreciate less in cold-stores here than in London?—I think if you can get regular supplies in New Zealand it would regulate supplies in England. I think it is well to send regular supplies to England so as not to let people think you can swamp the market at one time and at another time hold the meat back.

112. Regarding the price of labour and the price of land, what, less cost of production, do you think obtains per pound on mutton in the Argentine as against New Zealand?—If the British Government would put 1d. per pound on Argentine meat it would make up about the difference.

113. You think land in the Argentine at £10 an acre is of just as good quality as land out here at £25?—I do. Land that I have seen at £7 there is equal to your best that I have seen in the Hawke's Bay District.

114. And what are wages in the Argentine?—About 10s. a week for agricultural labour.

115. Would you advise any system of combination on the part of the freezing companies here?—Yes, I tried, with Mr. Twopeny, some years ago to form a combination, but could not. There are too many agents in London, no doubt.

116. How many towns did you notice Nelsons were in the habit of distributing meat in? Were they situated within fifty miles direct north of London?—I cannot say, but I think the bulk of them were distributed about the midland counties of England.

117. In how many of those towns are supplies sent to for the purpose of the army meat contracts?—I could not say at all. I should like to know that.

118. Referring to the question of stud sheep: if the Argentine people buy stud sheep from New Zealand, does that not prove that our stock are bred from as choice sheep as are those in the Argentine?—No; they come to Australia for Merino rams. They go to the Murrays for Merino rams. But you have magnificent stock here. If they come here for new blood it is not because they have not good blood themselves.

119. If there is such a difference in the quality of prime River Plate mutton and the inferior mutton sent by them to England, how is it that the price fetched only differs on the market by $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound?—Because I think the men are such clever business-men. They fix the price as near as they can to make it apparent that the quality is all the same. If lean mutton goes north the people in the north imagine it is the best mutton, and so it is for them.

120. *Mr. Laurensen.*] What is the difference in freight between Argentine and New Zealand, and its effect on frozen meat?—I cannot tell you exactly, as many of the Argentine works have their own steamers, and they take back all the supplies for the works.

121. Approximately there would be a difference in favour of the Argentine of perhaps $\frac{1}{2}$ d.?—Yes; I should say more.

122. You said that wages were 10s. per week?—Yes, for agricultural labour.

123. What sort of men are they—half-breeds?—Yes, and Italians as well.

124. Those men would not be equal to New Zealand labourers?—It would be hard to say they would not. The hours of labour are measured by the sun, and in summer they get two hours off during the middle of the day. They get 10s. to 15s. a week, for what we call ordinary rouseabout labour, which includes meat and *maté*.

125. You gave the figures as to the price of land, which would beat New Zealand by about 2s. $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per sheep per annum?—Yes. The land has been increasing in value rapidly. Mr. John Cooke bought an estate eighteen months ago, which has now doubled in value.

126. Is there much land there?—A vast area. There are four lines of railway competing between Buenos Ayres and Bahia Blanca.

127. Do they have to buy the land from the Government?—Yes, but every immigrant is exempt from all taxation for five years and gets a grant of land.

128. How much is the grant of land?—I have not got the figures here. If you want to start a butter-factory or dairy you are exempt from all taxation for five years, and, further than that, the local Government guarantees you 5 per cent. on your outlay for three years.

129. Are there many British people there?—There were 66,000 at the last census, and about 80,000 now. There are about five millions in the republic.

130. Principally what?—Spaniards, Italians, Argentinas, Russians—in fact, every nationality. The inducements held out to immigrants are very liberal, as you can see.

131. Are they going in for butter and cheese too?—Very largely. Their output is more than doubling every year. They have captured very nearly the whole of the South African market for butter, and our Trade Commissioner reports that it is looked upon as the best butter in South Africa.

132. *Sir J. G. Ward.*] Can you say, of your own knowledge, whether any country gives as large a price to the producer for sheep as is received generally throughout New Zealand, either in the English market or in South Africa?—No, I cannot say.

133. Would you state your opinion to the Committee as to whether the proposals to establish shops in England would be likely to raise or lower the prices?—My opinion is that it would lower it very much.

134. In consequence of what?—Competition with other countries.

135. Would the proposal, as far as the traders in the Old Country are concerned—that is, the butchers and salesmen—be looked upon with favour or disfavour?—I will read the resolution passed at a meeting of the Manchester and District Meat Retailers' Association: "As this action will be the means of a struggle between the large producing firms of South America, Australia, the United States, Canada, and other countries, and ruin to the meat retailers of this country, we, the members of this association, pledge ourselves to discontinue the sale of all New Zealand meat whatsoever in the event of the New Zealand Government carrying out this scheme."