

that is, the direct boats. They only put butter into the fastest boats. I know I am right in saying that some of the slower boats take up to sixty days.

134. What are we to put the average difference in time between the direct boats on the one hand and the New Zealand and African Company's boats on the other?—I should say about fourteen days. It is a very much longer passage by distance.

135. Is not the difference over twenty days?—No; I do not think so.

136. What is the average number of carcasses of mutton and lamb shipped per month by these boats? I find there are about 130,000 carcasses of mutton and lamb shipped for the seven months?—I have some information here. The "Suffolk" carried 35,000 carcasses of mutton and 33,000 carcasses of lamb. The "Buteshire" followed her with 36,000 carcasses of lamb and 16,000 carcasses of mutton.

137. With regard to perishable cargo, such as meat and butter, I make the quantity about 130,000 of mutton and lamb, and only 1,250 boxes of butter?—Yes.

138. Would not the extra length of time taken by the New Zealand and African Company's steamers account for the small quantity of perishable cargo carried?—No; I think they carried considerable quantities of frozen meat, and the reason why they did not carry so much butter was because they did not start running until the butter season was over.

139. Would you ship perishable goods in a ship taking a long time on the voyage if a ship taking, say, forty or fifty days was available?—Yes. I think the fourteen or fifteen days longer taken on the voyage has no deteriorating effect upon the stuff at all.

140. What about the rates of insurance upon produce carried by the respective lines?—The contract steamers ought to get the very lowest rate, because they are of the very highest class at Lloyd's, and mostly new twin-screw boats.

141. Would not the opening of the hatches at the number of ports to be called at cause a liability to damage and higher insurance rates?—I have not made any inquiries, and have had no occasion to inquire. The extra insurance in any case, if any is charged, would be trifling.

142. Does the New Zealand and African line carry produce to London as well as to the west-coast ports of the United Kingdom?—No. They have carried produce to London, but I understand they are not doing so now.

143. Can you tell the Committee why?—Because they are not going to London; they are going direct to Bristol, thence to Liverpool and Glasgow, &c.

144. Do you know the reason why?—No.

145. Do you know that I could not have a cargo carried to London by the New Zealand and African line because of a compact between them and the other steamship-lines?—No, I know nothing of that. They did carry cargo to London at first.

146. But since the inauguration of this service the Committee understand you to say that they do not carry produce to London?—They are going to west-coast ports and not to London.

147. Do you not know that the reason why they do not carry cargo to London is because they have made a compact with the other companies?—No; I do not know that, and in any case it would not affect our contract.

148. Does the Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company carry any cargo to the west-coast ports now?—I would not be certain. I do not follow the running of their boats so closely. I believe they have loaded boats for the west-coast ports.

149. But would you not be informed upon such a point as that—that is, whether the New Zealand Shipping Company or the Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company, since the contract was entered into, have loaded cargo for the west-coast ports?—They have not done so before, but since the contract was fixed they have loaded for the west-coast ports in opposition to this company.

150. Are you not aware that they have ceased receiving produce here for the west-coast ports?—I have no knowledge of their ceasing to load produce for the west-coast ports recently.

151. Have you not been told that the refusal of the New Zealand and African Steamship Company to take produce to London, and also the refusal of the Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company, who did carry produce from New Zealand to the west-coast ports of England, to continue to do so are on account of this compact I have mentioned?—No one has told me that.

152. With regard to freights from here being cheaper than they are from Australia, is not that a temporary condition of affairs due to the scarcity of frozen meat?—Yes, I think it is temporary.

153. Is it not a fact that, generally speaking, freights from Australia for United Kingdom ports rule lower than in New Zealand?—Yes, that is so.

154. Therefore the present state of affairs is merely temporary?—Yes, I believe that is generally so.

155. Is it within your knowledge that the 25 per cent. extra charged in freight for west-coast ports was always charged, say, to Cardiff, for instance?—There was only one steamer berthed in New Zealand for Cardiff antecedent to the contract, and that was the one mentioned where freights were 25 per cent. higher than those current in London.

156. Do you say only one?—Yes. There was one of the New Zealand Shipping Company's boats that went to Liverpool only, and a Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company's boat which went to Cardiff only.

157. When did the Shipping Company's boat go to Liverpool?—I should say about eighteen months or two years ago.

158. *Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.*] Mr. Buchanan asked whether the time taken by these steamers for the west-coast ports is such as to possibly prevent the shipment of perishable product. Mr. Gilbert Anderson, manager for the Christchurch Meat Company—possibly one of the largest shippers in the colony—has expressed himself in a communication you read to-day to the contrary?—Yes.

159. If there were no service to the west-coast ports direct, would it not mean that all the freezing companies doing business in this colony would make London their depot for the con-