

107. As soon as it comes back it is shipped away?—Yes, but it is accumulating in the sheds. I do not see that there would be any moisture, because in the stores I should say the people themselves would detect any moisture if there was any. The probability is that they might accumulate for some time before the sale, and after the sale they are rushed down to us at the rate of thousands a day.

108. *Mr. Foster.*] Ruanui brand—where does that come from?—Either boat or rail—that is all we know about it.

109. I see the Ruanui brand occurs pretty frequently in this reconditioning list?—It comes *ex rail*; that is all we know about it. The K-shed wool is all railway wool, and the other shed is mixed wool, and in the U shed, that comes in partly by rail and partly by boat.

110. You would have the consignor's name on your record?—Yes; that would be in the railway-book—that is kept in the shed by the Government. We take the wool out and put it away, and await instructions from the ships' owners or agents as to what ship, and it is then dumped and put into that ship's stack.

111. I notice one brand here, G in a circle, twenty-four bales wet?—I think there were a couple of surf-boats turned over.

112. By the "Kahu"?—Yes, coming from the east coast. They sometimes have a mishap and get the boats rolled over.

FREDERICK STUPPLES sworn and examined. (No. 21.)

113. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—Frederick Stupples.

114. You are Assistant Wharfinger in the employ of the Wellington Harbour Board?—Yes.

115. We understand that you can give us some information with reference to shipping wool?—Well, I have had a good deal of experience in dealing with wool until about three years ago—I was principally amongst the wool. Of course, Mr. Arcus has given you a pretty fair idea as to how the wool is received at the sheds. I could only reiterate what he has stated in regard to receiving the wool.

116. You have heard all he has said?—Yes.

117. Do you corroborate all he has said?—Yes.

118. Is there anything you wish to say in addition, or anything that has struck you that he has omitted?—There was an instance came before me on one occasion: the "Gothic" shipped fifty or sixty bales of fellmongered wool in Lyttelton, and when she come up here the stevedores discovered in turning it over that a lot of it was very much heated. That wool was landed, it was put into C shed and opened up, and the wool was evidently heating from the inside; it showed some heat right through, but it was much hotter inside than outside.

119. What was the condition of it inside—had it become black?—It was much darker.

120. Was there any sign of cinders?—Oh, no; only extreme heat—no sign of it turning into cinders or anything of that kind.

121. What was done with it?—That was sent away up to the fellmongery to be reconditioned, and after that it was brought back and shipped. That was the process we used to go through with all wet wool, as Mr. Arcus has said. When Captain Bendall was looking after it, if anything like that came about we used to ring him up and ask him to come along and inspect it. There was another instance with flax. We shipped a lot of flax. At the time the Rangitikei Fibre Company was in full swing we used to get a great quantity of flax down, and some of the men were not very scrupulous in dealing with it. And in mentioning the way the water was running out of the flax in the dumping-shed, we were told afterwards that that was the fault of the balers in the flax-mills. They went in for the practice of making it wet as they were paid so much per ton, and they would throw a bucket or two of water into the bale, and when we got that down here and put the pressure on to it, we squeezed the water out of it. Of course, sometimes we would get some of the flax-mill hands working in the sheds here, and they would know something about it.

122. The water-can had been used there?—Yes, the water-can to make it wet. I remember we used to reject the flax that was wet, and have nothing to do with it.

123. *Mr. Foster.*] In your position, would you have an opportunity of seeing how the wool and other stuff is stowed in the ship?—Well, occasionally it is necessary to go on board the ship. For instance, a wrong dump may get on board the vessel, and then it is necessary to go on board and get it out.

124. Did it ever come under your notice that any other class of stuff is stowed with wool on board ship?—No, they do not usually do that.

125. Have you ever seen flax stowed with wool in the same hold?—I have seen flax stowed in the same hold, but they do not stow it with the wool. For instance, if going to stow the flax they would put it in with dunnage between it, and then the wool against the dunnage.

126. Do they use anything else besides wood dunnage?—They have mats, as a rule, and dunnage to keep it separated.

127. Have you ever seen any of these mats on fire?—No.

128. Do you think they would burn?—I suppose they would burn, but I have never seen any on fire.

129. Do you think they would burn as readily as the woolpack would?—I should not think so—it is a different nature. In regard to your question about the Ruanui wool, I think that comes from somewhere up Hunterville or Taihape way. It comes down usually with Studholme's wool. It sometimes comes down *via* Wanganui and sometimes by rail.

The Commission proceeded to the wharves and sheds of the Wellington Harbour Board, and, under the direction of the Secretary of the Board, was shown the system of receiving, handling, stowing, and checking the wool, and flax, and tow passing through the Board's sheds. The system of testing bales of wool for temperature was demonstrated, and also the system of grading flax.

The Commission conferred.