

with the crane in a good deal less time than you would be able to load the same quantity in 100 lb. sacks. I have never timed them, but I think they can handle seventy-eight bags in from eighteen to twenty minutes.

12. With regard to chaff, are you aware that the new way is to put chaff into bales?—I have never seen it baled.

13. I have a letter here from a farmer in my district. He does not object to 200 lb. being put into a bag provided the size of the bag remains as it is now—26 in. by 48 in. Do you approve of the size of that bag?—I approve of the size of the bag; but I would not approve of having 200 lb. in the bag if I had to handle it.

14. The objection is on account of the weight. We want to reduce the weight to assist the workers at the port. At the present time the weight does not inconvenience the country workers, does it?—No.

15. Therefore we are studying the people at the shipping end. Do you not think that if they had 200 lb., or even less, put into a bag, they ought to come to us, as well as expecting us to go to them. I mean to say this: The present proposal to reduce the weight of the bag comes from the port. Now, as this 26 in. by 48 in. sack is a most convenient size for the farmers to use for carrots, chaff, potatoes, and other commodities which farmers use, do you not think, as one who purchased sacks and knows about the losses from sacks, that the port people should meet us, if we say we should put 200 lb. in a sack?—They might very well meet us by allowing another 10 lb. in the sack, making it 3½ bushels of wheat.

16. As they are unable to handle bags as easily as they used to be at the port, or as they say the handling of heavy sacks has injured them, is it not only fair that the farmers should meet them. And when they ask for a sack of 200 lb., would you not advocate that the present size should be kept; and that we should have an opportunity of turning down the sack?—I would much prefer the present sack to be retained, whatever weight it might contain.

17. What do sacks cost now?—7½d.

18. And second-hand sacks are a fairly valuable asset?—Yes.

19. There would be a great deal more loss, you think, if the sacks were reduced in size?—As a matter of fact a smaller sack would be useless for ordinary farm purposes; the smaller sack would not go on the chaff-cutter.

20. But as a farmer you would not mind giving them 200 lb. if you found they were unable to handle more than that?—No. I would give them that; but would prefer that they should give us a little more in the sack.

21. You are satisfied that a very great loss would arise through using a small bag?—I am satisfied of that.

22. And as representing a large number of farmers, you would say, if the men cannot handle more than 200 lb., let them have that weight?—Yes.

23. With reference to the wisdom of having the sacks turned down at the end and shorter, and also containing 200 lb., in giving your evidence you pointed out that the sack which would be the best sack for the men to handle would be a sack containing 210 lb., yet still of the same length or about the same length as the present one, only narrower?—No; the same sack exactly.

24. As a practical man, would you rather handle a 210 lb. short sack or a 240 lb. long sack?—I believe I could handle a 240 lb. long sack easier.

25. What allowance do farmers now get for sacks when selling grain to merchants?—They sometimes get full value, but generally ½d. less a sack than cost. If they sell immediately after threshing they get full value.

26. If the sacks come back to you for bran, what are they charged?—As a rule they do not come back to us.

27. Instead of getting up a special grain-sack to carry 200 lb. or 210 lb., could the farmers not get a larger sack, as used at present, and use it for chaff and bran?—I suppose they could.

28. Supposing a farmer got 1,000 or 1,200 sacks for his wheat, and at the same time 400 for chaff and bran, what would be the loss to him?—I am informed by the millers that smaller sacks would be of little use to them for "offals." The sack they buy wheat in is valuable to them, because it is used for putting in offals, and 210 lb. of flour, but if it were a smaller sack, it would be of no use to them, and they would ultimately buy the wheat sack in.

29. Mr. Scott said their practice was to send grain down in the sacks, and to get them back second-hand, charged at a reduced rate. They then used them for oats, &c., with the result that they reckoned the loss to them would be about 1d. per sack. What would hinder the miller putting his bran in a 46 in. by 24 in. bag, instead of a 48 in. by 26 in.?—I think the reason is that they could not get the ordinary quantity in it.

30. Am I to understand that the millers say that they would not allow anything?—Yes; they told us that at their last meeting.

31. Would it not be cheaper and more convenient for the farmers to have a light sack, which could be handled by manual power than one requiring mechanical appliances?—I do not think it would. I know the men would prefer the present appliances than to have to lift 200 lb. on to the drays.

32. You know that in our stores we do not use horse-power?—I know they do in Ashburton. In the country they invariably use the horse.

33. About on an average, how long are the men on the farms working with the 240 lb. sacks?—Three weeks or a month, according to the size of the farm, or the distance from the railway. Speaking in the interests not only of the men in the stores, but in the interests of the whole country, I believe the 240 lb. sack is excessive.

34. If we could get the millers to say that they would be prepared to make a proportionate allowance for the smaller sacks, would that to a large extent do away with the financial objection of the farmers?—Yes, I think it would. The difficulty is in having two sizes of sacks. Some two or three years ago a shipment of smaller-size sacks came to Ashburton, and I got some of them, but found them an inconvenient size. And after the bags came into second-hand use they were