

simply a nuisance on the place, getting mixed up with other bags, resulting in loss of the men's time.

35. *The Chairman.*] What was the size of those bags?—44 in. If the 240 lb. bag is insisted upon, shall we be compelled to get a bag to suit that weight? If it came to a matter of a 200 lb. or a 210 lb. bag, then for stacking purposes the narrower bag would be better, as we can work it in with the 210 lb. bag.

36. Have you ever heard yourself of a man being injured through handling these heavy bags?—No. My experience is confined to farms; but I have made it my business to make inquiries regarding shops and stores, and one of the head men told me that he had known men get swollen glands in the neck through holding their heads down when carrying sacks.

37. Have you ever heard of any one being ruptured?—No.

38. If there were a competition between a dozen equally capable men, the one lot handling 100 lb. sacks, and the other 240 lb. sacks, do you think the men handling the heavier sacks would carry a greater total weight in a given time than those carrying the lighter sacks?—If the smaller sacks had to be passed from hand to hand the men with the big sacks would win.

39. Must not the handling of these heavier bags be largely confined to men in their prime of life?—You would be surprised, sir, to see with how little trouble a man can handle them when he gets used to it. I had a medium-sized man of 12 stone carrying bags from the threshing-machine who could thread his needle while he was carrying a bag.

40. What is the average age at which young men should start handling these bags?—I started at seventeen.

41. Yes, but take the average boy after he has left school, when should the average boy tackle a bag of 240 lb.?—He should not be put to that work at that age.

42. What I want to get at is this: Is the handling of the sacks of the heavier weight not largely confined to men who are at their best?—Yes, that is so.

43. And what is to become of those men who are getting a little over their best: must they look out for other work?—Yes, I think so.

44. *Mr. Flatman.*] Do you know whether millers object to small bags because of their not fitting some of the spouts in the mill?—I have not heard that reason advanced; but Richard Evans told us smaller sacks would be useless to the miller. I hand in a letter dated the 24th August, 1907, from the managing director, Friedlander Bros. (Limited), Ashburton, on the subject of grain-sacks. [Exhibit E.]

Mr. GEORGE RUTHERFORD examined. (No. 6.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are —?—A casual tally-clerk at the Lyttelton Railway-station, and secretary of the Lyttelton Casual Railway Union. I have been asked by your Committee to give evidence with reference to the weight and size of grain-sacks (wheat, peas, and beans). From experience and from information gathered I beg to state: The storage accommodation at Lyttelton is capable of storing nearly 500,000 sacks of grain. At the present time 200,000 sacks in the sheds and four or five times that number sent direct by the farmers to the ship's side would represent a fair grain season. The 200,000 sacks would be handled twice in the course of a year—once when put into the shed, and once when taken out. Of recent years improvements have been made in the loading and discharging of grain from railway-trucks by the introduction of elevating machinery, which has obviated the necessity for carrying sacks up planks and tall ladders when building the stacks. But before the lifts and elevators can be used considerable carrying still has to be done. An ordinary shed-gang consists of six men—one working in the truck, one on the stack, and four carrying. In a day of eight hours this gang can discharge 20 trucks, each containing 60 sacks, making a total of 120 tons. For this work each man gets paid at the rate of 10s. per day, which works out at 6d. per ton. A railway-gang at the ship's side consists of two men in the trucks. And a ship's carrying-gang—from the truck to the chute—contains four or five men. In a day of eight hours they can discharge on an average 32 trucks of 60 sacks per truck—192 tons, or 4 trucks per hour. The men complain bitterly of the weight of the sacks, and blame the heavy carrying for their varicose veins and ruptures. If asked to continue their work day in and day out they would refuse to do it, and seek other work. I have seen men come out of the ship's hold after two or three hours' heavy carrying refusing to carry another sack, because they had to stoop the whole time to avoid the overhead beam, and each bump they got strained some part of their neck. These men are of opinion that the sack of grain should weigh not more than 200 lb., and that it should be about the same length as the one now used, only narrower. They say that to carry 200 lb. in the present sack, with the mouth turned down, would be harder on account of its shortness. When bending down to get the bag on to the back they have to lift it bodily, and, being short, it lies on the neck instead of on the shoulder. Therefore they believe that the strain on the leaders and nerves of the neck will in time affect the brain, and cause insomnia. A narrower sack of the present length would carry better. The shed carrying-gang say the most suitable size would be narrower, but not shorter. The sack they carry now is 48 in. by 26½ in. If this were reduced to 46 in. by 24 in., with the weight not exceeding 200 lb., it would be suitable for carrying and stacking, they say, and could be used at the mill for the offal at a reduced weight. The men further complain that when climbing up ladders they are unable to balance the short sack on the shoulder, and, having only one hand available to hold the sack, its whole weight here, again, falls on the neck. They believe this will affect the brain, and that we shall have our mental asylums filled to the utmost as a result of grain-carrying. The men are quite indignant when they think of the weight of the sack not being reduced years ago. They consider that 200 lb. is quite heavy enough for any man to carry constantly. I will now give the opinions of the storemen at Lyttelton on the handling of sacks in their respective sheds. Mr. A. Shrimpton, at the Railway-sheds, says that during a fair grain season between sixty and seventy thousand sacks are stored in his sheds. There is an elevator in one of the sheds, but no machinery in the other, where the bags have to be carried by hand. A gang of men will discharge twenty trucks in a day of eight hours; and he believes that if the