

88. In what way would they alter them?—A certain width of sack fits on to the spout where the wheat comes out, and all these would have to be altered.

89. The spout which the wheat runs through would not be more than, perhaps, 8 in. or 9 in.?—What I stated is one of the arguments brought forward by farmers.

90. It would not affect the threshing-mill?—I do not know of my own personal knowledge. I have always understood that it would.

91. *Mr. Hardy.*] It would affect the chaff-cutters made by Andrews and Beaven?—Yes.

92. You know that these sacks are used over and over again for chaff?—Yes.

93. They are much more used for chaff than they are for wheat?—They are used two or three times.

94. That is where economy would come in?—Yes.

95. *Mr. Laurensen.*] It would be possible, I suppose, for Andrews and Beaven to alter their machinery?—It is quite possible, I suppose.

96. I notice from your list that the Calcutta people quote bran-bags for Australia at 2s. 5d. a dozen less than they quote grain-sacks, and these bran-bags are 49 in. by 30 in., as against grain-sacks 46 in. by 26½ in.—the difference between the two is over 2s. a dozen. Would it not be possible, supposing we fixed on a small wheat-bag, to import these bran-bags, and the farmers could put their lighter stuff into these?—That is what they are used for in Australia, and not only for bran, but for chaff. You do not have chaff in corn-sacks over there.

97. They put it into the bran-bags?—Yes.

FRIDAY, 4TH OCTOBER, 1907.

JOHN TALBOT examined. (No. 9.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are chairman of the Canterbury Farmers' Co-operative Association?—Yes, and a farmer, of course.

2. Would you prefer to make a statement regarding your experience of corn-sacks?—I will say a few words, and then answer any questions. Anything that I may say will be from two points of view—that is, from the farming point of view and from the mercantile point of view—the point of view of the merchant and the grain-storeman. The farmers would probably be just as well pleased to let things remain as they are. This 48 in. sack is common over Canterbury, and I think it is almost exclusively used in Canterbury. The reason why it is preferred in Canterbury is that it is more suitable for chaff than a smaller bag. It is also the more suitable for oats, probably. I do not say that it is from my point of view, but that is what is stated to me. And there is the question, if you have the smaller-sized sacks on the place, they would probably get mixed with the larger ones when you came to fill bags with chaff; and the same with potatoes. I am assuming that if we got a smaller-sized sack to put the 200 lb. of wheat in and the larger sack were used for oats, &c. So that I would say, considering that the farmers do not mind the small amount of handling there may be on their places—that is, the carting, and so on—and have no stacking much to do, and would not trouble about the extra weight, they would just as soon that the sack remained as it is—probably they would rather have that of the two. On the other hand, I doubt whether the objection would be very great if the smaller sack were introduced. I myself would, I think, rather have it, and I would just as soon have it for everything. The 44 in. sack would not hold quite as much chaff, but I do not see that that would matter greatly. Chaff-cutting is oftentimes now done by the ton, and I do not think it would matter so greatly, and I think that with potatoes even the smaller sack would be just as handy. With oats also we should, I think, get sufficient into the smaller sack, and wheat, of course, there will be no question about whatever. As a matter of fact, some time ago such regulations were introduced that the smaller sack was necessary for wheat, and we had to use it. We were using these sacks—many hundreds of them—and they were carted into the stores and loaded on the drays, and I think we should have adopted them, and there would have been no trouble whatever, but some representations were made, and the thing was upset. As a matter of fact, the Canterbury Farmers' Associations had imported their year's supply, expecting that those sacks would be compulsory, with the result that before a very great many had gone out the alteration came about, and they found they were left with a stock of sacks on hand, and they had to get rid of them the best way they could and get the others the best way they could to supply the farmers' demands, because immediately the alteration took place some of the millers said, "We will not take those smaller sacks; you must put your grain into big ones or we will not take it." And the opposition then, I do not think, would have come from the farmers. Well, now, speaking from the mercantile point of view, since this Committee has been inquiring, the manager of my association has been sending round circulars and getting evidence from all the business people in Timaru, and I had hoped that this would have been before you; but, unfortunately, although I asked the manager to send it up, it has not come to hand. However, I can tell you substantially that the evidence collected is almost entirely in favour of the smaller sack. They say that it does permanently injure the men to stack those big sacks so high, that it creates trouble with their back and neck, and ultimately injures them, and that the choice of men would be over a far wider field if they had the smaller sack, and that the stacking is no trouble to them; they would just as soon stack the smaller sack, or would rather do so. Where there were one or two in Timaru that did object to the smaller sack, it was probably on the ground that it would not hold 200 lb.; but I can say without any doubt whatever that three-fourths or four-fifths of the evidence collected in Timaru would be in favour of the smaller sack—that is, in the town itself. Of course, for the country districts and the farmers I could not speak; but speaking for myself as a farmer, I say that I would not object to the smaller sack.