1907.

NEW ZEALAND.

EXTENSION OF COMMERCE COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF THE) ON THE SIZE OF CORN-SACKS; TOGETHER WITH THE MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

(MR. T. MACKENZIE, CHAIRMAN.)

Report brought up on the 7th November, 1907, and ordered to be printed.

ORDER OF REFERENCE.

Extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

THURSDAY, THE 11TH DAY OF JULY, 1907.

Ordered, "That a Committee be appointed, consisting of ten members, to inquire into and report as to the best means of promoting the commerce of the colony, and the sale of the colony's produce in markets other than those at present obtainable; the Committee to have power to call for persons and papers; three to be a quorum. The Committee to consist of Mr. Aitken, Mr. Barber, Mr. Bollard, Mr. Flatman, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Hogg, Mr. Laurenson, Mr. T. Mackenzie, the Right Hon. Sir Joseph Ward, and the mover."—(Hon. Mr. McGOWAN.)

REPORT.

THE Committee having fully considered this question, and having taken evidence thereupon, is of opinion that the weight of cereals in sacks carried over the railways should not exceed 200 lb., and that it be a recommendation to the Government to bring such a new regulation into operation as early as practicable without subjecting producers to loss.

T. MACKENZIE,
Chairman.

Thursday, 7th November, 1907.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

FRIDAY, 30TH AUGUST, 1907.

ROBERT SCOTT, farmer, Kyeburn, examined. No. 1.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You represent the Farmers' Union, I understand, Mr. Scott?—I am president of the Otago Provincial Executive of the New Zealand Farmers' Union.

2. Will you state the case from the farmers' point of view, as to what size of sack you consider most suitable?—Yes, sir. The sack in general use among the farmers of Otago is the 44 in., and occasionally the 46 in. The 44 in. is what we call the ordinary 4-bushel sack, and it is a sack of what I may term general usefulness. It is a sack that we use for all sorts of produce. It is used likewise for coal and other things. The weight of the 4-bushel sack when filled, of course, you are all aware of. The only thing that seems to be a little bit heavy, perhaps, in it is rye and wheat, but we have no complaints from our men as to the weight when they are loading drays or anything like that. The position, so far as we can see from a farmers' point of view, is this: that if the bags were changed to a smaller size it would mean inconvenience and expense. For instance, if the size of the bags was changed so that they would only hold 200 lb. weight, that sized bag would not be so useful a bag after it was emptied as the bags we now have in use. Take chaff, for instance. A large number of second-hand bags are used for chaff. Well, this smaller-sized bag would be inconvenient and mean a loss. It would be inconvenient, because there would be more bags to fill, and there would be a loss in the way of railage. We are allowed to put 140 bags of chaff on a truck, and naturally there would not be the same weight in 140 bags if we used the small one that there is with the present ones. The question of storage also comes up. When we have our grain in the store we pay by the bag, and for the small bags we should be paying proportionately more. The opinion generally throughout Otago at all our meetings—branch meetings, conferences, and provincial executive meetings—has been that the size of the bag now in use should be adhered to—that is, the 4-bushel or 44 in. bag.

3. *Mr. Laurenson.*] You said that your men did not complain of the weight of the sacks when loading a dray?—That is so.

4. How long during the year are they engaged in carrying wheat to drays—does that comprise much of their work?—Oh, no! It depends on the size of the place. It may be a matter of only a week or ten days.

5. Is it not a yearly job?—No.

6. But just a casual thing: when they are loading these drays, do they have to go up any flights of ladders?—There would probably be two or three tiers of bags on the dray or wagon being loaded.

7. They do not have to go up to any great height?—No. They lift them from tier to tier.

8. You say that one of the great objections to the use of a smaller bag for grain is that when you came to get the bag returned and to use if for your chaff, you would have to fill more bags in order to get the same quantity of chaff away?—Yes.

9. And that the Railway take 140 bags to the truck at present, and that instead of getting, say, 2 tons into 140 bags, you might only get a ton and a half?—Yes.

10. Well, supposing the size of the sacks was reduced, and the Railway said, "Well, now the sacks are smaller, instead of allowing you to send 140 sacks away in a truck we will allow 160": would that meet that position?—Scarcely. More handling would be entailed, more sewing, and more expert work at the bagger. Under these circumstances, the larger the bags we can get at the bagger the better it is, because you must understand that bags of chaff are cut at the rate of anything from 60 to 100 bags an hour. If the size of the bags were reduced, it would be impossible for the men to do it.

11. Do you, as a practical farmer, grow wheat on your farm?—Yes.

12. Have you ever lost anything through bags bursting, or through leakage from the wheat-bags?—No, I personally have not. I do not grow a great deal of wheat myself.

13. Has this thought ever struck you: that these excessively large bags put such a strain on the sacks as to cause bursting and a good deal of loss that might be obviated if the bags were smaller?—It might be so if an inferior class of bag were used, but with careful handling I do not see that any new bags should burst with wheat. It is almost the universal rule to put first wheat into new bags.

14. You do not know of any loss in that way?—I never heard of it.

15. Of course, you have not been much in the stores at the shipping ports?—No.

16. Boiled down, the great objection that the farmers have to a reduction in the size of sacks is that they would have smaller bags to put their chaff and bran and stuff such as that in?—That is one of the chief objections.

17. And the chief objection after that is that the Railway charge so-much for so-many sacks, and you would not be able to send away the same amount of stuff for the money you now pay?—That is one of the objections, and another is the greater amount of work that would be entailed in chaff-cutting and sewing the bags.

18. Would the delay that would be caused by sewing up these extra bags make a great difference in the course of a day or two or three days?—I should think it would.

19. Of course, you are only chaff-cutting for a very limited period in the year?—We are chaff-cutting all the year round.

20. Not every day?—Oh, no!

21. How many days in the year are you chaff-cutting—two days a month?—Some of us are, for part of the year.

22. That is, twenty-four days in the year?—Yes.

23. There would be a certain loss of time on account of having to sew up a few more bags?—There would be also be the extra time at the threshing-mill.

24. If the Railway met you by saying, "Instead of 140 of these large-sized bags we will allow you to send on a truck 160 or 170 of the smaller bags," would that not do away with that point?—It would, but there would be a greater number to handle.

25. But do you not know that you can handle a greater number of smaller bags in the same time and turn out the same quantity of stuff?—I do not know that that follows. Say two or three men are engaged in loading a wagon with chaff. Two men throw the bags to the man up on top, who is building. It would not make any appreciable difference.

26. You understand that we are not complaining about the size of sacks for chaff—it is the size of the 240 lb. bags for wheat?—So far as I understand, it resolves itself into this: if we have a smaller sack all our produce will be affected by that smaller sack. It will put us to extra expense in having to get different sizes of sacks.

27. When you send wheat away, do you get those sacks back, or do they go to London?—We do not get them back. They are sent into the store with wheat in them, and we are allowed so-much per bag.

28. How much?—About ½d. or ¾d. less than the cost price—something like that.

29. Well, when you get your bags back for chaff ——?—We order chaff-bags through our agents.

30. You get second-hand bags?—Yes.

31. What do you pay for them?—A certain price that will be quoted according to the quality. For new bags that have been only once filled, well, I have paid as much as 5½d.

32. Supposing that instead of getting second-hand bags for chaff for which you pay 5½d., you got new bags, what would you pay for them?—7½d., I think, this year.

33. I am speaking of an average year?—In an average year I suppose they would run about 6d.

34. We will say 6½d.—that would be a difference of 1d. a sack. If you got brand-new bags from Dunedin it would make a difference of 1d. a sack?—Yes.

35. That is all the objection that the farmer has, that he would not get a second-hand bag back to put his chaff in, and the difference between a second-hand bag and a new bag to put his chaff in is 1d. a bag?—That is about what it would amount to in that way, but even at 1d. a bag it runs into a good bit of money.

36. You do not take into consideration at all the effect of handling these 240 lb. bags on men who are engaged in it day in and day out all the year round?—We have not had experience of that.

37. You have not considered that?—We have, but as far as our case is concerned, we think that the 44 in. sack is the most useful sack for all the farming community.

38. What is the size of the 240 lb. grain-sack?—44 in. Some farmers may use 46 in. sacks.

39. You have no knowledge of this fact: that when the men are handling large sacks such as those, the work has to be done more slowly than if they were handling smaller bags?—When they are carrying them, you mean?

40. Yes?—I should think so.

41. *Mr. Hardy.*] The farmers would not object to the weight being reduced, I presume, provided the sack were still left the same?—Well, perhaps they would not have such an objection; but I might point out this fact: that if the sack was still left the same and 200 lb. of wheat were put into it and it was turned down, there would be a difficulty about stacking such sacks. You see the ordinary sack is two in width for one in length. If you double this sack down you will not get the length in the two widths.

42. Have you not generally found in life that where there is a will there is a way?—Yes.

43. Is it not better to reduce the weight in the sack than to injure the men who load the ships?—Oh, yes.

44. Is it within your knowledge that more machinery is now used for loading and unloading sacks than used to be the case when you were much younger?—Yes.

45. I presume you know that most threshing-machine owners have whips which take the sacks up from the stacks and load their wagons?—Yes, a good many have.

46. So the weight of the sack is not now a matter of such great importance to the farmer as it used to be?—Oh, no.

47. But you are of opinion that it is wise to still keep the sack the same size, even though the commodity in the sack may be reduced in weight?—I am still of that opinion.

48. Are not sacks largely used for chaff, potatoes, carrots, and grass-seed?—Yes.

49. Do you know anything about the rise in the price of jute, which has increased the price of sacks?—No. I understand there has been a scarcity of jute, or something of that.

50. Bags were very difficult to procure last year at 7s. 6d. a dozen?—Yes.

51. You know that?—I know they have been at a high price.

52. And probably they will be 8s. this year?—Yes.

53. You are not surprised at the fact that sacks have increased in value, as other commodities have done?—That is so.

54. You contend that the size of the sack should remain as it is on account of the economy to the farmer in using second-hand bags?—I do.

55. Because all the second-hand bags which he requires are, to all intents and purposes, second-hand grain-sacks?—Yes, his own grain-sacks.

56. In what way do they come back to him?—He may order them for any purpose he likes. If he buys coal he will get a certain number. If he is a man who does not grow potatoes he will get so many with his potatoes. And when he gets flour he will get some. They all come back to the farmer.

57. As a representative of farmers you would not object to a reduction in the weight, provided that the bag was not reduced in size?—We should not have such a great objection, but we should still have an objection to that, on account of the extra trouble in sewing.

58. Men are not so strong as they used to be?—Well, I know I am not.

59. We have a right to think of other workers?—Undoubtedly.

60. And if there has been a reasonable outcry, the farmers would not object?—I do not know what the individual farmers would do. I can only speak of the resolutions that have been passed by my association, and from my own personal knowledge. Some individual farmers might object most strongly.

61. *Mr. Bollard.*] Do you think that 200 lb. in weight of anything the farmer produces is quite enough to put in any bag?—It is a fair weight, I admit that.

62. Do you think it would be better for all parties—for the men who are handling bags day after day and year after year—that they should not be asked to deal with more than 200 lb. in any sized sack?—Of course, I could hardly say. I know that if a man is in the habit of handling weights he becomes accustomed to it, and can do it with much greater ease and alacrity than a man who goes at it green. Perhaps a 200 lb. sack would be a very heavy weight to me, who has not been accustomed to lifting for some years, and yet another man, who has been in the habit of lifting, would lift a much greater weight—say, 260 lb.

63. Supposing the men at the stores had a thousand sacks to deal with, they would deal quicker with a thousand sacks of 200 lb. weight than 1,000 sacks of 240 lb. There would be less strain upon them?—I should think there would.

64. Do you not think that if they were dealing with 200 lb. sacks they would handle the same weight of grain of any sort in a quicker time than if the sacks were 240 lb. ones?—I should not like to say they would handle it in quicker time, because they would have an extra bag in every five or six, would they not? It would be hardly reasonable to say they would handle it in quicker time.

65. Supposing two men had to put 2 tons of wheat upon a dray, do you think they would put it on quicker with 100 lb. bags than 240 lb. bags?—I do not think they would.

66. My experience is to the contrary?—One man would do it quicker, certainly, but if you put two they would not.

67. *Mr. Aitken.*] Do any farmers in your association keep their men employed at lifting sacks of grain, day in and day out, for a week or a month at a time?—Not down our way.

68. That being the case, the view that we wish you to take cannot possibly present itself to you in a practical way, can it? There are at the ports men who are employed day in and day out for weeks on end?—Yes.

69. Would you like to see men in your employ carrying sacks holding 240 lb. of grain all day long for weeks at a time?—No, I should not like to see any man do it. Is it done? Do they handle these sacks for weeks at a time?

70. It is represented to us that that is the case at ports where grain is handled—that they get the men to handle grain in that way for weeks at a time. Granting that that is the case, would it modify your association's opinion as to the size of sacks?—I cannot speak as to that.

71. Give us your own opinion?—My own opinion is that we would rather sacrifice the weight.

72. And take the smaller sacks?—No.

73. You would rather sew down the bag?—Yes.

74. *Mr. Hogg.*] I presume that the main consideration with you is the saving of time and money?—Yes, it is.

75. You consider that by handling good-sized bags labour is economized with regard to sewing, and in various ways?—Yes.

76. Do you find that amongst the workmen employed there are great variations in the physical strength of the individuals?—Very much so.

77. What do you think is a fair burden for the average worker to be carrying for hours together?—I really could not say. I have had no experience of that. Our experience is in lifting sacks on to drays, or in stacking a barn.

78. Have you found any difficulty at any time in getting men able to carry those weights?—No. The men who work our teams make no trouble about it.

79. They are accustomed to the work?—They may grumble a little about it the first day, but after they get a bit seasoned at it those who are at big places say that it makes no difference to them. They would just as soon handle a bag of wheat as a bag of oats. I am speaking now of loading drays and stacking in barns.

80. Do you know of any cases where permanent injury has arisen from the carrying of those sacks?—No.

81. You have heard no complaints of the kind?—No.

82. *Mr. Barber.*] Supposing you did take a small-sized sack for wheat, the returned sacks would come into use afterwards for many articles, such as potatoes or turnips, or anything like that—that sack would still be available as a second-hand sack?—It might be available, but it would make an alteration in the present custom of giving, say, twelve bags of potatoes to the ton. It would then really mean thirteen.

83. That would only alter the present custom a little bit?—Yes.

84. Do you think there would be very much loss in handling all the heavy articles in smaller-sized sacks?—No, perhaps there would not be so much loss in handling the whole of the heavy products, but there would be a loss in handling the lighter products.

85. But, supposing you confined the use of the small sacks to heavy products?—Then it would mean that the farmer would have to keep two sizes of sacks.

86. Supposing you adopted one size of sack for heavy articles, and a larger-sized sack for light commodities such as chaff, instead of using the returned grain-sacks for chaff, there would be a gain on that side?—There would be a loss, because we should have to keep two sizes of sack.

87. You are now using a sack that comes in for heavy and light produce?—Yes.

88. Would it not meet your own convenience if you adopted a small-sized sack for heavy things and increased the size of the present corn-sack for light things—the one would offset the other?—I think it would be much more convenient for us to have only one size of sack. The present sack is a sack of general usefulness. I have no doubt the thing would work all right, as you say, but it would cause a lot of confusion.

89. If there were only two sizes, and one was very much larger than the other, would there be much confusion?—I think there would. A man would always have to keep two sizes separate and distinct.

90. Do you mean to say that having a large sack for chaff and a small sack for wheat and other heavy things would be a very great drawback to the farming community?—It think it would.

91. *The Chairman.*] I suppose you know that when the regulations were gazetted in October, 1903, limiting the sack to 200 lb., there were a good many farmers using 5-bushel sacks holding 320 lb. of wheat?—I have just been made aware of that. It was not general in Otago.

92. Regarding the stacking, if the Calcutta people narrowed the width of the web, would it not be possible to shape a bag that would hold 200 lb. and lie stock-still?—Oh, yes.

93. It has been contended that the 200 lb. sack even now can be stacked twenty-five tiers high. Do you think that could be carried out with 200 lb. bags?—Do you mean the sack that you are speaking of built in proportion?

94. No, the sacks at present in use?—With a piece turned down?

95. I do not know how it is done, but the statement was made that the bags now used containing 200 lb. could be stacked twenty-five tiers high?—It may be done. I have had no experience of it.

96. You do not agree to two sizes of sacks, one for carrying lighter stuff and the other for heavier?—I would not agree to that.

97. Then your evidence is in the direction of retaining the present-sized sack?—Yes.

98. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] What sized sack do you prefer for grain generally?—The 44 in. sack.

99. Of what weight?—Well, as farmers we want to get as much in our bags as possible, but we are for 4-bushel bags; that means 160 lb. of oats, 200 lb. of barley, and 240 lb. of wheat.

100. You know the ordinary flour-sacks?—Yes.

101. What is your opinion about them so far as the farmer's using them is concerned, even when they are second-hand?—There are a lot of flour-sacks in use that are, I think, 42's.

102. You know that flour is generally sold in 200 lb. sacks?—Yes.

103. That is the universal weight of flour-sacks?—Yes.

104. Do you or do you not find those sacks of convenient size?—Some of them, but some are not. Some are short sacks.

105. You mean to say now that what you want is to get the greatest amount of stuff into the sack, whatever the size may be—that is, you want the greatest result for your money?—Not always.

106. Well, then, give us a case in which you do not want that?—Well, a farmer would fill his bags to run 4 bushels to the bag. There are some farmers who would ram all the grain they could into the bag, but the bulk of the farmers reckon on 4 bushels to the bag right through—that is, with grain.

107. Do you prefer that 4-bushel size right through?—We prefer that size.

JOHN ANSTEY examined. (No. 2.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are a farmer, Mr. Anstey?—Yes.

2. We shall be glad to hear your evidence on this question of the most suitable size for corn-sacks: would you like to make a statement, or to be questioned?—I think I should prefer to make a statement first.

3. You are not representing any association of any kind?—I have no authority to represent any one.

4. But you are connected with an association?—Yes.

5. And you think that probably the opinions you express are the views of the association?—There is a variety of opinion, but I think I can indicate what backing my views would have. I propose to analyse the question rather than give very definite opinions. I am speaking to-day as a practical farmer, a man who, all his life, right up to the present season, has actually had the handling of grain-sacks. In addition to actually handling grain, I have also had to pay for the handling of it; I can therefore claim to speak fairly authoritatively on both sides of the question. As a practical man, and speaking from my own feelings on the subject, I should say that there is no necessity for any alteration in the size of the present sack. It is a convenient sack for all farm purposes. From my own personal feeling I do not consider it too heavy, although I recognise that there are quite a number of people less robust than myself for whom the weight of 240 lb. might be considered rather excessive. Consequently, I think it a mistake to alter the weight of the sack. As a practical man, I recognise that the labourer who has got to handle these sacks has also a right to say what weight is suitable for him to handle; but if it is likely that we are going to make any alteration in the size and weight of the sack, such size and weight must be regulated in such a way as to cause the minimum of cost and the minimum of inconvenience. It must be conceded that whatever alteration is made, there must be some additional cost to the farmer. It is impossible to make any alteration without its meaning an extra cost to the farmer. First of all, I should unhesitatingly condemn a reduction of the weight in the present sack to 200 lb. This was tried, as you gentlemen all remember, a year of two ago, and proved an utter fiasco. It increased the cost to farmers. They had to purchase twelve sacks instead of 10, which meant the price of two sacks extra for every ton. The sack, when sewn with 200 lb. in it, was an extremely awkward one to handle owing to its awkward shape. I had more complaints from my men handling those sacks during that one season than I ever had in

my life before, all put together. Every man condemned the 200 lb. sack as an awkward thing to load. To explain this I may point out that it is very often the shape of a package rather than its weight that increases or decreases its convenience of handling. When a man goes to take a sack up on his shoulders, from the tail of a dray or any other place, a long sack overbalances itself and thus helps in the lifting, and I have no hesitation in saying that it is much harder for a man to get 200 lb. of wheat in the existing sack on to his shoulder than 240 lb. Once on his shoulder it is easier to carry, but it is harder to get there. To get a 200 lb. sack on to a dray is much harder than to get a 240 lb. one. One man can easily load a 240 lb. sack on to a dray, but to load a 200 lb. sack on a dray I had to get two men. The result of that regulation, which was afterwards withdrawn—and this made things worse than they were when it was there—was that a whole lot of us had to buy these extra sacks, and having gone to all this additional expense we found that it was quite nullified—that we had simply wasted our money for absolutely nothing. Some farmers managed to save a little by purchasing a sack of 44 in. instead of the usual 48 in. When these sacks were delivered to the millers with grain in them they refused to pay for them, because these sacks would not hold 200 lb. of flour. The farmers were thereby again caused quite an unnecessary additional expense. So I hope that any alteration that is likely to be made will certainly not be in the direction of a simple limitation in the weight in the existing sacks to 200 lb. I also very strongly condemn the proposal to limit the weight of wheat-sacks to 100 lb. Limiting the weight to 100 lb. would involve the importation of a special sack which we do not now have. That sack would be utterly useless for any other farm purposes than wheat; consequently, when the wheat was sold, the sacks would have to be given in. There would be a very large increase in the cost of handling these sacks. To prove this I will point to what happened a few years ago when very large orders for oats in sacks of 80 lb. each came from Africa. At that time the merchants gave us the sacks without any charge. They also gave us a halfpenny a bushel more for oats put in that sack than if they were in 4-bushel sacks. On making a calculation I found that the extra cost to me was not made up by the additional halfpenny, plus the sack given me. That, I think, you may fairly take as meaning that if you insist on the 100 lb. sack it will cost the farmer fully a halfpenny per bushel dead loss. We had to employ an extra man at the mill to fill these small sacks, and even then it was a most unsatisfactory process, and caused a lot of unnecessary feeling. Having condemned the two systems that I think have been proposed, let me now suggest, if there is to be an alteration at all—which I have already stated I oppose—a system which I think might be adopted with some advantage and with about the minimum inconvenience to the man who will have to pay for it. If it is necessary to reduce the weight of the sack to 200 lb., it is essential that the sack should be reduced in width so that the full sack when sewn up shall be twice as long as it is wide. In order to accomplish that, steps must be taken to introduce a sack of that description. To introduce a sack of that description it will be necessary for the Government themselves to undertake what I am afraid is rather a big undertaking. At present all the corn-sacks made in India are made 26½ in. wide. They can be cut to any length you please, but the width cannot be altered except at considerable expense and some trouble. From communications received from India we found that this narrow sack cannot be imported at present, but that the sackmakers in India were quite ready to supply sacks of that width, provided they got an order sufficiently large and sufficiently continuous to warrant their altering the machinery for the purpose. To import sacks such as I suggest, about 24½ in. wide, would at present, or under any circumstances we now think of, cost very considerably more than to import the present larger size. But if an order such as I speak of, sufficiently large and sufficiently continuous to warrant the alteration in the machinery, were arranged, then this narrow sack could be imported at a price possibly a fraction less than the present sack. Now, in order to introduce a system such as I speak of, it would be necessary for the Government here to act in conjunction with the Governments of the Australian States and arrange for the introduction of a standard sack such as I speak of. If we had such a sack it would be a fairly long step in the direction of introducing the cental system. This sack would hold 200 lb. of wheat; it would hold 150 lb. of oats—both a step in the direction of the cental system. This sack would be used for other farm purposes, such as coal, potatoes, chaff, flour. In the case of potatoes, coal, flour, we should use twelve sacks to the ton instead of ten. It would have this advantage: that you could sell a quarter of a ton of either of those things. You cannot sell a quarter of a ton now, because 2½ sacks make a quarter of a ton. That is one slight advantage you would gain by such an adoption. This 200 lb. sack, although not quite so convenient as the present one, would be found to be useful for all farm purposes. For instance, it would be used for chaff. At present one of the most inconvenient products that we have to handle is a sack of oat-sheaf chaff. To my mind it is infinitely harder to load than a sack of wheat, strange though this may seem. To load one of the present sacks of oat-sheaf chaff you have to take the sack into your hands and lift it over your head on to the dray. A sack of wheat is over-ended and only part of it is lifted. Personally I consider that a sack of oat-sheaf chaff is the hardest and most dangerous bag that a man can lift. To that extent, at all events, a 200 lb. sack would be, I think, an advantage. There is really only one very serious objection to the introduction of such a sack on a farm, excepting its additional cost; that is that our chaff-cutters—many of them, at all events—would have to be altered in order to enable them to be properly filled—I mean the barrels of our chaff-cutters. Some of them, at all events, are too large for this reduced-size sack, and would have to be altered. I do not think that would be a very serious thing. I think that is about all I have to say. I will just recapitulate. Do not make this alteration to 200 lb. in the existing sack. If you do you will arouse no end of opposition. If an alteration has to be made, let us have a definite alteration, and have it in a form that will entail a minimum of inconvenience. So far as the small extra cost is concerned, I think quite a number of farmers would be ready to meet it if they could thereby meet the wishes of those who have got to handle sacks; but bear in mind that whatever you do will mean some small addition to the cost. I may say that there are a considerable number of farmers who would favour a reduction in the size of the sack on this ground: There are quite a number of our lads of

from sixteen to twenty years of age who have to handle sacks. 240 lb. is rather heavy for them, and to them there would be an advantage as against the disadvantage of the small extra cost. I do not think the whole body of farmers would very seriously object, provided the extra cost were small and the inconvenience not appreciable. I may say that when this question was under discussion I got six sacks sewn to the width suggested, filled with 200 lb. of wheat, sewn, and stacked for exhibition, and all agreed that such a sack would be a very nice sack to handle. Its length was twice its width, it stacked conveniently, and it was very convenient to handle.

6. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] Would you prefer to see the sacks remain as they are, or to have what you suggest in regard to the 200 lb. sack?—I have said very clearly that from my own personal experience I do not wish any change. I think there is no urgent necessity for it. But, as I said, I recognise that those who have to handle sacks have a right to have a say. I prefer, and I think a very large majority of farmers would prefer, the sack to remain at it is.

7. *Mr. Hogg.*] I understand from what you say that if the Government would take the steps that you suggest with a view to having an alteration made in the size of the sacks, and if the men themselves who are interested showed that they were desirous of having a smaller sack substituted for the present one, the farmers would be perfectly agreeable?—I did not say they would be perfectly agreeable. I said that if the alteration were made there would be no very serious objection.

8. Do you think the adoption of the cental system would be an improvement?—Not nearly so great an improvement as some people think. At present all grain is really sold at per pound, and not per bushel. Nominally it is sold at per bushel, but all grain is weighed. If my sacks were to average an extra half-pound a bushel, I should get paid for that half-pound—that is to say, when dealing with a respectable firm.

9. *Mr. Barber.*] What would be the requirements of this colony alone in the way of these small sacks: do you know?—I cannot tell you that.

10. Supposing that we could not get the co-operation of Australia in this matter, do you not think the demand in New Zealand would be sufficient to warrant the Indian manufacturers making them?—It is possible that that might be so. I am almost afraid it would be too small. I think you ought to try to get the co-operation of Australia. I notice that the Lumpers' Unions in Australia have already made the same demand, and it has been refused on the grounds that I stated—namely, that the change is not necessary.

W. BATES examined. (No. 3.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—President of the Lyttelton Stevedores' Union.

2. And you are here to represent that body?—Yes.

3. Would you like to make a statement first, or to be questioned?—The only statement I could make is that for some years past the men have tried to get a reduction in the weight of sacks, considering that it caused excessive strain on a man handling the present sacks. They thought it was accomplished when Sir Joseph Ward gave the order to the Railway, and there has been a lot of bitter talk about it being rescinded, although they recognised that the 200 lb. sack was not an ideal sack to handle. Still, the concession, from the point of view of not having to carry such a great weight, was very acceptable. That is all the statement I wish to make. I should prefer to be questioned now.

4. *Mr. Laurenson.*] How many men are there in your union?—Between three and four hundred.

5. How many of those men are fit to carry grain-sacks?—There are a good many who carry them that are not fit to.

6. They are not all able to go grain-carrying?—No.

7. What sort of physique has the average man at it?—We are not such big men as Mr. Anstey, on the average. I am not above the average. If a man is an under-sized man he has not much chance. He must show that he is a good man, or the employers will say he is not wanted.

8. When a man is a fairly good grain-carrier, how long does he work at grain-carrying: is he at it every day?—He would be in some cases in the sheds; but we never know one day what a boat is going to take the next—whether it will be grain or another sort of produce. There are some men who, in the grain season, are at it for months, probably. Some men might get their living at it all the year round.

9. How far have they got to carry these sacks in the sheds?—I should say the longest distance would be about 20 yards.

10. And have they got to carry them up at all?—If they cannot get a whip to take them up in all cases, they have to.

11. What is the height of some ladders to go up?—Twenty or thirty steps.

12. They have to go up twenty or thirty steps?—I would not make a definite statement; but the men tell us twenty or thirty.

13. Then, when they get up there, who does the storing?—There is a man called the "stacker."

14. Have they got to do the storing in the holds of vessels?—Yes, except with Home boats. They sometimes give you a man to help, because they want to use all the space available; but, as a rule, you have to build up your own bags. It is altogether different from the shed-work.

15. Have they got to stoop when they have to do that, in handling these big bags?—In the East Coast boats, in some places you cannot walk upright when carrying a bag. There is the width of a bag between the beams, and you have to put a bag in between the beams and the place. That is so as to fill the vessel up.

16. Does that cause strain?—Oh, yes!

17. In carrying bags along the steamer's hold—what is the hold, wood or iron?—In some cases it is iron, but we always try to avoid carrying on iron.

18. In case you fall on the iron and the sack comes on top of you?—If you have hold of a weight and you slip, you naturally hang on to it. If you have the presence of mind to let it go, of course, you may be all right.

19. Have you known of cases of men getting hurt in that way?—Yes, a man named Hock hurt his back. He had only clear surface enough to stand on, and stepped a little too far, and went over on his back. He tells me now that his back is weak. When you strain your back you go to the doctor, and perhaps are cured; but you always have to be very careful.

20. In dragging these bags and hauling them the men use grain-hooks, do they not?—In the shed they do; but you cannot carry a variety of tools with you, and use your ordinary hook.

21. Does that cause more splitting of the bag than would be the case if it were a lighter one?—Unless it is of tough material a bag will not stand the strain. There is a lot of waste. The farmers will use second-hand bags.

22. Have you known many men die as the result of these injuries?—I have not known them die, but I have heard it reported.

23. Did you know Kelly?—I heard of Kelly.

24. You remember about Kelly leaving his heart to the hospital, expressing the hope that the medical men would keep his heart so as to show the effect of the strain on him?—I have heard the men talk of it.

25. You have heard of Gowers?—Yes.

26. Did you know Penny?—Yes, I have heard of him, too.

27. How many years have you been in Lyttelton?—I came here when the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall came to New Zealand.

28. In 1901?—Yes.

29. You are not one of the older hands?—No.

30. Do you remember when the loading took place for the Boer War?—Yes.

31. Those were all light bags?—Yes.

32. Were the men able, with the light bags then, to get more weight of stuff handled in a certain time than they were when handling the big bags?—When you have a light bag you can be quick, and you do not waste any time. With a big weight it is awkward. You must have it accurately across your shoulders, or you may strain yourself.

33. You heard the evidence given by Mr. Anstey as to the advisability, in any change that may be made, of making the sacks narrower?—Yes.

34. Which would suit you best—to have the end turned down and to have a short sack of 200 lb., or to have a long sack of 200 lb.?—I thoroughly agree with Mr. Anstey. A sack should be shaped like a brick, so that you can build and bind them in.

35. It would be much more desirable to have them long?—Yes. Further, when the price of potatoes is very high you hear the men say, "It is a shame that food which we cannot afford to buy should be spoilt." You can understand that when you throw a sack of potatoes down from your shoulder it bruises them.

36. You think that if there was a smaller sack of potatoes there would be less damage done to the potatoes?—I am sure of it. It is one of those facts you cannot mistake when you see it so often.

37. Really, then, it would be to the advantage of the farming community to have lighter sacks, because of the saving of injury to their products?—That is, if they are their own products; they may be the merchant's. I may say that in carrying sacks we have to carry these heavy sacks off the wharf up inclines when loading the East Coast boats, and the incline may be a stiff one; and then, when you reach the top, you have to throw the sack over your head to get it on to the shoot. When one gets a sack of oats it is quite a relief.

38. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] Have you found any general objection to the 200 lb. sack?—No objection at all. Then men were thankful to get that concession.

39. The objection is to the 240 lb. sack, is it not?—Yes.

40. *Mr. Barber.*] Do the men have to pick these bags up, or are they lifted on to their backs: do they have any assistance to get them on to their backs?—When a vessel is loading you lower them right down the hold. You build what we call a stack. As to lifting up, well, of course, you have to do it when you have limited space.

41. You have to pick the bag up yourself?—Yes, and it is hard work.

42. *The Chairman.*] You would be content if the bags were not heavier than 200 lb.?—I think so. I may say that what Mr. Anstey said is voiced by the men who do the stacking—that it is far preferable to have a proportionate bag.

43. It is within your own experience that sound men have been permanently injured by handling these heavy sacks in the holds of ships?—The thing is this: Injuries that took place before the amendment of the Compensation Act the men were not paid for, and these men have to compete for their livelihood, but they do not wish to come forward, because the employers will say, "Oh! if you were injured I will not stand the risk of your being laid up."

A. C. HUBBARD examined. (No. 4.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you, Mr. Hubbard?—President of the Wharf Labourers' Union, Dunedin.

2. And you appear as ——?—Their representative.

3. We shall be glad to hear what you have to say. Will you give us first a statement of your own experience?—Of course, in Dunedin we do not have, as they have in Lyttelton, such a terrible lot of bag-carrying. Still, we have a fair amount in the grain season, and our experience is altogether with the ship's hold. We have no stacking in sheds at all to contend with, barring a little in the barley season. We find that the 240 lb. is altogether too heavy. There are times when we are stacking in a ship's hold when we are not allowed to have a stack. Then these bags have to be lifted by hand—that is, two men lift and carry them with their hook, perhaps twice the length of this room. Then you have to put them up five or six high. One gentleman who gave evidence this morning said he never knew of any loss in grain on account of the size of the bags.

Very often we have found that one could sweep up bags of grain from the hold—grain that has been lost. That must be a loss to the farmer in the first place, if his bags get torn. It does not matter how strong the bags are, when you have to tumble them about you cannot help knocking them about. You have not always got the time to see how you put your hook in, and you turn the bag over, and the first thing you know, perhaps, is that you yourself are capsized through the bag carrying away. In loading, when we do have a stack, perhaps we may build up so high that we have to carry the grain while almost on our knees. Then we have to fill in between the beams. That also gives a lot of heavy dragging and pulling. We contend that the 200 lb. bag is really the handiest bag for us. A smaller bag, of 100 lb., we do not care about, because we imagine that that would probably make heavier work in some cases, in this way: Where now, with the 200 lb. bag one man could take that on his back and take it away, with a 100 lb. bag one man would be expected to pick that bag up and throw it anywhere In that case it would make the work even heavier on us than with the 200 lb. bag. Then, we contend that to shorten the present bag—that is, the 4-bushel bag—would be altogether out of place, because, as has already been stated, when you were carrying from a stack it would be a much harder bag to take on your back. The bag does not balance, you have to lift it on to your back. Then, again, the bag would not stack so well. So we support the bag being made narrower. If it is made shorter, make it narrower in proportion.

4. *Mr. Laurenson.*] How many men are there working on the wharves in Dunedin?—I could hardly say. There would be, perhaps, about three hundred.

5. Do you know of any cases where men have been disabled or injured through straining?—Not since I have been on the wharves. In Dunedin we do not get such a terrible lot of bagging as at Lyttelton or some other ports.

6. Do you believe that a result of the use of the smaller sack would be that you would be able to do your work quicker?—Much easier and quicker, certainly. In stowing, if you get a light bag you have to get it up and then push it in. Of course, we do not get men in the hold to stow our bags for us; we have to stow them ourselves. Sometimes we have to crawl in on our hands and knees.

THURSDAY, 12TH SEPTEMBER, 1907.

Mr. G. W. LEADLEY examined. (No. 5.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Your name is ——?—George William Leadley. I am vice-president of the New Zealand Farmers' Union.

2. And you are a farmer?—Yes.

3. Would you kindly give the Committee a statement of your views?—Yes. I am sent here, at the invitation of your Committee, by the executive of the North Canterbury Section of the Farmers' Union to state our views on the size of grain-sacks. It is really the weight of the contents of the sacks that is the point at issue. We fear that the reduction of the size of the sack would occasion considerable annoyance and difficulty. If the contents of the sack are to be reduced, we should prefer that 210 lb., and not 200 lb., should be the weight of the wheat-sack.

4. Is that 210 lb. in an ordinary sack—48 in. by 26½ in.?—Yes. The reason we ask for bags of 210 lb. is because of the ease of calculating the contents and the facilities for stacking these bags in large quantities. In most of the stores now where wheat is handled, it is carried on the one floor, and very large stacks—from thirty to forty bags high—are built up. A shorter sack, with the same breadth, however, would be really dangerous to stack, and the stack would have to be wired round. But the few additional pounds would to some extent get over this difficulty. If, on the other hand, the bag is reduced to 200 lb., and a smaller sack made to contain only that quantity, such a sack will be perfectly useless for many purposes. It will be useless to the miller for holding bran and chaff; of very little use for oats, or the lighter grain or grass-seed; and we believe that if a 200 lb. bag—to contain that quantity, and that quantity only—be adopted, the farmers will have to sell their wheat, sacks in. I may add that we do not apply the same amount of manual labour to sack-lifting that we did in years past. I have here an illustration showing the loading of grain by means of traction-engines, and where the haulage is done by the ordinary farm team we use a tripod with block and tackle. Really, on the farms there is very little lifting of bags at all now, and in the stores there is scarcely any cause for lifting, as the bags are hauled up by horse-power.

5. *Mr. Flatman.*] You say, Mr. Leadley, that if the weight which you suggest is not put into the sacks, it may be necessary for the farmers to buy new sacks for chaff, &c.?—Yes.

6. *Mr. Bollard.*] Have you had any experience in handling 100 lb. sacks?—No; but I had a lot of 80 lb. sacks.

7. Are you aware that in the United States and in Canada 100 lb. sacks are generally used for grain?—I have been informed so.

8. Supposing we had 100 lb. sacks here—would they be convenient for counting?—In Canada you could not attach the ordinary 4-bushel sacks on the Yankee machine.

9. Do you not think it would be a progressive step if we had 100 lb. bags in general use?—In some respects it would facilitate work if the cental system were in vogue, but it would be utterly useless in many other respects.

10. Supposing I had 500 tons to place on board a train, or to move into store, in 100 lb. bags and you had a like quantity of sacks as used now, do you think it would take more time to deal with my 500 tons than yours?—I think it would.

11. You think the 100 lb. bags would not be handled much quicker?—The individual bags would be, but not the total quantity. I have handled 80 lb. bags for sending to South Africa, but we could not stack them to any height with any degree of safety; the stacks had to be kept together with wire. My men could load a truck of seventy or eighty ordinary bags of wheat

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 if 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, beeause 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

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 informatioin 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

sacks held 200 lb. the gang could discharge five more trucks of from 30 to 40 tons a day. The men cannot handle the shorter sacks so quickly as the longer ones, and he believes that a sack measuring 46 in. by 24 in. would be the most suitable size. It would stack well, and could be handled quicker. It could be fitted to the old baggers, being nearly the same length, but could not be used for baggers if made shorter. Mr. W. Foster, storeman for Kaye and Carter's shed, says that from fifty to sixty thousand sacks represent a good season for grain stored in the shed. They have an elevator in use. He is of opinion that a sack measuring 46 in. by 24 in., and containing 200 lb. of wheat, would be easier to stack and more quickly handled than the ordinary sack. He experimented one day by sewing some sacks to these dimensions, and found them as easy to handle as oat-bags, and just as easy to stack as the present sack. He hopes that if the size of the sack is to be altered it will not be made shorter, and believes that if the weight be reduced the men will be able to handle an additional 30 tons in a day of eight hours. Mr. R. Treleaven, storeman at the Lyttelton Harbour Board Shed No. 5, says that during an average grain season from sixty to seventy thousand sacks are carried into his shed. The machine employed there is the whip-lift. A gang can carry on an average about twenty-two wagon-loads in a day of eight hours; and he believes that if the weight in the sacks were reduced they could discharge another four or five trucks. If the size of the sack is altered he would sooner see a narrower sack than the present one, but of the same length; or 46 in by. 24 in. would make a good all-round sack. He has carried sacks for nearly forty years, and says that 240 lb. is far too heavy for any man. He has had many men working under him who have left after a season's grain-carrying to find lighter work elsewhere, owing to having strained themselves by the carrying of heavy sacks. Mr. J. Foster, storeman of the Loan and Mercantile sheds, says that during a fair grain season from thirty to forty thousand sacks are stored in his shed. They have an elevator, but a certain amount of carrying has to be done before in can be used. He is of opinion that if the weight of the sacks did not exceed 200 lb. he could get more work out of the men than he is able to do now with the sacks at 240 lb. He believes, too, that if the sacks were made narrower they would be much easier to handle than shorter sacks. Mr. G. Porteous, storeman of the Harbour Board Shed No. 1, says that about twenty thousand sacks are stored in his shed in a season; and, as no machinery is used, every sack has to be carried, sacks of 240 lb. being far too heavy to carry up planks and ladders. It therefore takes him all his time to get a gang of men to work in that shed. If, however, the weight of the grain-sack were reduced, he says it would be no trouble to him to get men. He is of opinion that a sack measuring 46 in. by 24 in. would be a most suitable size, as it would carry well and stack easily, and would entail less labour. Mr. J. Pearse, sampler and carrier for forty years, says that sacks containing 240 lb. will ruin the strongest men in a very short time. Mr. Menzies, sampler for Stead and Co. for thirty-five years, says that sacks containing 240 lb. are far too heavy to be carried by hand, and believes that a narrow sack, containing 200 lb., would be more convenient to handle than the present sack. Mr. Gill, wharfinger, Union Steamship Company, states that a ship's carrying-gang could carry four trucks an hour, and if the weight of the sack were reduced they could discharge five or more trucks an hour, or 50 tons more in eight hours. He considers that another advantage of using the lighter sacks would be that, as they would give more freely than the heavier ones, they would get torn less by the men's hooks. He is of opinion that a narrower sack would be more convenient to handle than a shorter one. The following is a list of men injured while carrying heavy grain-sacks:—

Name.	Injury.
John G. T. Wood	Varicose veins.
Fred Herne	Varicose veins.
David Devon	Physical wreck; body strained all over. Carried at Wood Bros' mills for ten years, and carried there last. Is unable to do any work now, being crippled up.
George Gower	Strained heart. Ordered by doctor to leave off carrying, and find lighter work.
Charles Fitzsimmons	Now in mental hospital from effects of grain-carrying, but partly from abuse of drink. (See remarks.)
George Rutherford (myself) ...	Ruptured when carrying grain up a ladder in the Loan Company's shed.
John Wilson	Strained nervous system; cannot follow former occupation of printing-machinist.
Stephen Norris	Ricked his back, and was laid up for three months.
Thomas Hunter	Aneurism of the heart. Formed one of deputation which waited on Christchurch Medical Association in 1899, and was examined by them. Is unable now to carry, or do any hard work. Says it would frighten you to see his heart beating from the breast. (See remarks.)
Joseph Williams	Strained the muscles or leaders of his neck, and got insomnia. Went to Sunnyside Asylum, and died there.
John Young	Is also said to have died in the asylum from the same cause as the last-named. After a heavy day's carrying he did not know how to rest his head, and could not sleep.
George Moor	Affected in same way as previous two, and died in the asylum.
John Norton	Strained his heart, and could do no more heavy work, and died some years after.
Frank Lawrence	Strained his heart, and died a few years after.
Frank Walklin, J. Juriss, J. Hardy, E. Kelly, J. Gower	Also died from strained hearts.
W. Roeder	Went blind, and afterwards died. (See remarks below.)
Denny Kelly	Died of aneurism of the heart. (See remarks.)

Remarks on the Above List.—I say that Fitzsimmons's affection was "partly from the effects of drink," because, after carrying grain all day, he would imbibe more than he required, yet keep on with his work the next day. The case of W. Reeder is very pitiable, as the following account by his widow will show: While carrying a bag of wheat down a ship's hold he felt his neck rick, and called out to his mates that he had hurt his back; and he never carried another sack. Seeing the doctor shortly afterwards, the latter told him that he had strained his spinal column and also his optic nerves. In a few weeks he went blind of both eyes. A concert (realising £50) was got up with the object of sending him to Australia to enable him to try to recover his eyesight; but he was unsuccessful, and died afterwards from the effects of the injury to the spinal column. D. Kelly died of aneurism of the heart in 1901. He went into the Christchurch Hospital as Thomas Hunter came out of it. Both were suffering from similar injuries, and the doctors patched them up as best they could. When the men were able to go about the Christchurch Medical Association called on them to be examined. Twelve doctors were present, and both men stripped to the waist, and were examined separately by each doctor. After going through two or three evolutions of the body Hunter inquired if it would be safe for him to continue carrying a little, and was informed that it would mean committing suicide. Kelly told the association that if his heart would serve as evidence in the cause of reducing the weight of grain-sacks they could take it from his body when he was dead. The heart is now in the hands of Dr. Orchard, and if your Committee wish it to be sent to Wellington for inspection it shall be sent. Two men asked the doctors of Christchurch to assist them in getting the weight of sacks reduced. As a result of that deputation to the Christchurch Medical Association the latter wrote a letter to the Chamber of Commerce, on the 21st August, 1899, a copy of which I hand in [Exhibit A]. I also hand in a copy of a letter which the Chamber of Commerce addressed to the Right Hon. the Premier on the subject, [Exhibit B], and a copy of a leading article which appeared in the *Lyttelton Times* of the 21st August, 1899 [Exhibit C].

2. *Mr. Hardy.*] Have you carried many sacks?—Yes.

3. Have you carried many of those short sacks about which you are giving evidence?—Yes, but not many.

4. What is your experience of the injuries likely to result from handling the sacks which are now in use?—It will bring on strained heart and mental affections.

5. Are you a medical man?—No; I have not passed as such. But passed first-aid in ambulance.

6. You say that these sacks have not been in general use?—No.

7. Then, you are only assuming that the lifting of them would bring on strained heart?—I have a list with me of injured men alive in Lyttelton.

8. You say these sacks are not generally in use?—They are not in use now.

9. Consequently no trouble has ensued through the handling of sacks which have really not been used; it is only the danger of their being used that you object to?—The men believe that if they were still to keep carrying those sacks in time it would affect some part of their head.

10. Then you are of opinion that if these sacks were put into use danger would ensue?—Yes.

11. Nothing has happened up to the present?—I could not say.

12. You have said that the sacks are not generally in use?—Yes; but the men now in Lyttelton may be suffering from the effects of handling the short sacks, which were in use two or three years ago.

13. Then you practically hold that 240 lb. is too much for a man to handle in a ship's hold?—Yes, it is too much.

14. Are you of opinion, then, that the farmers should be limited to 200 lb. sacks?—Yes.

15. You would not like to injure the farmer, would you, by putting an additional expense on him: if it were shown in evidence that the farmer was going to lose considerably over the sacks you would not like to press that matter very much?—I do not think they would be losing very much; they could carry the offal at a reduced rate; they could reduce the weight of bran in a bag.

16. But what about potatoes?—I know that some eight or nine years ago some sacks of English grass-seed came out here, and, as the bags contained 2 cwt. 3 qr. 5 lb., the men refused to carry them, and the seed had to be rebagged.

17. But you would not injure a fine industry like the farming industry by insisting that the bags should be reduced in size, when the farmers are prepared to meet you in reducing the quantity you would have to carry?—The men themselves do not object to the narrow bag—they wish to have a narrow bag—and they think it would not hurt the farmers.

18. Yes, but they are not farmers. But to go half-way to meet them, by reducing the weight to 200 lb., or even less?—They would sooner go back to the old sack than have to carry 200 lb. in the present sack.

19. You say you have carried wheat: have you sustained any injury?—Yes, a rupture, owing to carrying a 240 lb. bag of peas up a ladder. When they reduced the size of grain-sacks last year the wheat-sacks were the only ones reduced; the peas and bean sacks kept the same.

20. I suppose now you are not able to carry?—No.

21. Have you known of many men being injured?—I have, and also heard of them.

22. And do you know of any men who have died from it?—Yes; the men referred to in the list of men injured or killed.

23. Is that the only man you have known recently: that is not going very far back?—The most serious case is that about which the Medical Association at Christchurch wrote to the Chamber of Commerce. I will hand in a copy of their letter.

24. *Mr. Laurenson.*] The question is, could they shift a lot of grain-sacks quicker in lighter than heavier sacks?—An ordinary gang of men at the Railway sheds at Lyttelton consists of six

men. They will carry into the sheds twenty trucks a day—each truck containing sixty sacks, weighing 6 tons. If the sacks were reduced to 46 in. by 24 in., and contained not more than 200 lb. each, a gang could remove another five or six trucks a day. The present sack contains 240 lb. The carrying-gang at the ship's side could discharge four trucks an hour; and if the sacks were made narrower 46 in. by 24 in. would be the most suitable size. In a day's work they could remove five trucks an hour instead of four, easily—that is, nearly another 50 tons a day.

25. *The Chairman.*] And you make that statement thoroughly believing it could be done?—Yes.

26. *Mr. Laurenson.*] Does the evidence which you have got from Mr. Foster, the storeman at Kaye and Carter's shed, and Mr. Treleaven, storeman at the Lyttelton Harbour Board shed, indorse that?—They all say they could do another five trucks a day.

27. Can you remember when the biggest lot of stuff per day was shifted at Lyttelton?—No.

28. Do you remember when the late sacks were in use during the Boer War—was it then?—The discharging of the trucks of 80 lb. bags went quicker then than at any other time; but an extra man was put into the gang.

29. *Mr. Aitken.*] Where does the greatest difficulty arise in the handling of grain: there must be mechanical appliances for lifting at all these places, excepting the ship's hold?—I was just going to read out the reports on each shed. Elevators are not provided in all sheds. Two sheds in Lyttelton, the one belonging to the Harbour Board and the other to the Railway Department, are without any; and it takes the foremen all their time to get a gang of men to work in these sheds.

30. Supposing all stores were fitted with appliances, would it not then be on board ship where the chief handling would be done?—Yes, but there would still be a certain amount in the sheds.

31. I presume that in the hold of the ship it is not only the weight of the sack itself that is the difficulty, but also the lifting of a heavy weight where space is limited?—Yes; in some ships there is only just room for a man to stand upright between-decks, and when carrying a sack he has to stoop the whole time. Short men have the advantage.

32. What, in your experience, has been the difference between handling light and heavy sacks after they get into the ship's hold?—I have had no such experience; but on board men have very often to be replaced because they will not carry grain owing to the weight of the sack.

33. Do they not put two men on to a sack in the hold?—No; it is only handled by one man until they load on top.

34. *The Chairman.*] With reference to those men suffering from varicose veins: are you quite sure their complaint was the result of carrying, or were they not also footballers?—No; I saw them myself, and they said it was due to heavy carrying.

35. You have heard the evidence given by Mr. Leadley, advocating the use of the 210 lb. wheat-sack. If the Committee conclude that a narrow sack, to contain 210 lb. or thereabouts, is best, would the people whom you represent object to the 210 lb. measurement?—Of course, the 3½ bushels would be the easier calculation; but if the weight is to be 210 lb., then the men wish the bag to be narrower than the one in use.

36. The only thing I was wishing to get from you was that if they had a narrower sack, containing 3½ bushels—210 lb.—would that meet the case?—If it were 210 lb. in a narrow sack I do not think the men would object at all.

37. You say you had to carry that bag of peas up an ordinary ladder of twenty steps: do you not think all these stores should be required to keep an elevator?—Yes, they should.

Mr. DAVID BUDDO, of Rangiora, examined. (No. 7.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are willing, Mr. Buddo, to give the Committee the benefit of your experience as a farmer in regard to handling grain-sacks?—Yes. My first interest in this matter was as far back as 1894. I have noticed from time to time that the use of the 240 lb. wheat-sack, as compared with a smaller-size bag, has not been of any material benefit to the farmer. Some years ago my men made three trips a day to the railway-station with sacks containing 200 lb. of oats, and three trips a day with sacks containing 240 lb. of wheat—the total tonnage in either case being equal—and I found that, as a rule, I had to pay overtime at the rate of one hour per man per day on the cartage of the wheat, but oats were often carried in less than a working-day. This applied to short-journey work, the distance to the station being from one to two and a half miles. During recent years the drawbacks to the heavy sack have been greatly reduced by the employment of a triangular lift attached to the dray, and this has been of considerable benefit to the farm labourer. But a great deal of lifting has still to be done by hand, and I consider that a reduction in the weight of corn-sacks would be an advantage to the worker. Smart, active men have frequently to give notice to leave the farm when the carrying of grain becomes their only work, and on several occasions I have had to part with excellent men from this cause. The continuous carrying of 240 lb. sacks for a period of from one to four weeks annually is work, I consider, at which only the very best men can be employed. Now, sir, if we are still to consider New Zealand to be an exporting colony for wheat—and I take it that farmers recognise that there will still be years when our surplus must go to London—the question for consideration is whether the sack should weigh 3½ bushels—210 lb.— or 200 lb., which allows of a decimal calculation. To my mind the 200 lb. bag would have the advantage. Here comes in an important point, the value of the sack after being emptied of wheat. There is a difference of only 2d. a dozen between the invoiced prices of the large 48 in. by 26½ in. sacks and the small 44 in. by 26½ in. sacks; but if the smaller sacks be used there is no doubt that the miller and the farmer will both lose. When chaff-cutting the farmer will find the short sacks most inconvenient, as they will get mixed up with the larger ones used for potatoes and oats; he will lose in weight per ton, as the system of weighing the cut chaff is per bag—say, twenty-five to the ton. Again, the miller will find that the usual calculation of ten sacks of flour to the ton will have to be substantially increased. Therefore I am of

opinion that the large sack (48 in. by 26½ in.) should be retained, and the top be turned down when filled with wheat. My own experience as a farmer, and also that of the workers that I have met, shows that there is no disadvantage in lifting a short sack as compared with a long one on to the dray or railway-truck, as it is entirely a question of weight. On the other hand, the stevedores may possibly find it difficult to stow the short sacks in the ships' holds. I have the word of the principal North Canterbury miller that he has experienced no difficulty in stacking the 200 lb. bags of 26½ in. width in his stores. If the general proposals which I have indicated are put into effect I consider that they will result in no loss to the farmer; but, on the other hand, he will probaly gain by the adoption of the lighter wheat-sack in having a greater weight moved per day, and will also have the benefit of a larger selection of labour for his farming operations.

2. *Mr. Laurenson.*] Supposing you had the short broad sack, would there not be a difficulty in stacking them?—The principal miller in the North Canterbury district told me some time ago that his staff had no difficulty during the short period that the regulation confining the weight of the bag to 200 lb. was in force in stacking the shorter bags satisfactorily and securely.

3. With regard to relieving the strain on the men, would you rather grapple with 200 lb. in a short dumpy sack, or 240 lb. in a long sack, if both were the same width?—Undoubtedly with the 200 lb., for this reason: In lifting a sack to the dray or railway-truck it is generally a question of weight, because there is no shouldering of the sack.

4. Do you not think 240 lb. would balance better on your shoulder if you were carrying it day in and day out for a long time than 200 lb.?—I have not tried it myself, nor have my men; but I should say from general observations that the men carrying the shorter sack would not be so much fatigued at the end of the day as the others, and the total weight carried would be greater than if they had been carrying 240 lb. sacks.

5. How long does your grain season last?—At the present time it would not extend beyond a fortnight; in previous years three to four weeks.

6. In the case of your men having to handle these sacks day in and day out, what would you prefer?—Speaking from both the farmer's and the labourer's point of view, I should say the 200 lb. The lighter sack would give a greater number of sacks and more weight moved per day, and a substantial relief to the worker.

TUESDAY, 1ST OCTOBER, 1907.

ALBERT KAYE examined. (No. 8.)

The Chairman: We shall be very glad to hear your evidence, Mr. Kaye. I think, perhaps, the best course would be for you to make a statement, and if any member of the Committee wishes to elucidate any point afterwards, you can reply to his questions.

Witness: I happen to be the president of the Canterbury Chamber of Commerce, and I am attending as their representative. I am also connected with the grain and shipping trades. I have been more or less connected with the grain trade since 1872. My early experience was in South Australia, where, amongst my other duties as a youngster, I had to tally the wheat as it was put into the ships, and I thought it might be of interest to the Committee if I got one of these tally-books over and showed you the weight of the sacks, which rules almost up to the present day. I have a book here of 1885, I think it is, and also one of 1900, showing the weights which ruled there, and rule right up to the present time.

The Chairman: Were the weights then much the same as now obtain?

Witness: They were much the same in those days as they are now. You will see that they go up as high in some cases, I think, as 340 lb. The average in anything like an ordinarily good season rarely if ever goes below 250 lb. to the bag there. You will see in these books plenty of weights of 270 lb., 280 lb., even 290 lb., and occasionally over 300 lb. I am only saying this to prove that it is not an unusual thing for these heavy bags to be carried by the men without any complaint. [Books put in.] I might say that I got those books from those leviathan wheat-shippers, John Darling and Son, the biggest people in the wheat line in South Australia.

The Chairman: Is your object in putting these books in to show that heavy weights ——?—

Witness: That heavy weights have, up to the present time, practically been customary in Australia.

The Chairman: Are you going to give an opinion on the practice?

Witness: I am going to speak with reference to that later on. Not that I am an advocate of these specially heavy weights being continued necessarily; but these heavy weights have been borne by the men and carried by lumpers under extremes of heat, practically without any grumbling or any special injury to the men as far as can be seen, rather leading one to believe that, provided the right class of men are employed in this particular kind of work, no injury results. We have discussed this matter down South for three or four years now, at odd intervals; we have got beyond that stage in which we discussed whether we should have a 240 lb. or a 200 lb. sack, I take it, and the object of this Committee is to decide, not on whether the weight shall be 240 lb. or 200 lb., but what size of sack shall contain 200 lb.

The Chairman: No, what size of sack would be most suitable. We are here to hear all sides of the question, as to which is the most suitable size of sack and the most convenient weight for handling.

Witness: I think the matter started at the Canterbury Chamber of Commerce. We had a letter about four years ago from two doctors at Lyttelton, testifying that two men had died, in their opinion, from aneurism of the heart, caused by their lifting these heavy sacks. This was felt to be a very serious question, and ever since that time we have been trying to decide on a sack

that would be satisfactory to all concerned. We have had a meeting of the Farmers' Union, the Agricultural and Pastoral Association, and the Chambers of Commerce, all combined, and the opinions given were most diverse. The ultimate conclusion arrived at by a narrow majority in every case, in committees and in meetings assembled, has been to agree to the 44 in. by 26½ in. sack. That is what I may term the universal size used almost right throughout Australia. The only place, practically, where the 48 in. sack is used to any extent is in Canterbury, New Zealand. We felt that this 44 in. sack, though it is more or less unsuitable for holding 200 lb., is best, looking at it from all points of view—that is to say, from the point of view, in the first place, of buying—because this is a very important point; a 44 in. sack you can buy any day. You can telegraph to Calcutta to-day, and you can buy a thousand bales in a moment; but any other size of sack not ordinarily kept has to be made on special looms, like our 48 in. sack, and you always have to wait a certain number of weeks before you can get your orders executed. If you run short with the 44 in. sacks you can at all times replenish your stock from the nearest market—either Sydney, Melbourne, or Adelaide—or if you get a surplus you may very often find you have a market in which to get rid of your surplus quantity. If we have a bad harvest we may have too many corn-sacks, while if we have an excellent harvest which was not anticipated, then we have too few. All these points have been taken into consideration by the committees, and, though there has been a great deal of dissentient talk, we have decided that the best sack is this 44 in. by 26½ in. one. If it were only a matter of a sack for holding wheat and nothing else, I think the majority of the members of the Canterbury Chamber of Commerce would be in favour of the cental bag that they have in America; but that only fulfils one purpose. It brings in the wheat, and then it is, as it were, done with. If it were a good bag which might be sent out a second time and be filled again, we should like it; but it could not be filled for the number of purposes that a sack is used for, as anybody connected with farming knows. You send the corn-sack out again to be filled with chaff or potatoes, or oats, or barley, or whatever it may be; but this could not be done with any advantage if we had only a cental bag. Therefore it is that, taking all these questions into account, we have reluctantly, I might say, come to the conclusion that on the whole the least evil is to have the 44 in. by 26½ in. bag. At our last annual meeting we had a farmer who, you would have thought, would have been one of those who would have been pleased to have a lighter sack, very strongly opposing any other sack than the 48 in. one. When we were loading ships with oats for South Africa during the time of the Boer War, I myself went to a gang of men when they were eating their lunch, and said, "Now, do you like these smaller bags—these 80 lb. bags—better than the 48 in. heavy wheat-sacks?" and that particular gang, in one chorus, said, "No, we do not like these bags. We do not get any rest between. It is one continual rush with these bags to get them away." With the heavy bags the men would have to lift one, and then they would have a sort of spell; but with the small bags they were kept at it. So this particular lot of men said they did not want any change. But I think that is not universal. I do not know whether the men have deteriorated, or what it is, but at any rate the class of men who work now find this 48 in. bag, holding 240 lb., too heavy for them, and therefore we down in Canterbury have considered that the question has been practically settled by the action of the Government in issuing that regulation which limits the weight of the sack to 200 lb.; only, as you know, the regulation has been suspended. The whole question is one that is surrounded with great difficulties, and I have had, as I say, reluctantly, to come to the conclusion that we had better have the same bag as they have in Australia, and stick to the 44 in. by 26½ in. sack. As I was leaving Christchurch I got this circular which I have in my hand—a circular from Calcutta—to show you that they only quote 48 in. sacks for New Zealand, and that they only quote 44 in. by 26½ in. sacks for Australia. This shows that 48 in. bags are practically never used in Australia. The 44 in. by 26½ in. ones are always used there. I do not know that I can give you any more information, gentlemen, that would be of use to you.

1. *The Chairman.*] What bags were they that held 270 lb., 280 lb., and 290 lb. in Australia? The same bags that they use to-day—the 44 in. ones. They hold the same weight to-day. It is the peculiarly good quality of the wheat that enables the grain to pack so closely.

2. *Mr. Laurenson.*] You spoke about the weight of the sacks of wheat in South Australia in years gone by: did they have any appliances for handling those sacks at all, or did the men just have to shoulder them all?—They worked under far worse conditions than those prevailing here, because in those days they had to carry the sacks across a wharf. The trucks came down to perhaps 30 ft. from where the ship was lying, and they had to carry the sacks that distance. It might be of interest to you to know that in South Australia they have an entirely different way of buying wheat from the New Zealand method. Every large grain-merchant there has, perhaps, a hundred and fifty or two hundred buyers, and they go to all the principal stations, and they buy each load as it comes in, and each load as it is bought is weighed over a scale—each bag by itself. Every bag goes over 200 lb., the odd number of pounds over 200 lb. is marked on the bag, the man gets paid practically at once, and the wheat is either put into a stack or sent direct down to the ship. When it gets alongside the ship there is a tally-clerk, who has books like the ones I produced, and he checks these weights. The man then takes the sack on to his back, carries it across the wharf, and puts it down. The conditions are very much worse than they are here for carrying the bags. The heat is occasionally 114° in the shade there—something dreadful.

3. I do not suppose the men at that time lived very long?—I can only say that we did not have complaints. I do not know how it was. I think they must have been men of better calibre. There was no talk in those days. I do not know much about it since. On my trips over there I have seen them doing the same thing to-day as they did twenty years ago. I do not advocate it, mind you.

4. You were saying that the present size in Australia is 44 in. by 26½ in., and in New Zealand 48 in. by 26½ in.: what is the difference in the cost?—About 3½d. a dozen.

5. Would there be any difficulty in the way of the Indian manufacturers turning out a 48 in. by 24 in. sack—making the sacks the same length but narrower?—There is no difficulty what-

ever in turning out whatever sack you like to say. It is only a matter of fixing the looms accordingly. But you have to pay proportionately more for a special size.

6. What is the arrangement now, supposing you buy wheat from a farmer, and he sends you down so-many hundred sacks of wheat: do you credit him with the price of the sacks—does he get any allowance for the sacks?—Oh, yes! It really costs him about ½d. for the use of the sack. If the price of a sack is 7d., he is debited with that amount, and when he brings the sack in he generally gets 6½d.

7. Then, if he wants the sacks back again to put chaff in, what is he charged?—He is generally charged the same price. The farmer, as a matter of fact, generally gets his sacks pretty well free. It might cost him ½d. a bag; but he is well served as far as the sacks are concerned, because we have to run the risk of importing them, and when the sack comes back to the merchant it is only a second-hand sack, and the merchant has to sell the bag in. It only costs the farmer ½d. a bag for the use of bags.

8. If he wanted a larger sack for putting his chaff and bran into ——?—He would not have it. He would have to import a special size for that purpose alone.

9. Or pack his chaff into a smaller-sized bag?—Yes. Well, of course, that could be done.

10. In loading up the lighter bags for the Cape at the time of the Boer War, did you find the men were able to shift a given number of tons of produce quicker with the lighter bags than with the bigger bags?—I think they could. Those small bags were loaded up very quickly.

11. In South Australia, when the wheat came down, did it go into stores, or did it go right to the ship?—As a rule it went right to the ship. On the stations, as a rule, there are huge stacks, and there they so seldom have heavy rains in January, February, and March that they to a large extent run the risk of rain, and leave these practically uncovered; and when the ships are in port the trucks are loaded straight alongside the stacks and sent down to the ships.

12. How long does the season last in South Australia?—It is over by March, as a rule. It begins in December, as a rule. Sometimes there is a little shipped in November.

13. *Mr. Bollard.*] What is your individual opinion about the cental system?—I am inclined to think that it would be the best if we had only to consider the wheat; but in this country we want to know what to do with our empty bags. We have come to the conclusion that the 44 in. by 26½ in. sack, taking it all round for all purposes, and despite the fact that it is an awkward sack to handle, is the best sack to continue to import.

14. Are you aware that, with regard to chaff, the American system of preparing chaff for export is to put it in 180 lb. bales?—Oh, yes! compressed fodder. I had a lot to do with that in Australia, but we here have not got to that system yet.

15. Do you not think it is time we did commence it here?—I think it would be a very good thing indeed; but it is more for export purposes than for local use. I do not think it would pay with chaff for use in New Zealand. It increases the cost a good deal. It is done really to reduce the freight.

16. Take potatoes: do you not think they would be easier handled and quicker managed in 100 lb. sacks?—That is one way of looking at it; but then these 100 lb. sacks are very thin. If a farmer left these sacks out in the paddock all night, and there was a frost, the potatoes might all be frost-bitten in the morning. There would be great liability to that. Farmers will not cover the potatoes at night, as they should. That is one of my objections to the 100 lb. sack. It would not be a success in that sense.

17. You are speaking about potatoes in the South?—Yes. We have a lot of frosty weather in April and May, now and then.

18. *Mr. Flatman.*] You spoke of the heavy weights carried in Australia: are you aware that the question of the size of the sack is being considered in Australia at the present time?—Oh, yes! I saw in the *Australasian* that a member of the Ministry had been approached, and that he was awaiting the decision of the Parliament of New Zealand on this matter.

19. Do you think it would be wise for this Parliament to approach the Australian Parliament or Parliaments on this matter, and so have established a universal size for bags?—I think it would be most desirable—the very best course that could be pursued. That is what I advocate right through—to keep on the same lines as Australia.

20. The 44 in. sacks are not generally used in Canterbury at the present time, are they?—No. They are very little used. They are used at the Bluff.

21. Would the 44 in. by 26½ in. sacks stack as well, if they contained 200 lb., as the ordinary sack containing 240 lb.?—Oh, no! I have had practical experience of that in our stores at Lyttelton.

22. Then you would object to them on that account?—I would object to them on that line. They do not stack at all well.

23. Of course, the wheat being drier in Australia, 4 bushels would easily go into a 44 in. sack, generally speaking—the drier the wheat the less space it takes?—That is so. Practically a 44 in. sack never holds less than 240 lb. of Australian wheat.

24. You have known it happen in Canterbury that you could not get 4 bushels into a 44 in. sack?—You are supposed not to be able to do so, but you can do it with this year's wheat easily.

25. How is grain bought in Canterbury—by the bushel?—Yes.

26. Is it bought by weight in the end?—Yes, as it is weighed on the railway weights, as a rule.

27. So it would not matter how much, practically, was in a bag, from that point of view—although paid for by the bushel it would be paid for at the Railway weight or at a weight?—That is right.

28. So that grain is practically sold by weight at the present day?—That is so.

29. You were speaking of potatoes, and you said, so I understood, that the 100 lb. bags would be of thinner material, and that the farmers would not cover the potatoes up, and that they would be liable to frost?—I take it the bags referred to by the honourable member were the

cental bags that we used for the wheat, and that when they were emptied of wheat they would be used for potatoes. Those bags are entirely unsuited to be exposed to any kind of weather.

30. Why?—Because the material is, comparatively speaking, so thin.

31. But why should a sack holding 200 lb. be made of thinner material than the present 48 in. bags?—The one that holds 200 lb. is a jute bag; a cental bag is a hessian bag.

32. *The Chairman.*] The question is, why should they not make the smaller bag of the same material?—You would have to be making a special size. They are not made of this other material in Calcutta.

33. *Mr. Flatman.*] But you think they could be made?—You can make any size, but then it would be a special size.

34. *Mr. Aitken.*] At extra cost?—At extra cost. Anything special you would have to pay specially for.

35. *Mr. Flatman.*] Do you think there would be extra cost if it were a bag that was really adopted for future use?—Not if it were adopted by all Australasia, no.

36. *Mr. Barber.*] Do you think it would be inconvenient to the farming community if two standards were adopted—if it were recognsied that there were two different sizes in general use, a large bag for light materials and a small bag for heavy weights?—As far as the farmer is concerned, he, in a way, does not come into the consideration of inconvenience, because he does not suffer any inconvenience as long as the merchant goes to the risk of importing what the farmer requires. The farmer does not have any risk or trouble at all.

37. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Barber means this: Would it not be inconvenient to the farmer if there were a small bag and a large bag in use?

38. *Mr. Barber.*] A small bag for heavy weights, and for chaff and bran a larger bag could be used?—Of course, in Australia now they import hessian bags for their bran. As you all know, here in New Zealand the farmers use their corn-sacks for bran. I do not suppose it would be any inconvenience at all to the farmer to use them in that way, only it would be inconvenient to the merchant to have to import two different kinds of bag.

39. Do you think it would be a very material hardship to have to keep in stock two different sizes of bag—half of each size instead of the whole quantity in one size?—Of course, dealing with threshing-machines, and so on, it would be very inconvenient if you had different-sized bags to fit on to the receivers. You all remember why the 48 in. sack came in at all—to get over the Government regulation of twenty-five years ago that there should be ten sacks to the ton.

40. *Mr. Aitken.*] Some of the farmers that came here made a point of this, that while, perhaps, not objecting altogether to putting only 200 lb. of wheat into a sack, they would rather adopt the 48 in. sack and sew it down, because then the sacks would come in useful for other produce. Do you, on your own account, or on account of your Chamber, think that would be a way out of the difficulty?—Oh, yes! We have had that thoroughly threshed out—in fact, it was only at our last meeting, in August, that we had an animated discussion on that very point. Some of the farmers are very strong on having a 48 in. sack, but you can see yourselves what a tremendous amount of turning-in it would mean.

41. On the other hand, if they must have a bigger sack for their chaff and lighter materials, they spoke of the very great expense it would be to them to have to buy new sacks for these lighter materials, as well as for the wheat. You, however, make out that the cost to the farmer is nothing—that it all falls on the merchant?—That is so.

42. Supposing two sizes of sack were imported, would that cause the merchants to change their methods and make the farmers pay for their sacks?—Buy, sacks in?

43. Yes?—What I want to convey to the Committee on that point is that the farmer does not in reality suffer in that way. I saw that when the deputation waited on the Minister in Melbourne they made out that the farmer, because when he sold he sold sacks in lost the full value of his sack, except the weight of the sack. Well, that is not so. That is quite an erroneous impression.

44. *The Chairman.*] You will never alter the farmer's impression on the point?—No. If the price is 4s. 6d., sacks extra, the farmer gets nearer 4s. 7d., sacks in.

45. *Mr. Aitken.*] Leaving the question of merchant and farmer out of view altogether, would it be very much more costly to insist upon two sizes of sack—one for wheat and one for lighter material?—It would be more costly in the sense that a merchant would require to import two kinds of sack, and he has to order those goods, as a rule, a long time before it is possible to judge as to what the season is going to be. We find from experience that the bulk of our corn-sacks should be bought in April and May.

46. *The Chairman.*] The question, as I understand it, is this: whether it would be a costly matter to the farmer if there were a sack for holding, we will say, 200 lb. of wheat, and a larger sack for holding lighter produce?—I would not say it would be very much more costly. It would be more costly.

47. *Mr. Hardy.*] You spoke of the loss to the merchant and not to the farmer in connection with sacks: where does the loss to the merchant come in, and not to the farmer. Simply because the merchant has, first of all, to run the risk of the market. He buys the bags.

48. Speculating for profit?—If he can get it. He always speculates for profit, but he has to buy for a long way ahead. The price is usually fixed for the season on the price at which he has bought. He has got to send the bags out to the farmer. He actually does not get paid. When the sack comes back again, the farmer, in some instances, insists on getting the full price that he has paid for his sacks, and the whole risk in connection with the sacks, therefore, practically, comes back on to the grain-merchant.

49. Does the grain-merchant not buy sacks for the purpose of making a little profit, and for the purpose of keeping his grain business together?—For the purpose of keeping his grain business together, but not with a view to making what you may term a profit. He may make a little profit or a little loss; it is, comparatively speaking, infinitesimal.

50. A means of advertising his business?—It is a necessary adjunct to the business, in order to keep your clients together.

51. But a grain-merchant really makes a little profit out of his grain sometimes?—I hope so.

52. The grain and the sacks together make it a reasonably profitable business if you have good luck?—Yes; it is a very speculative business, you know.

53. Do you know anything about the losses the farmer might suffer through using different sizes of sacks?—You mean if they went in for the 100 lb. bags? They do not at present use different-sized sacks. They are practically all using 48's.

54. A short time ago they were using 46's and 44's?—Yes.

55. Did you hear any complaint?—Yes, a good many grumbled.

56. Would there be any loss, do you think, if the sacks were still made 48 in. and turned down at the ends?—I do not know whether there would be any actual loss. It makes a very cumbersome kind of package for stowing in the ship's hold. Probably it would cost more in freight.

57. You would not like to inconvenience the farmers, if you thought the introduction of a smaller bag was going to inconvenience them considerably?—Not for a moment.

58. Do you know that threshing-machines and chaff-cutters are at present fitted up for these large bags?—Yes.

59. Would it necessitate the alteration of these?—It must, if you have a smaller-sized bag; but not for the 44's.

60. Are the same kind of sacks used for potatoes?—Yes

61. Are they used for anything else—carrots?—For everything connected with farming—oats, barley, potatoes, swedes—anything you like.

62. You have often been on farms?—Yes.

63. You have seen a great number of sacks hanging about all over the place?—Yes.

64. Then, if we had to get another size of sack, the loss or inconvenience might be greater?—There would be a loss to somebody.

65. Do the farmers of Canterbury approve of the reduction in the size of the sack?—Well, as you know from the reports of the Farmers' Union, there is a divided opinion on the matter. I do not know how the majority would go if they were all got together. At our last annual meeting a well-known man, Mr. Horrell, advocated the 48 in. sack, and Mr. O'Halloran, who is also a very well-known man in Canterbury, went exactly on the opposite tack.

66. He does not handle grain, though?—That might be, but he went on the exactly opposite tack.

67. Are you of opinion that the man who is a large wool-grower would be more interested in the size of the woolpacks than in the size of corn-sacks?—Yes, he necessarily would.

68. Do you know what Mr. Horrell is?—Yes.

69. Does he grow grain?—Yes; he is a sheep-farmer, too.

70. He does more grain-growing?—I dare say he does. I am not quite sure. He deals a lot in sheep, too.

71. Mr. O'Halloran deals in wool?—Yes.

72. At any rate, you would favour a reduction in the weight of the wheat carried in the sacks?—I feel that that is the general public desire—that the sack should be 200 lb. Though not absolutely sure about the necessity, I can see its desirability under the present condition of things.

73. And, even though the sack itself were not reduced in size, you would approve of the quantity of wheat that is put into the sack being reduced?—I approve of that under the present conditions, yes.

74. *Mr. Aitken.*] Speaking about the size of the sacks and the looms in Calcutta for producing these sacks: it is only in the length that the loom can be changed, not in the width, is it?—That is so.

75. The width must be the same?—Well, the width is the same.

76. It must be?—Is that so?

77. *The Chairman.*] Are you in a position to say whether they can or cannot make a narrower width in India?—You could with special looms.

78. Are you yourself in a position to say they cannot make a narrower-sized sack?—No. I should say you could make a special loom to make a special size. I believe that to be the case.

79. You believe that if you want a narrower sack you can get it made?—Yes, I believe so.

80. You do not weigh in sacks at all in buying from the farmer, do you?—No; practically speaking, they are always paid for.

81. Have you any idea what proportion of sacks are re-used in this colony—what proportion of the total number that are used are again sold out to the farmers second-hand: 10 per cent.?—I cannot tell you that.

82. You could not say whether 10 per cent. of the total number of sacks used in a season are re-used?—It would be mere guesswork.

83. Would the larger sack—the 48 in.—turned down, stack?—It would be, I should say, if anything, a little more awkward than the 44 in.

84. Does the London market at the present time control the price here for wheat—the price that is paid to the farmer?—In a sense it does, because, in the first place, it affects Australia, and we in turn are affected as the price goes up there.

85. Could you pay the present current rates and ship the grain to London?—No; we are above the relative London rates.

86. So that at present London is not fixing the price?—Except in an indirect fashion, *via* Australia.

87. *Mr. Flatman.*] I understand you to say that if the sacks were narrower they would be awkward to the farmers for the threshing-mill?—They would have to alter the threshing-mills to suit them.

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. Laurenson.*] 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.

Of course, if any arrangement is made, the importers should be protected. That is the trouble. We have to order our sacks a considerable time beforehand. For instance, the next year is provided for already. The Calcutta orders are given, and the sacks must come on. So that if ample time is given and it could be done, I am quite certain the smaller sack would soon be a thing that we would recognise, and there would be no trouble about it. Probably one of the troubles is that it is stated that the loom makes a certain width of cloth—that you may lengthen your sack or not as you like, but the width must be the same. We have made inquiries from Calcutta, and they say that there would be a good deal of objection to altering looms, but I do not think that would be insuperable. If the larger-sized sack were knocked out they would have to accommodate themselves to it. What we really want is a narrower sack running up to, say, 46 in., or even 48 in. in length. The 46 in. certainly would be short enough for stacking purposes; and if that were done I am certain that it would be better. I notice that some one, speaking on the labour question, remarked that the farmers were against it, and that this showed how little they regarded the men. I think that possibly the labour people would be exactly the same in similar circumstances Human nature is human nature all the world over. I think the farmers do not recognise, as a rule, that 240 lb. is too heavy for constant work, and I do not think they would offer any serious objection to the smaller sack if they did.

3. *Mr. Flatman.*] You say that the trade must be protected?—Yes.

4. Do you think that if it were decided to adopt a smaller sack it could be procured for the season, say, of 1909 or 1910?—This is 1907; we have got 1907 and 1908 provided for. Oh, yes! certainly.

5. But not before that?—Not before that.

6. And there would be no difficulty, in connection with the spout of the threshing-machine, in making a smaller sack?—None at all.

7. Do you think there would be with a chaff-cutter?—Well, they might have to make some alterations. I should like to say, in connection with threshing-machines, that some time ago we had South African orders for 80 lb. bags of oats, and there was some trouble with the machine bagmen, but it wore off all right.

8. You think that a bag suitable for 200 lb. of wheat would also be suitable for holding 3½ bushels, or so, of oats?—Yes, 4 bushels.

9. So far as you as a farmer are concerned, you raise no objection to the smaller bag?—No.

10. In fact, you would sooner, I believe, have a smaller bag than know that men were suffering in health through carrying heavy weights in the larger bags?—I believe, from my point of view, that I would rather have it—on the farm especially. The small bags are easier to handle altogether. The 4-bushel bag is an awkward one, but it is good for stacking, in that it is proportionate.

11. Seeing that in Australia this question is under consideration at the present time, do you think it would be advisable that we should confer with them if possible to get a bag that would be suitable for Australia as well as New Zealand? Should we then be more likely to get the looms altered in India?—I could not give much of an opinion about that. In Southland, I believe, and in Australia they are using 44 in. sacks. Whether or not they find them suitable, I could not say.

12. You think there would be a sufficient demand in New Zealand to warrant the manufacturers altering their looms for the purpose of making a smaller sack?—I should think there would be, but, of course, I could not tell.

13. There is no reason why, if a smaller sack is adopted, it should be made of lighter material than the present sacks?—Oh, no! You could and should make them as good.

14. *Mr. Bollard.*] Have you ever studied the cental system?—Not very much. Of course, we have to deal with centals in the African trade, but only there. In using the 200 lb. sack the idea that suggested itself was that if ever the cental system came in it would be useful.

15. You are aware that there is no practical utility in talking about bushels nowadays—that everything is sold by weight?—The only thing is that every farmer wishes to know what he gets per bushel. We never deal with the farmer at per cental, but we deal with the African trade in centals.

16. And you say that, in preparing the oats for the African trade, there was a little difficulty at first, but not so much when you got the men into the way of it?—No, that is not exactly the point. The first African orders were for the War Office, and that necessitated having them in 80 lb. bags. I merely wished to point out that even then we could use the smaller sack at the threshing-machine for as little as 80 lb. In a good many cases the oats were put into the big sacks and taken to the store, and refilled in the 80's. We filled these little sacks at the threshing-machines, and after a little grumbling the men accommodated themselves to it.

17. Supposing that you had 5,000 bushels of wheat in 100 lb. bags, and you had to shift it from your farm to the railway-station, do you think you would do it in quicker time in that way than by the present way?—I think it would be as quick. You are getting at the point whether a 100 lb. bag is not better than a 200 lb.?

18. Yes. Which do you think would be moved quicker?—I hardly think the 100 lb. bags would suit. That would be such a radical alteration that I do not think we thought of it at all. I would say straight off that I think you would do it as quickly in 100 lb. bags as in 240 lb. bags, but time is not all that has to be considered.

19. You think you would not do it quicker?—I should not like to say that.

20. You have not had any experience in that respect?—No; but I have had experience of 80's with the oats, and I believe they were handled quite as quickly.

21. Do you not think it would be better for the grain-merchant and the shipping to have the grain in small bags like that?—I am afraid you would come into conflict still more with the miller. The miller, after all said and done, can get 200 lb. into the others, but with 100 lb. bags he would certainly have to get fresh sacks.

22. Wheat being the heaviest class of grain, do you not think it would be better for the men who are handling the sacks and for every one to have the grain in packages like that?—I should not like to say that, for the reason that we have been collecting our information on the other basis. I think a 200 lb. sack would be the most acceptable.

23. Supposing you had to adopt a 100 lb. sack for wheat, it would be easy enough to get sacks suitable, and it would be easy to get sacks suitable for chaff or grass-seed?—Yes. Our trouble is that oftentimes a farmer gets a few more than he fills, and I suppose he generally has the right to return them if he cares about it; but they are liable to be left about on the place. It would be a great advantage to the farmer if the same-sized sack could be used for everything on the place.

24. What-sized sack do you use for new potatoes?—The 48 in.

25. Before they are properly matured for taking up?—I have never had any experience of that. They would be taken away for immediate sale.

26. There is a large quantity of new potatoes sold in the South Island before they are sufficiently matured to take up?—I think they would be put into any bag that was handy on the place.

27. You do not put them into small bags?—I do not think so.

28. *Mr. Hogg.*] Can you suggest any reason why the sacks in use in Canterbury should differ from the sacks in general use over in Australia?—I think it is quite likely to have been accidental from the start. Ever since I knew anything of Canterbury these large sacks were in use. I think it was merely the accident of some importer at the first, probably, bringing them in, and we have got into the groove. When I first knew about the wheat there were two sizes ruling, and that was considered objectionable. There used to be a 3¾-bushel sack, and then there was this great objection to the two sizes, and the importers found that farmers would not take the smaller sack at all on account of the mixing of the two, and they dropped it. From that experience comes the difficulty now; the farmers are so very much afraid that they are going back to the old system of two or three sizes.

29. Do you know of any difference between farming in New Zealand and Australia—the weight of grain or the bulk of chaff, or anything like that—that would warrant two different-sized sacks being used in the respective countries?—I know of none.

30. Then, if the smaller sack that you have been referring to is in general use in Australia, you have no reason to assume that it would not be equally convenient if it were adopted here?—I see no reason whatever.

31. Do you know of any place where a larger sack than the one used in Canterbury is in use amongst the farmers?—I have not heard of it.

32. Are you aware of any place outside of New Zealand where an equally large sack is in use?—Well, I have been told that this large-sized sack is practically confined to Canterbury.

33. Has any instance ever come to your own knowledge where men have suffered in any way through carrying those heavy sacks?—Not any special instance. I could not speak of any special case.

34. You have not known any instances in Timaru or elsewhere in which men have been incapacitated for life through injury to their spine?—I have not heard of any. No special cases have come under my notice.

35. Do you think the smaller sack would be equally convenient for the miller?—No, I do not think it is. They say they have to press their flour to get 200 lb. into the bag, and it is injurious to it.

36. I think you mentioned that the chief objection to the smaller sacks came from the millers?—That is so.

37. They refused to receive the wheat unless they got it in the larger sacks?—Yes, so it was stated.

38. *Mr. Aitken.*] Do you know what-sized sack they use in Great Britain?—I was a boy when I left there; but they had sacks that held 4 bushels, and they were manufactured to last for years. The usual practice where I came from was to send the sacks to the mill and deliver the wheat that was then offered for sale, and get back those bags again, year after year.

39. They used to go through the process of washing every year, did they not?—They were kept with the farmer's plant.

40. Do you know the measurement of the sack used in Australia?—No.

41. 44 in. by 26½ in.: would that fit in with what you know?—That is a squat sack.

42. Would that fit in with what you know takes place in Australia?—I should think that a narrower sack would have suited them better.

43. But the question of the loom comes into the width far more than into the length. They can make the sacks any length they like, but not any width. The loom has to be made for a certain width. You do not know of your own knowledge about the width of the sack in Australia?—No. I understand it is the same width.

44. It is 26½ in. Is the Australian wheat heavier than the New Zealand wheat?—On the average it may be; but this year it is not as heavy. The difference would be very slight. Our average here runs from 62 lb. to 64 lb. the bushel, and theirs will run 66 lb.; but this year we have beaten them in weight.

45. Would you consider it a feasible thing for the Legislature to legislate in this matter without saying anything about what the size of the sack was to be, but simply laying it down as a stipulation that no sack should contain more than 200 lb. weight of anything?—That would seem to me to be the simplest way. That was the form of the last regulation—just that the weight should be 200 lb., exclusive of the sack; that there should be 203 lb. allowed.

46. You mentioned the flour-millers. We have had evidence here from farmers who also strongly objected to the smaller sack because of the chaff question. There may be reason in their argument and there may not; but, on the whole, you think that if there were a regulation issued saying no sack should contain more than 200 lb. weight, that would be a regulation that could be easily worked?—I do, because there would be no harm if the importers brought in two sizes of

sack. If they liked to run the risk of mixing them on the farms, they could get them still. I may say, Mr. Chairman, that I will undertake, if it would help you in any way, to have this information that we have collected forwarded to you.

47. *The Chairman.*] We should like very much to have it. You had experience, I think you said, of the lighter sack for a time?—Yes.

48. And you found that the work was done expeditiously, and that the people were getting into the use of the lighter sack?—Yes. I had it on my own place, and although the bagmen said they did not know how they would stack the smaller sacks, they found they could do it as well as they did the larger ones.

49. On the question of width, you would let the width be such as would hold the 200 lb.?—I would let the people look out for that themselves, to adjust themselves to it. All that I think the legislature is concerned about is that the sack does not contain more than a certain weight.

50. *Mr. Flatman.*] Referring to the question put by Mr. Bollard *re* the 200 lb. bags, do you think the 100 lb. bags would be as suitable on a farm as those which contain 200 lb.?—No, certainly not; I would not go so far as that. I think it would create a good deal of disappointment. I think the 200 lb. sack would be accepted without much trouble, and we should all work into it; but I am afraid that if you went to the 100 lb. bags—well, there would be trouble. That is my own personal opinion.

EXHIBITS.

1. Telegram from Mr. LAURENSON, M.H.R., to Mr. GEORGE VOYCE, Lyttelton, 29th August, 1907.

George Voyce, Stevedores' Union, Lyttelton.

POST to me, to-night's mail, list of those injured and incapacitated through carrying grain.

GEORGE LAURENSON.

2. Telegram from Mr. REED to Mr. LAURENSON, 30th August, 1907.

MEN disabled—Hunter, Trehearn, Woods. Deceased—Kelly, Gower, Thompson.

REED.

3. Telegram from Mr. LAURENSON to Dr. UPHAM, Lyttelton, 29th August, 1907.

PLEASE post, to-night's mail, letter giving your opinion of carrying present large sacks on men on wharves; also instances of injuries. Also your opinion of Lyttelton lumpers' physique.

GEORGE LAURENSON.

4. Letter from Dr. C. H. UPHAM to Mr. LAURENSON, 29th August, 1907.

DEAR MR. LAURENSON,— Lyttelton, 29th August, 1907.

In reply to your telegram,—

1. I am of opinion that the carrying of the present large sacks is extremely injurious to the men. I have frequently attended men for the consequences, principally heart-strain. When such a man comes to me, I can advise him to knock off inhaling cigarettes, drinking beer; and in most cases he does so, but he cannot earn his living unless he *raises* and carries these enormous loads.

2. At the time of their deaths I attributed the fatal illnesses of Christian and Penny (Pini, a Frenchman) to this heavy work. They both died of aneurism of the aorta.

3. Your last question as to the physique of Lyttelton lumpers enables me to record my observation that in nearly every case the heart is enlarged; and it is because of this that I inquire as to cigarette-smoking and beer-drinking, but often get the answer that the man is a total abstainer and smokes a pipe; occasionally he is a non-smoker. I also find them the subjects of high arterial pressure, attributable to straining work. This, of course, would considerably shorten a man's life. Another point is that men of all sizes are engaged at this work—many little frail men of, for instance, my build; but the load is the same for all. And I am convinced of the truth of the complaint, for carrying a fully packed Gladstone bag a quarter-mile makes me feel ill for days, although organically I am quite sound Yours sincerely,

C. H. UPHAM.

EXHIBIT A.

A LETTER was sent to the Chamber of Commerce: The following is the copy, appearing in the *Lyttelton Times*:—

THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, NEW ZEALAND BRANCH, CANTERBURY SECTION.

SIR,— 21st August, 1899.

A deputation from the Lyttelton lumpers waited on us at a recent meeting, requesting us to use our influence to have the weight of sacks of wheat reduced. Two of the deputation were suffering from aortic aneurism, a condition which is directly caused by prolonged muscular effort,

one also which is an absolutely fatal disease. Our association is of opinion that 240 lb. is too great a weight for men to handle for any length of time with impunity. We hope you will see your way to associate with us in an effort to obtain a reduction in the weight of sacks. We would suggest 200 lb. as the maximum weight which could be safely handled by the men.

Yours, &c.,
R. H. ANDERSON, President.
EDWARD GANE, Secretary.

EXHIBIT B.

The Chamber of Commerce took the matter up, and forwarded the following letter, which appeared in the same-dated *Lyttelton Times*:—

SIR,—

I have the honour, by direction of the committee of this Chamber, to forward you a copy of letter received from the Canterbury Branch of the British Medical Association on the subject of excessive weight of sacks of wheat, and also the following resolution, passed by the committee, which we trust will receive your kindly consideration:—

"That the attention of the Government be requested to the copy of the letter enclosed from the Canterbury Section of the British Medical Association, directing attention to the injury caused to workmen by the excessive weight of sacks of wheat, in order to facilitate the use of small sacks. The Government be asked to make provision accordingly in the railway tariff."

Yours, &c.,
H. ANTILL ADLEY.

The Right Hon. the Premier.

EXHIBIT C.

The *Lyttelton Times* published a leading article on the subject of the letters, of which the following is a copy:—

The letter which the local branch of the Medical Association has addressed to the Chamber of Commerce, and which the latter body has forwarded to the Premier, deserves the careful consideration of the Government. If a 200 lb. sack of wheat is the maximum weight that a lumper can handle with safety to himself, the Railway Department should certainly not encourage the farmers to put their grain into heavier sacks. At present ten sacks of wheat, each weighing 240 lb., are taken on the railways as 1 ton, so that the farmer gets 2,400 lb. carried at the same price as he would pay for 2,000 lb. if he used the smaller sacks. So long as the present tariff is maintained there will be no change made, for, however much the farmer may wish to consider the men who have to move and store his grain, he cannot afford to pay 20 per cent. extra in the way of railway carriage to save them from the evils depicted by the Medical Association. There can be no doubt that the excessive weight of the sacks now in use is responsible for a great deal of inconvenience and a considerable amount of actual suffering. It scarcely required two men suffering from aortic aneurism in the ranks of the deputation that waited upon the association the other day to satisfy the public that the lumpers at Lyttelton are constantly exposed to a variety of ailments that arise from prolonged muscular exertion. Any one who has seen these men at work in the height of the grain season must have realised that handling a 240 lb. sack of wheat imposes a strain upon the human frame which cannot be borne for many hours with impunity. In the United States the cental bag of 100 lb. has been in use for many years; but a proposal to introduce it into Australia has been strenuously resisted by the merchants and shippers in Sydney and Melbourne. They contend that the bags are not strong enough to stand the repeated handling that is required in the colonies; that they cannot be removed weight for weight so rapidly as the larger sacks; and that in the long-run they cost the farmer more. They do not seem to have considered the point raised by the Medical Association here, but the local Chamber of Commerce has taken a far more humane view of the matter, and has requested the Government to make such amendments in the railway tariff as may be necessary to facilitate the use of the smaller sacks. We trust that the request will receive the favourable consideration of the Minister of Railways, and that he will see his way to give effect to the suggestion of the Chamber.

EXHIBIT D.

J. WALLER, aneurism of heart, dead; T. Buckley, badly strained, and dead; T. Pritchard, badly strained, and dead; J. Hock, badly strained and dead; J. Brown, badly strained, and dead; J. Longman, badly strained, and dead; E. Keye, badly strained and dead; J. Ellis, badly strained, and dead; T. Harkiss, strained leg; W. Taylor, bowels strained; D. Appleby, heart strained; H. Wilson, heart strained; J. Serrat, varicose veins; J. Clark, varicose veins; G. Davis, varicose veins; J. Taurish, varicose veins; F. Lurch, varicose veins.

EXHIBIT E.

DEAR SIR,— Ashburton, 24th August, 1907.

Herewith statement of account showing £270 17s. 1d. in your favour. This amount has been placed to your credit with Union Bank, Ashburton.

Size of corn-sacks: We have neither had a man disabled by lifting the 4-bushel sacks of wheat or in any way injured during the thirty-odd years the writer has been in business. As you

know, our firm handles as much grain annually as any other firm in New Zealand. As a matter of fact, nearly all grain coming into store has been for years hoisted on to the stacks from drays and wagons with horse. Traction-engines, which cannot get into stores, have to be discharged nowadays by manual labour, but the sacks are only carried a very short distance, and are then hoisted. It will be a very serious matter to farmers if a different-size sack is adopted than the one now in use. A smaller sack does not stack well, and a man will only carry the same number of sacks per diem. Result, cost of receiving and delivering will be increased. This must come out of the pocket of the producer. Surely there are enough able-bodied men in this colony to do without the slightest injury to themselves this particular work. Let those, then, do this job and others unfit to carry a 4-bushel sack look out for lighter work. In any case, if 4 bushels is too much, average the contents of a sack to be 210 lb. maximum, or 3½ bushels of wheat. For storage purposes 225 lb. would be more suitable if the time has come for a 4-bushel or 240 lb. sack to go; but I fear if a reduction is made it will be below 225 lb., and in that case 210 lb. is the best next thing.

Why are you not giving us some of your stock business?

Yours truly,
FREIDLANDER BROS. (LIMITED),
Per HUGO FREIDLANDER,
Managing Director.

G. W. Leadley, Esq., Wakanui.

EXHIBIT F.

DEAR MR. HARDY,— Mitcham, 25rd July, 1907.

I see by the papers that the size of the corn-sacks has been brought up again, and that the Premier said that the looms would have to be altered to make the sack required to hold 200 lb. of wheat. And I also noticed that Messrs. Buddo and Laurenson wished it to be made law that no more than 200 lb. of wheat go into a sack. Well, if they want the 200 lb. in a sack, keep the size of the sack the same as now—viz., 26 in. by 48 in.—put the 200 lb. of wheat into it, and fold down whatever is required of the top. Then the sacks will do for oats, barley, chaff, potatoes, and, in fact, any other farm-produce, and there need be no difference in the sack, and it will suit all concerned. Small sacks are very much trouble at the machine, as they are too short for the spout, and have to be kept up with a stool, and require an extra man to handle them. I thought I would just write and suggest this for your consideration, but I suppose you have thought the matter all over before.

Yours, &c.,
W. A. MCPHAIL.

EXHIBIT G.

SIR,— City Malthouse, Colombo Street, Christchurch, 24th August, 1907.

I would like to draw your attention to an article in to-day's *Lyttelton Times* (24th August) *re* weight of grain-sacks, and lumpers of Lyttelton's opinions thereon. The article speaks for itself. I am and have been a fairly strong man, and during my time have carried thousands of grain-sacks. I have handled wheat, oats, and barley, and unhesitatingly say that 200 lb. is plenty for any ordinary working-man to handle day after day. It is the limit in weight. I can confirm the remarks made at that meeting.

* * * * * * * * *

Yours very truly,
JAMES DAWSON.

Mr. Laurenson, M.H.R.

MEMORANDUM.

THE late Dr. Lewis, of Lyttelton, said that he was patching up men nearly every week from the effects of heavy carrying.

When the potato season was on about eight or nine years ago large English grass-seed sacks were filled with potatoes, and the weight was 3 cwt. 2 qr. 5 lb. The men in the sheds refused to carry them, and the potatoes had to be rebagged in 200 lb. sacks.

GEORGE RUTHERFORD.

OPINIONS of the LEADING MEN in TIMARU, who have had Experience in the Handling of Grain, as to the Advisability of using the 200 lb. Bag for Wheat.

Mr. W. Hassall

(Who has had Twenty Years' Experience as Head Storeman in the C.F.C.A.).

HE is of the opinion that the 200 lb. sack would be a decided advantage. It is just as easy to stack, and in handling an average young man can work all day with a 200 lb. sack, whereas it takes a man of strength and physique to work all day with a 240 lb. bag, and it is most difficult to get men at all to work with wheat in the present 240 lb. bags. In the handling of wheat, too, if you can get an active and light man he will get through a deal more work in a day with the light sack than a heavy man will with the big sack. If the light sack was introduced you would get a better class of men to pick from, but as it is now you cannot get young fellows, and only the "old stagers" who have been carrying for years will handle wheat.

From a farmer's point of view it would no doubt he somewhat inconvenient at first, but (in Mr. Hassall's opinion) it would be only a matter of time, if the 200 lb. bag was introduced, when the whole business would resolve itself into as satisfactory a way of working as there is now.

The farmers were just getting into the way of using the 200 lb. for wheat and the 26½ in. by 48 in. for oats when the Government cancelled their previous instructons "that wheat must be in 200 lb. bags."

Mr. W. Pratt

(Who has had Twenty-five Years' Experience with the New Zealand Loan Company as Head Storeman).

"Have them by all means—that is, from a labourers' point of view; in fact, if you don't get them soon the men will jib altogether. I find in the working of the store that it would be very much better, you could pick and choose your men, but you simply cannot get men to work the present sack. I recently wanted men, and asked fully twenty, and they all replied 'Is it wheat?' and when I told them there would be some wheat, not one of them would take it on. In regard to stacking—they stack better, in fact, than the ordinary ones. They bind better, and you can get as much in a bay—*i.e.*, the space between the pillars—in fact, I believe you can get more than the 240 lb. bags. In view of the after-use of the bags, I don't advocate it; but in time it will resolve itself into satisfactory working. It's just a murmur now among the men, but it's coming sure, that it will be the 200 lb. sack or else extra pay for handling the present one."

Opinion of John Mill and Co.

(Including their Manager, Head Storeman, and two Stevedores).

"From the men's point of view, have the 200 lb. sack by all means. We had a lot of trouble last year through different-sized sacks coming in one line; but if they are one size there is no difficulty in stacking. We think the size should be reduced in proportion all round. The present size is 26½ in. by 48 in. Well, make the 200 lb. one, say, 24½ in. by 44 in., not to alter it by just cutting some inches off the top; it is easier handled by having a proportionate reduction. At the wharves and for stowing on board ship the 200 lb. is far away the best; it is so much easier handled, and by being smaller stows better, and consequently gives the ship more freight-room. We strongly recommend it. Of course, it has its disadvantages for after-use, but that difficulty would in time be overcome."

I. J. Bradley

(Wharfinger, Timaru).

"I have had considerable experience with the 240 lb. sack, and think the 200 lb. bag would be better in every way. There are so many men about who cannot tackle the big bag. I have often seen men come out the hold who cannot handle the big bag. The small bag would be better stowing, and I firmly believe we could, on the wharves here, handle more grain a day by using the small bags than the present ones, as they are so much easier handled.

Mr. J. Venning

(Who has had Twenty-five Years' Experience with Messrs. Evans and Co., Flour-millers, Timaru).

"I would certainly favour the 200 lb. bag. I had no difficulty in stacking them last year. One can get more picking of men with the small bag, too; they don't like handling the 4-bushel one, especially young fellows object. I get through the work as well. Of course, there is more travelling with the small bag, but the men would sooner do that than carry the heavy ones. They can be used for flour, too. 200 lb. of flour can be got in them; but it would be better to put 180 lb. in, as I do not advocate pressing flour, as when it is bagged hot it is liable to cake. But no matter what they get, despite the talk to the contrary, the whole thing will right itself in regard to after-use."

Opinion of the Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company, Timaru

(Including their Manager and Head Storeman).

"Yes, the 200 lb. bag would be advantageous. We have very little in the store, but at the wharves and in shipping we have a good experience, and certainly think it would be better. The bags, being lighter, would not be knocked about so much, and they can be handled so much easier. When they are so heavy they are more liable to tear with the men's hooks and burst when dropping, and consequently there is time lost in repairing, and besides the wheat spilt.

General.

No one has had come under his notice a case where a man has been injured for life or where death has been caused, but both Mr. Pratt and Mr. Hassall notice in men who have been carrying wheat a decided stoop, which cannot be healthy.

K. G. Turner

(Manager, Belford Mills).

"I have carefully considered the question of sacks for many years, and after eighteen to nineteen years' experience I am perfectly satisfied that the ordinary 48 in. by 26½ in. sack, carrying 4 bushels of wheat, is a very fair sack in every way. I have had men working for my firm during the past seventeen or eighteen years, handling fifty or sixty thousand sacks per annum, who are not in any way physically incapacitated, and are still able and willing to handle the 243 lb. sack.

The 200 lb. sack suggested is absolutely impossible from the ordinary store requirements, and it is, in my opinion, impossible to stow wheat of the size suggested without undue risk to life and limb of the men employed in stacking and stowing wheat in stores. You cannot build a stack of wheat, and safely tie the stack, of sacks of 200 lb. weight, and such an arrangement by law would place an embargo on the proper use of stores, which I am sure no Government would give any consideration to."

EXPORTS FROM TIMARU.

	Wheat. Sacks.	Oats. Sacks.	Barley Sacks.
12 months ending December, 1904	171,894	266,165	3,521
,, ,, 1905	291,592	117,676	2,119
,, ,, 1906	180,192	169,943	1,732

Handled by Ourselves (Canterbury Farmers).

	Wheat. Sacks.	Oats. Sacks.	Barley Sacks.
12 months ending 31st July, 1905	100,035	71,507	606
,, ,, 1906	125,267	69,256	660
,, ,, 1907	117,418	42,582	536

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (1,600 copies), £15 5s.

By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1907.

Price 9d.]