

67. Yes: could you stop that?—If you could prove his association with a trust firm.

68. The London Produce Company are practically Sims, Cooper, and Co.: is there any means of finding out to whom the London Produce Company sells the meat that is returned to them?—We have a good deal of information on that point, and I have already read that.

69. There was no information in that—it was simply that there was no evidence. Could not some more evidence be obtained?—Yes, I showed the percentages which were sold to the American buyers.

70. That is not quite the point. This free meat is handled by Sims, Cooper, and Co. and the London Produce Company, and to whom does the London Produce Company sell it?—They do not sell it direct to the consumer: they principally sell it to wholesalers, who pass it on.

71. Is there any evidence as to whether it goes under the control of the Meat Trust?—That I could not say. That is what I should like to know.

72. Have you any evidence that Sims, Cooper, and Co. actually tried to get preferential rates from the local shipping companies?—I have no knowledge of their business with the shipping companies.

73. You mentioned something of Sims, Cooper, and Co. having secured the Geelong Freezing Company?—They have had those works leased for some time.

74. Have they not leased them since they obtained them?—They took them over shortly after they were built. They belong to the Geelong Harbour Trust—a municipal trust.

75. *Mr. Reed.*] Could you supply us with a list of the freezing-works and freezing companies?—Yes.

76. And also a list of the shareholders in those various companies?—That might be obtainable.

77. Have you looked into the share-list of some of those companies that you believe contain outside capital?—Possibly I may have been misunderstood when I stated that one firm had offered to put a lot of money into certain freezing companies. I do not know that either of those freezing companies accepted the offer.

78. Who are the shareholders in Birt and Co., in Vestey's, and in Fletcher and Co.?—I could not tell you who are the shareholders in Birt and Co.—that is a London company.

79. Are they simply registered here as an English company?—Their works are at Ocean Beach. The official designation of the management there is "Ocean Beach Freezing-works: J. G. Ward and Co., Managing Agents."

80. Are Birt and Co. registered here or simply carrying on business?—I do not know what their status is in that direction.

81. In the case of Fletcher's or Vestey's, are they both registered here?—W. and R. Fletcher are registered here as a New Zealand Company. It is simply an offshoot of a large firm in London.

82. I understand their share capital is £2,000, and they must have about a quarter of a million or more worth of plant?—It is understood in New Zealand that they are acting on behalf of Vestey's and the Union Cold Storage Company.

83. Do you know what companies have been financed by outside capital? You mentioned just now that companies or outside individuals had offered to find money for freezing-works: do you know of any cases where companies have been financed in that way?—I do not know that I do, except that in more than one company the shipping companies have taken a large number of shares. I have only heard of reputed offers which have been made and have been turned down.

84. Could you also get the Committee a list of the exporters in New Zealand?—Yes, I could get that.

85. Also a list of the exporting companies?—Yes.

86. Also the English representatives of the whole of the exporting people?—Yes.

87. Do you know anything about the operations of Weddel and Co.?—They are a very large firm in London doing a big business and having representation in New Zealand.

88. Have you any reason to believe that they are in any way at all connected with the American Meat Trust?—I think there is no doubt they have a very large number of transactions with the Meat Trust people in London, but I have no reason to believe that they are in any way allied to them. I think they are quite an independent company.

89. Sims and Cooper were both in their employ after they first started in that line?—I have no knowledge of their having been.

90. Were not Sims and Cooper working in conjunction with Weddell and Co. when they first started, and were financed in the first instance?—I do not know who financed them when they first started.

91. They were clerks, were they not?—One was a clerk and the other either a clerk or a stock-buyer.

92. How long ago is it since they left employment of that kind?—I suppose they have been established about ten years now.

93. Have you any idea at all where their capital came from when they started?—Absolutely no knowledge.

94. Have you any idea of the extent of their transactions when they first started?—They grew very quickly, but in the beginning one's attention was not focussed on them very much.

95. They were small buyers to begin with?—Yes, but their business grew very rapidly indeed, and their operations extended.

96. Have you any idea of what the extent of their turnover is at the present time?—I have no idea, but it must be very large.

97. You know the history of the operations in the Argentine—you know the methods of the American Meat Trust for the purpose of acquiring a monopoly in the Argentine?—Yes.