

43. Is there anything much worse than the American Beef Trust or a British Beef Trust?—I do not think there is any British Beef Trust with which the American Beef Trust could for a moment be compared. Any one who reads these pamphlets I have produced, and notes the allegations made, evidently in a responsible way, will see what the American Beef Trust has done in its own country.

44. Is there any combination of merchants in other lines?—There are, certainly, and there certainly will be.

45. You suggest we should tackle the Beef Trust?—Yes. I think it has operated to our disadvantage already, inasmuch as it has obtained a footing, and wherever it has put its foot it has exterminated competition.

46. It has not done that in New Zealand yet?—In my opinion it has taken the first step towards it.

47. *Dr. Newman.*] You are aware that the meat trade of this country at the present time is in the hands of the Government?—Yes.

48. And that is working satisfactorily during the war?—Quite.

49. Do you see any objection to that going on after the war?—I do not.

50. Supposing it goes on, would it not be easy for the Government to arrange freights so that every company is able to get shipping freights at a cheap rate?—I do not think the Government could be more efficient in finding cheap freight under ordinary conditions than the associated freezing companies would be.

51. What I mean is this: if I sent a truck-load of cattle a hundred miles I pay the same freight as the biggest company in New Zealand?—Yes, there is one tariff.

52. Could not the Government arrange one tariff for shipping?—I think there is one tariff for the meat trade.

53. That is during the war. I mean after the war?—Before the war there was one tariff.

54. You know it is possible, if the Government does not interfere, for the shipping companies trading here to give special concessions to the Meat Trust and cut us out?—Yes.

55. The Government can control the meat, and by arrangement can control the freight?—Yes.

56. After that if the Government still retains the selling-power, by that means they can see that the Beef Trust does not get the business into their clutches?—The combination, whether the freezing companies or the Government, will have to control the freight.

57. You were talking of the meat trusts in America gaining control of the poultry and egg export: are they not interested in the grain trade as well?—I am not aware of that. I have never seen anything to lead me to believe that is so.

58. Are you aware that they largely control the gigantic salmon-fishery trade?—No.

59. Are they not operating in cheese and butter in New Zealand?—In butter they are, but not in cheese.

60. Is it your opinion that unless a combination takes place here the American Meat Trust will absolutely dominate the trade in New Zealand?—Yes, that is what I think they have started out to do, and will continue if they are not prevented.

61. *Mr. Talbot.*] You suggested that the farmers should themselves take a hand in the matter by refusing to sell to firms who are supposed to be connected with the Meat Trust?—Yes.

62. That would mean boycotting certain firms who are operating?—Yes, I suppose so. It is not exactly a boycott in the offensive sense of the word. I do not think that word is quite applicable. The boycott, as I understand it, is an attack, and this is a method of defence that I am suggesting.

63. But a number of large firms would have to be excluded from business. You have admitted that a firm like Sims, Cooper, and Co. might belong to the Meat Trust, but we have no absolute truth of it, and they have challenged it. We could not exclude that firm?—No, there is very considerable difficulty in doing that. As this question matures it may become quite a possible thing for the Government of this country to require all traders in meat to purge themselves of all foreign connections or alliance, and I take it that would very soon settle the question. You cannot reach a solution of this matter in one act by saying that the farmer will do his part in not selling to the Beef Trust. One obviously is speaking of the open or undisguised element of the Beef Trust, which is accessible to every one. If there be a disguised element in New Zealand it will be one of the problems that the combined action or federation of British interests will have to deal with; but I cannot say how it is going to deal with Sims, Cooper, and Co., if it should turn out that Sims, Cooper, and Co. are secretly supported by the American Meat Trust.

64. You speak of "peaceful penetration." It is difficult to find out where that peaceful penetration begins and where it ends. Do you not think the State will have to take the matter in hand at both ends?—I take it that the State will have a considerable hand in dealing with this question. Without belittling what the State can do, I have tried to point out that a large commercial proposition must be handled by commercial men, and large commercial frozen-meat propositions must be handled by the men who have graduated in the meat trade and know it from A to Z. Subject to that qualification, I would not suggest any limit on State interference and regulation.

65. *Mr. T. A. H. Field.*] Do you think State regulation would be sufficient without State ownership?—Yes, I think commercial management under State regulation would be better than State management, and that the State ought to be able to protect this industry reorganized on commercial basis and carried out on commercial lines.

66. *Mr. W. H. Field.*] I take it you are of opinion that we can do nothing without combination between the Imperial Government and our own Government?—Yes, at the beginning the co-operation of the Imperial Government ought to be secured, so that none of its methods