

will counter in any way the New Zealand reorganization of this trade on a British basis, and that they will do nothing of that nature in their dealings with the Beef Trust, because they must have dealings with the Beef Trust in supplies from other countries.

67. Then you see no difficulty in regard to the British Government protecting our interests and at the same time dealing with foreign meat?—No, I do not. Whatever difficulties there are would have to be solved, because they have to have foreign meat.

68. You spoke about a combination of farmers: I think most of us are rather sceptical at arriving at such a combination?—It is hard to say how far the meat companies might be able to solve the position apart from the farmers, but the farmer is the ultimate factor on which the frozen-meat trade is built. You have to go back to him, and unless he can be got into line in any process of reorganization of this trade there will be friction and dissatisfaction.

69. You are satisfied with the scheme we have at present?—Yes.

70. Do you not think that scheme might be used to build upon after the war?—Obviously. I think the method of starting this scheme would have to be in the shape of a pool, just as there has been in connection with the wheat in Australia. What I have been trying to argue for is the agency that is going to do it—namely, commercial management.

71. Do you not think it would be necessary also to secure the wholesale co-operation of Australia in this matter?—I do not know, but I rather think at first sight not. It is very hard to get two countries into line.

72. You think an attempt should be made to secure their co-operation?—I think the better plan would be for this small and well-consolidated territory to lead the way.

73. There is no other part of the British Empire besides Australia that we need trouble about?—Not at the present time.

74. We had it in evidence from the managing director of the Meat Company that it was necessary to secure the absolute combination of every portion of the British Empire which was producing meat in order to succeed?—I do not see any reason to say so, but I would not contradict him.

75. You say that the operations of the firms associated with the American Meat Trust are growing year by year?—There is no instance more clear than the steady rapid growth such as the suspected trade.

76. We are told that we would find it very difficult indeed to get any direct evidence as to the operations of these trusts. Do you think we would be right in considering that the trusts are operating, and that we should bring about remedial measures?—Whatever may have been the answer to that question before Armour and Co. came into the business, I think there can be no doubt that the trust is here. It is a fact, and not assumption.

77. You strongly urge that no time should be lost?—Yes.

78. Dealing with the question of the suggested board of business men, do you suggest that the Board of Trade, the members of which have a high business-capacity in commercial matters, would be sufficient?—No, I do not. I would not set up a Board with full powers in a case like this. I would appoint one or two men, and I would give them advisers, but not controllers.

79. Have you any knowledge of rebates being given on freezing-charges by freezing companies to people supposed to be connected with the Meat Trust?—No, I have not. I know there is suspicion current, but I do not know the grounds for it.

80. Have you any views as to whether we should control the shipping in any way, or leave it in its present position?—I think the shipping should be left in its present position. There are no two single institutions existing that have contributed so much to the development and success of the frozen-meat trade as the two shipping companies which have served this colony—namely, the Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company and the New Zealand Shipping Company. Seeing that they have well and efficiently served this country for more than a generation, and this meat trade for thirty-five years, by their brains and work and liberal investment of capital, and anticipated the requirements of the trade from year to year, I think it would be impossible to find anybody who would do better for us. Of course, if anybody comes along and offers to do better, the country dare not refuse their services; but to set out to do for ourselves what has been so efficiently done for us in the way of hire in the past I think would be a wrong policy.

81. *Mr. Reed.*] Is the management to-day as sympathetic as it was?—I do not think one can speak much about to-day.

82. But I mean, when normal times come again?—I think there was never a time when a freezing company in New Zealand was struggling to its feet and feeling about for a little capital that it did not get it from the shipping companies; and there never was a time when the shipping accommodation was more adequate to the wants of this colony than when war broke out.

83. *Mr. W. H. Field.*] And you are of opinion that the recent high increase in freights has not been exorbitant under the circumstances?—I have no information about that. War conditions are so unparalleled and so incomparable with anything else that I am unable to say whether the freights have been moderate or not.

84. I take it you would be in favour of dealing with British trusts in the same way as American trusts if they were formed to deal with meat and produce?—Yes, generally. If any British body was up against us as the American people are, and threatening us the same as they are, then I would advocate the same measures of defence.

85. We have had rather a difference of opinion among the various witnesses as to whether, if we brought a scheme into operation for protecting our meat trade with the co-operation of the Old Country, whether we should extend the scheme of control to the wholesaler or go to the consumer?—I think the president of the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce expresses to a nicety my views on that question—that we must do as the Beef Trust do. They follow the meat from the ranch