

where it is grown right to the consumer who buys the stuff, and they care for it at every point. So long as we are fighting them we cannot afford to use a less effective weapon than complete care from the beginning to the end, as they do. Now they take all the profit that can be taken out of the business from the ranch to the retail shop. We abandon it half-way and throw it into the open scramble, with the result that we are not as strong as they are from that point. I think to fight them effectually we would have to make ourselves as strong as they are at every point. A good deal could be done to check their operations without protecting the meat to the final point—*i.e.*, the consumer—but we must get there in the end if we are to fully combat the trust.

86. *Mr. Scott.*] As an exporter, have you had any experience of the operations of the Meat Trust being adverse to your interests?—I think not; but then my interests as a New Zealand merchant terminate when the meat leaves New Zealand: I do not follow it.

87. *Mr. Pearce.*] You consider that the Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company and the New Zealand Shipping Company have done the best possible for New Zealand?—Yes.

88. Is it not a fact that we had to establish a Freight Reduction Committee to keep them from raising the freights on wool?—I do not think that is inconsistent with saying that the provision for the freight wants of the colony have been ample.

89. But possibly they are charging an unfair freight. Do you not know that the first operation of the American Meat Trust was to secure control of the shipping between England and America?—I am not aware that they secured control of the shipping.

90. Does not one of the pamphlets you have there make that statement?—I do not think they do. What I think it meant is that they secured the cold-freight space in the British steamers. Any shipping company in installing the cold-freight space has a large preliminary expenditure, and it therefore wants a contract. The concern which was most ready to give that contract was the Beef Trust.

91. Do you not fear the same thing in connection with the shipping here?—I do not see how it is to be feared if you secure the meat from being sold to the trust before it leaves here. If it is a danger at all when we come to close quarters with a rearrangement of the trade it should be specially provided against.

92. As far as the Shaw-Savill Company is concerned, they are not in America at present?—I do not think that is so at all. I speak subject to correction, but the principal owner of the Shaw-Savill Company is a shipowner named Ellerman.

93. Has not the New Zealand Shipping Company been amalgamated with another company?—Yes, with the P. and O. Company.

94. Is not that largely owned by the Morgan line?—I do not think there is any connection between the P. and O. Company and the Morgan line. I think the P. and O. Company is too big to be under the control of any other concern.

95. *The Chairman.*] I understood you to say that if steps are taken to control the purchase of meat in New Zealand and prevent the Meat Trust operating, then there would be no point in the Meat Trust trying to control the meat in any way?—Yes.

96. Your object is to prevent them being shippers in New Zealand?—Yes.

97. That or any other trust?—Yes.

98. *Mr. Reed.*] At the present time freighters pick up cargoes all along the coast of New Zealand lying outside the freezing companies?—Yes.

99. Have you any reason to fear that may be discontinued by the shipping companies either through any combination of themselves demanding the centralization of all freights, or brought about by the Meat Trust operating in New Zealand by their concentrating and bringing the live-stock into certain centres and working into the hands of the shippers?—I think we ought to judge the future action of the shipping companies by their past action. There has not been a freezing-house built in New Zealand which has not found the shipping companies ready to go to their door for the freight for the last thirty-five years, and it is reasonable to assume that they will do the same thing in future. Besides, they are in the trade to remain if they are reasonably treated. Trade is a mutual thing, and there are always other shipping companies to turn round to in the world if we should be held up with oppressive conditions in any way.

100. You have not heard the suggestion?—No.

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JAMES CHRISTOPHER COOPER examined. (No. 9.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Managing director of the Wellington Farmers' Meat Company, situate at Masterton, and general manager of the Taranaki Farmers' Meat Company, New Plymouth.

2. The Committee will be pleased to hear anything you have to say in regard to the operations of the Meat Trust?—Well, I hardly know exactly how you want me to deal with the matter. The two companies which I control are entirely owned by farmers, and I think there are about a thousand shareholders in each company. The storage-capacity of one of the works is close on 300,000, and the other works 70,000. We are a buying concern in each case. We do not at present freeze for speculators or American firms, and have not frozen save on owner's account for the last three years. Of course we have given our settlers the privilege of freezing on their own account, and when the Government commandeered the meat we gave every man the right of selling to the Government direct if he wished, and we even offered to pay for the meat. I think half a dozen availed themselves of that offer, but they have not repeated it. When I say we do not freeze on owner's account, we have done so formerly. We did so to a large extent for Sims, Cooper, and Co. up to about three years ago, and we also made a contract with them that