

is in 1916, and includes all classes of meat. Australia shipped 104,000 tons, and New Zealand 158,000 tons. The total output of Australasia was 285,000 tons, as against four American houses who sent 313,000 tons, so that it is easy to see that, at the present time at any rate, the Dominions are not able to supply Great Britain with all the meat she requires, and that year we know there was a shortage of importations into Great Britain. Of course a lot could be done by developing the various portions of the Empire, because it is serious from an Empire point of view. When another war comes along these big firms are going to take care that the whole of the insulated tonnage is not going to be protected by the British flag; and, apart from that, one has to realize the fact that these huge American concerns are drawing profits from various portions of the Empire, largely from the colonies, which are going to further swell the huge financial resources of those in America instead of coming back here, therefore a large proportion of the value of the produce of this country will be going to America.

14. Have you thought out what steps the Imperial Government could take to protect us? It is quite plain they have to admit foreign meat. Could they deal with our meat satisfactorily, and at the same time protect us from foreign competition?—Yes, it could be done. At the present time the Board of Trade have got the names of every immediate purchaser of New Zealand meat. All they have to do is to say, "Eliminate So-and-so." When I say "purchaser" I am referring to wholesale purchasers. Our manager has to send in a return of every man he sells meat to.

15. *Mr. Reed.*] If it were sent to the London Produce Company, could they say to whose hands it went after that?—Yes.

16. *Mr. W. H. Field.*] Considering the hold the Americans have got and the growing hold, would it not be possible to retaliate by putting down the price of meat and so shut us out of the market?—No, I do not see how they could very well. Of course, they may be able to do more in the future than ever they have done up to now, because Great Britain is the only market they have got for their surplus. They are out to make profits. They will only sell at a loss when it comes to squeezing somebody out, and will only buy at a loss when it comes to getting control. Their past operations have proved that so conclusively. Look at the case of the Argentine: 70 per cent. of the Argentine meat is owned by four American houses, 21 per cent. by two British firms, and 9 per cent. by one remaining firm.

17. The others are allowed to act on sufferance?—Yes. If they attempted to do otherwise they would have to go right out. They have the power. The result is, taking the selling-value of the Argentine meat, and their contract with the British Government as against ours, which is better than ours, and taking into account the fact that America is buying a portion of their output, they have a big advantage over all their rivals, and are making enormous profits.

18. Taking all those points into consideration, are you satisfied that we can deal with this matter effectually if the Imperial Government will co-operate with us?—Yes; as a matter of fact, we have got to—we are right up against it. To save ourselves we have got to do it, and it has got to be done quickly or we shall be too late.

19. Do you think it would be necessary also to rope in for the purpose of co-operation other portions of the Empire, particularly Australia?—It will be better if it can be done, but meantime we are so much a larger factor in the meat trade than Australia that it is more an important matter to us. I know the Queensland Government have been justly making efforts to cope with it, because it is a serious matter. I have been through the American works there, and I know their operations.

20. You would right away endeavour to secure the co-operation of Australia?—Yes; in fact, it is an Imperial matter really, and a matter which should be tackled in a particular spirit, because it is the Empire's food-supplies which are being attacked and controlled.

21. The last witness told us he thought it would be necessary in order to have a scheme which would be effectual to secure the co-operation of the farmers themselves by combination either voluntary or by force. Do you think you could get the co-operation of the farmers?—Yes, if the matter was fairly put to them. I have been round my district in the different centres, and discussed with them the whole position, and they fully realized the danger. That is the trouble: unless the farmer is first of all acquainted with the facts he may resent what will be a serious drop in values to him.

22. Have these pamphlets you have produced been circulated amongst the farmers?—We have distributed quite a number of them—about two hundred.

23. Did you find your farmer shareholders went back on you when these other people were competing?—Yes, a certain number went back. But you must recollect this position: if you and I are farming in the same district and a rival concern comes along to you and offers you 5s., or 7s., or 8s. per head—the sum paid last year—for your fat stock more than they are actually worth you take it; and I, on the other hand, say, "No, I am going to sell to my local company at its value and no more: I am going to put the stuff on the hooks at the Government value." The result is that you have got anything from 5s. to 8s. per head more for your stuff than I have got, and you are therefore able to go into the market and dominate the position more than I am.

24. But the farmers who are prepared to act squarely are forced to do the other thing?—Yes, compelled to do so.

25. Have you any opinion in regard to controlling the shipping?—No, I have not. I have heard a lot and seen a lot in the papers about shipping. When in the Old Country I had a chat with the general manager of the Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company, and he put the position fairly well to me. Apart from the submarine losses, the demands of the Army and Navy are enormous at Home, and some of our insulated steamers are acting as colliers for the Navy. With the growth of the Army at various fronts the number of ships required for that purpose is steadily increasing, and submarining is going on all the time, with the result that there is a steady diminution in the number of ships to carry the commerce we have.

26. That is not what I meant: whether we could leave the shipping companies to deal with the stuff without control?—I am afraid we will have to control them, for this reason: while in the Old Country I saw a return which had been asked for by a member of Parliament, which