

67. Could you give the figures for Canterbury, approximately?—I should say, 120,000.

68. Could you tell us what Joseph and Co. put through the year before?—I could not say.

69. Did Joseph and Co. operate all over New Zealand, or only round Canterbury?—They operated in the North Island—at Hastings.

70. *The Chairman.*] Do you wish to add anything, Mr. Sinclair, which you think may be of use to the Committee?—No, Mr. Chairman.

71. *Mr. Pearce.*] Could you tell us the different limits you had in the case of lambs during the season: you only gave the instances in regard to beef?—Yes; we started at, I think, about 6½d., and finished at 9½d.—that is, over all.

WILLIAM DOUGLAS LYSNAR examined. (No. 11.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What positions do you hold?—I am chairman of the Poverty Bay Farmers' Meat-freezing Company. I am an exporter of dairy-produce; I own a butter and cheese factory, the surplus from which I export; I am a sheep-farmer, and an exporter of wool and meat.

2. Do you desire to make a statement before the Committee?—I have prepared a statement, and shall be glad to read it to the Committee. It is as follows:—

For some years past I have been an exporter of meat, wool, and dairy-produce. I am chairman of directors of one of the freezing companies in Gisborne, and am the sole proprietor of a butter and cheese factory there, the surplus products of which are exported. I have been closely watching the operations and dangers of the meat and shipping trusts since 1910. In that year I went home to England, and, at the suggestion of a certain section of the Farmers' Union in this Dominion, I investigated these matters very fully. I visited San Francisco, Chicago, and New York, when I made careful investigations as to the doings and operations of the trust. I followed up these investigations in England, where I wrote a special report dealing with our shipping and meat matters. This report was confirmed by a New Zealand committee who investigated matters in England, and very wide publicity was given to it; and, although there were some very severe strictures in the report, I may add that the correctness of my facts upon which I based these strictures were never in any way questioned through the public Press by any person associated with the shipping or meat trade. In 1912 I again visited England, and went further into these trust and shipping matters, and upon my return I addressed public meetings of farmers throughout the chief centres of New Zealand, urging them to combine to take steps enabling them to fight the trusts. The result of my observations convince me that our pastoral industry in this Dominion is at the present time being encircled by a very dangerous combination, and I feel I cannot too strongly impress upon this Committee the real danger facing it at this juncture, for unless the producers and legislators of this Dominion combine, disastrous results will, in my opinion, unquestionably ensue—results that will affect every walk of life, for, as New Zealand is not a manufacturing country but depends mainly on its agricultural resources, if that industry becomes imperilled it must naturally follow that everything else will be proportionately affected. Therefore I suggest that it is not only a fight that should be grappled with from a producer's standpoint, but also from a Dominion and Imperial standpoint; and in this respect I fear that from a commercial outlook these trust dangers are as grave a menace as that of Germany. The trusts are seeking to dominate the world and the meat industry of this Dominion by sheer weight of capital, while the Germans are endeavouring to accomplish the same by brute force; and every day the operations of these trusts are allowed to continue, the huge accumulation of capital against which we will have to fight is increasing and making the ultimate result more difficult to achieve, consequently the sooner the danger is realized and grappled with the better. I refer to the Imperial standpoint of this fight for the reason that these trust monopolies work by a process of squeezing down the price paid to the producer and increasing the price of the product to the consumer, with the result that, in consequence of the growing high cost of living, this has a tendency to accentuate the serious labour difficulties from time to time arising; and it is poor consolation for a New-Zealander to realize that he is getting, after paying the f.o.b. charges, less than 5d. per pound for his best wether mutton when, according to a Press cable that was received on the 21st May, the best beef and mutton is being retailed in England at 2s. per pound. This shows that there is huge profiteering going on somewhere, and it is easy to learn that it is not the producer nor the Imperial authorities who are making this profit, but it is going to the huge trust organizations; and there is little wonder that three or four of the meat trusts disclosed by their published balance-sheets that during the last three years while the war has been in operation they have made larger profits than the New Zealand Government has spent on the war from its inception; and when it is realized that a large portion of these huge profits are being extracted from the meagre assistance the men in the firing-line are able to allow their wives and children who are left at home, I suggest that it is the first duty of those of us who are not in the firing-line to immediately take concerted action to absolutely prohibit this wicked profiteering from succeeding. Earlier in the period of the war a direct attack was made through the medium of the Press in England alleging that New Zealand producers were exploiting the home consumers. Steps were rightly taken up at the time by the High Commissioner in England to repudiate this; and I feel that at such a critical juncture as the present no better services can be rendered to our Empire than by assisting it to combat the objectionable operations of the trust or profiteering firms, and to see that the produce is expeditiously and as cheaply as possible supplied to the consumer.

In dealing with the trusts it must be remembered that the shipping and meat trusts act together, and while the managements are not identically the same, except in certain cases that might be pointed out, it is well known that the two operate together, and somehow or another the meat-trust representatives will always get their produce carried when others will fail.

Regarding the result and danger of the trust, the most practical illustration we can have of this is to observe the results of the trust workings in other countries. It is reported and generally recognized that the Meat Trust obtained its stranglehold of the pastoral industry in the United States of America in about the year 1900. Up to that time statistics show that the United States