

Do you know what interest Mr. Ogden Armour has in the London company?—I have no idea.

Are you running the whole of the Australian business from New Zealand, or have you directors over there?—We have no one in Australia at the present time.

Your desire is to observe the laws of this country?—Yes, we are here to work in the open. The unfortunate thing seems to be we are here trading in our own name.

Can you tell us whether the restriction of your operations by refusing to grant a meat-export license will materially affect our markets in Australia or in America?—I am not able to give you any answer on that point.

We are naturally looking for markets. Can you say, if your company had a meat-export license, whether it would help our market in America?—I should think so.

Can you give any information to the Committee as to the possibility of that market in America continuing?—You have some idea of the amount of stock they have taken already, and I think you can fairly well rely upon it that they can take the same quantity every year.

When you were in America you were not associated with Messrs. Armour and Co.?—Not until November. Just after I arrived back from England Mr. Carney cabled to me and asked me whether I would accept a position with Messrs. Armour and Co.

In observing what you did in Chicago you did so as an entirely disinterested person?—I was very much interested.

It was your natural desire to see what was going on?—Yes.

Are you aware of what takes place at the stock-sales in America?—Yes.

Did you see any indication of open competition?—Yes, there was plenty of open competition. On one occasion I went to Clay and Robinson in Chicago and made inquiries from them. I happened to meet Mr. Clay, and I obtained particulars from him as to the quantity of stock that came from the farmers and producers. Afterwards I went round with Messrs. Armour and Co.'s chief buyer and I learnt the whole method of buying.

As far as you could see it was keen and open competition?—Yes.

Now, in regard to the Commission's report, you do not suggest it was not a *bona fide* Commission and a very important Commission?—Probably Mr. Carney knows more about it than I do. I may say, however, that I spoke to several about the matter after the report was made public and they said that the report was got up for political purposes. They said we never understood those things over here. They are for politics or even religion.

Can you tell us as to the condition of things in South America as a result of the operations of the Meat Trust?—Only to say that the Argentine seems to be going ahead all right. In a report that I read recently it was stated that the British Meat Company in the Argentine made a profit of £435,363 in the year 1918, and £589,608 in 1919. That does not look as if anybody is being squeezed out.

You are aware that South America is held up to us as a horrible example owing to the operations of the Meat Trust?—They do not hold that view there. South America is going ahead by leaps and bounds, and stock-raisers are paying enormous prices for stud stock, which is one of the best indications of the pastoral prosperity of a country.

Mr. L. A. RUTHERFORD further examined. (No. 11.)

*The Chairman*: You wish to make a further statement, Mr. Rutherford?—Yes, sir. I would like to add a few remarks to what I said last week. I would like to state my occupation. I am a sheep-farmer. I have been a sheep-farmer all my life. I am a grazier and not a fatterer, and I have no other interests whatsoever. I am not a shareholder in any company. I wish to make myself perfectly clear on those points. Now, sir, a gentleman here has been trying to make out that the Sheepowners' Federation meeting held in Wellington on the 28th July last was not representative of the sheepowners—

*Mr. Lysnar*: Not representative of the North Island?—Well, I will state the names of the gentlemen who were at the conference. They are as follow: H. D. Acland, L. A. Rutherford, L. C. Gardiner, and R. M. Morten, representing Canterbury; J. Begg, J. King, W. J. McGregor, and Colonel Nicholls, representing Otago and Southland; C. Smith, representing Marlborough; Mr. McLeod, I understand, representing the Wairarapa; and Hugh Morrison and G. L. Marshall representing Wellington. Mr. Sherratt, who represents Gisborne on the Sheepowners' Federation, was not able to be present at the conference, but he holds very strong views on this matter—

Who was the other northern representative?—Mr. G. L. Marshall. Now, I noticed that Mr. Lysnar read out the other day a resolution which was carried at the Farmers' Union Conference, and, if you will allow me, I would like to read out the resolutions which have been passed at our sheepowners' meetings. We have in Canterbury a Sheepowners' Union, consisting of a large body of sheep-farmers. There are fifteen or sixteen hundred odd members, and they are all sheep-farmers. At the annual meeting of the union on the 11th August last there were about forty members present, who were all representative men of the industry. Now, at that meeting it was resolved, on the motion of Mr. E. Hay, seconded by Mr. H. Ensor, and carried unanimously, "That this annual meeting of the Canterbury Sheepowners' Union are of opinion that Messrs. Armour and Co. should be granted an export license from year to year." At that meeting it was also proposed by Colonel Chaffey, who is also a sheep-farmer, that a public meeting of sheep-farmers should be called, and this public meeting was advertised in the Canterbury papers in race week. This meeting was held on the 13th August, and though it happened to be a very wet evening we had a very good meeting. It was open to any sheep-farmer in the Dominion to attend, and we had a sprinkling from the North Island. Mr. Sherratt was there, and there were one or two others. There were also sheep-farmers from Otago and from Marlborough. At that meeting Mr. George Gould moved, "That no obstacle be placed in the way of any firm operating in New Zealand unless it is proved that the operations of the firm are detrimental to the interests of the producers of New Zealand." That was seconded by Mr. T. C. Robinson, and was carried unanimously. And the resolution which was carried at the meeting of the Sheepowners' Federation in Wellington was on similar lines. I wish to make that quite clear. Now, sir, you have had a certain amount of evidence given here as to what took place at the New Zealand Farmers' Union Conference, but at that conference everything was not quite in order—