

I have attended every meeting of the shareholders of the company, and I should say that I have attended every meeting of the directors of the company that has been held. There are only four shareholders—

*Mr. Lysnar*: Who are the other shareholders?—The share capital of the company is £100,000, divided into £5 shares. Mr. Washington Irving Carney has a £5 share, Mr. Norman McBeth has a £5 share, I myself have a £5 share, and Mr. Jonathan Ogden Armour, of Chicago, has 19,997 £5 shares. Mr. Jonathan Ogden Armour's share capital in the company is £999,985. So that the whole of the capital of the company is American capital. That, of course, is permitted by the law of New Zealand. I think I am right in stating that the whole of the capital of the International Harvester Company is American money, and I believe there are three or four other large American corporations in New Zealand which are being run on American capital. But, sir, this is a New Zealand company. So far as the management of its business and its organization is concerned it is a New Zealand company. It is domiciled here, and the directors attend to and deal with all the details of the business quite independently. Now, sir, in consequence of my position as counsel for the company, and being a nominal shareholder, and having been present at every meeting of the directors, I am able to speak from my own personal knowledge in regard to the company's operations. Now, Sir, the instructions for the formation of this company originally came from America. At that time there were rumours going round New Zealand to the effect that some of the companies carrying on business here, not being run on open lines, that they were really representing other powerful interests. Whether these rumours were true or not I do not know. But this I do know: the instructions by Mr. Jonathan Ogden Armour to Messrs. Armour and Co. of Australasia were that they were to establish themselves in New Zealand absolutely openly. Of course the incorporation of the company is public property. The share list is filed with the Registrar of Companies. There is no information about the company which any dissatisfied person cannot become aware of by paying a fee of 2s. at the Registrar's office in Christchurch, where everything is on record. My instructions were, sir, to facilitate in every possible way the policy of Armour and Co. of Australasia in New Zealand, and my instructions were that that policy was to be a perfectly open policy—that it was to be a policy of "cards upon the table." I may say that I personally advised the company—and I not only advised, but I insisted upon a particular auditor being appointed—viz., Mr. William Morris Tyers, of Christchurch; he was appointed auditor to the company, and we hope that he will be able to give evidence before this Committee. Mr. Tyers is very well known in New Zealand. He was in the Land and Income Tax Department for many years, and is a man of known ability and integrity. He, as auditor, will be able to tell you that he knows every detail of the finances of the company. He knows the financial details of the company better than I do. He will tell you that since this company has been operating in New Zealand it has not owned one shilling's worth of share capital in any other company or firm. He will tell you that it owns no property in New Zealand of any sort. It leases a set of offices in Hereford Street, Christchurch, and it has about twelve motor-cars. That is all the property it has. Mr. Tyers will be able to testify to all that. Now, on behalf of the other shareholders who form the company I am able to give this Committee the assurance that Armour and Co. of Australasia has not got the least idea, either now or in the future, of putting money into bricks and mortar in this country. They do not own freezing-works, because they think there are more freezing-works here than are required. They do not and have no intention of embarking money in bricks and mortar, and, furthermore, they do not own any rolling-stock in this country. They cannot, because they are State-owned railways. In the course of my association with the company it has been my duty to equip myself fully with the literature and reports bearing on the question of the American Meat Trust, and I want to remind the Committee that Mr. W. B. Colver, the President of the Federal Trade Commission, whose report has caused so much damage in New Zealand, in answer to a question on the floor of Congress, admitted that in the course of investigations of his Commission they did not allow the packers or any one on their behalf to give evidence, or to be represented by counsel to cross-examine the witnesses against them; and Mr. Colver in set terms admitted that the Commissioner's report was arrived at without giving any opportunity to the packers, who were charged before it, to defend their case. I want this Committee to realize that the Federal Trade Commission's report is not a judicial document, and is not such a report as would be furnished in New Zealand by a Commission or by a Committee of this House, because it is our invariable custom to allow persons charged to lead evidence, to cross-examine evidence against them, and to give them every opportunity for their defence. It is not true, as has been suggested, that the packers were put out of business. There was a Bill proposed, and it was known as the Kendrick Bill. This Bill proposed to license the meat trade and make it subject to Federal State control. In the course of the negotiations on this Bill the packers voluntarily gave up their control of refrigerating-cars, transport, stockyards, and so on. It is quite wrong to say that the United States Government has put them out of business. They gave up certain transport arrangements which were objected to and which did not exist in New Zealand, but the provisions of the Kendrick Bill, which purported licensing the meat trade, did not go so far as the New Zealand measure. The licensee in America under the Kendrick Bill has his appeal against the refusal of a license. As was said by Mr. Kendrick in introducing the measure in Congress, the packer who is refused his license can have his day in Court; in other words, the decision of the Government authority to grant or refuse a license is subject to review by the Court and must be for cause. We have no objection to the Slaughtering and Inspection Act. It places the meat trade under control. All licensees would be subject to the most minute and searching investigation by Government officials. Their books, their correspondence, their works, their accounts would be all open for inspection. Armour and Co. do not object to that. If we trade under a license our every action will be subject to careful review, and the moment we do anything wrong the license could be revoked; whereas trades who are not licensed could carry on improper practices uncontrolled by the Government, and we have not the least desire to do that. All we ask is that we shall not be refused a license. It has been suggested by gentlemen of the highest authority that Messrs. Armour and Co. should go on trading without a license, and it has also been suggested that the Act is defective. There is no adequate definition of "meat-exporter," and it is suggested we could trade without evading the law. Messrs. Armour and Co. have no intention of evading the law, but of merely avoiding the law—they could carry on their business in spite of the Act and without a license. He would be a very poor lawyer who could not