

18. I suppose you do the work in a proper manner; but, if other companies do not do the same as you, a bad impression will be created and a great deal of injury will be done?—The whole thing has been much exaggerated. It is preventible, and I can hardly understand the existence of "bone-stink," seeing that it is the interest of all parties to prevent it—both the shippers here and the consignees in London.

19. Does your company freeze for any other person beside yourself?—Yes, but we buy nearly all the stock that we freeze.

20. Suppose that person sent you two hundred sheep to be frozen, how would you exercise control?—Any sheep which we considered not up to our standard we should set aside; an inferior but still healthy sheep fit to freeze would, of course, be frozen and shipped, but we would not put the company's brand on it.

21. You grade for yourself?—Yes.

22. If you put them in your own shipments you grade them?—Yes.

23. Could not the Government do that as well as you?—I do not think so; our company is thoroughly conversant with the requirements of the trade.

24. You are not responsible for the shipments you send Home?—Not if we ship without a brand. But the meat is sold. Compared with Argentine and Australian meat, and having no New Zealand brand on it, it probably gets the best market the owner can get for it.

25. Does it not injure New Zealand mutton as a whole, that mutton of that class should go Home?—I am rather doubtful of that. It is better than Australian; it is better than Argentine meat; it is even better than a great deal of Home-grown meat. Surely it is too good for cutting up.

26. But you do freeze them?—Why object? Other companies do it. It appears to me that the object of this Act is to bring the meat grader and freezer into accord with the buyer. The buyer is the best judge of what he wants; he comes to the company, who give him what he wants. It is different with the butter trade. The Government by stepping in can help to make good butter; but you cannot make a six-year-old wether other than he is.

27. That was the argument made by the dairy people; but our object now is to improve New Zealand mutton and to improve the price that can be got for it. If we cannot do that, we are of no use sitting here. You say it is difficult to educate the great British public; have they not been educated?—No; I do not think so.

28. Have not Canada and other States forced them to educate themselves in the matter of improving butter?—It has not educated the customer.

29. Are they not importing experts from Canada and other places to teach them to make good butter?—Yes.

30. Has not that educated the public?—Not the customer. The customer will take the best he can get. The passing of an Act through the New Zealand Legislature will not have any effect on those who do not care anything about it.

31. You think it will give no advantage?—I do not think so. With respect to the mark, some people say that you can put on a mark without damaging the animal, but I think the mark will damage it. You must remember there are many things which you can do with a single carcass which you cannot do with a thousand.

32. You say that you have been able to get a good price on account of your careful grading, and being careful in respect to what you send Home?—What I said was that we were able to sell without recourse to arbitration.

33. That shows that you have gained the confidence of the public at Home?—The Stock Department could not have got that without our information. We have trained our staff carefully for the purpose. It is a matter of experience requiring careful training and observation.

34. You say you have succeeded by keeping a staff up to date with every kind of necessary information?—I said that we have brought our graders and classers into the closest touch with buyers.

35. Is it not open to us to do the same thing?—No; for your department does not know all the little details.

36. But we can learn?—We know every thousand sheep that come in. You cannot do anything except getting men such as those we have educated and trained to the work.

37. My contention is this: that the fact of your company and other companies being able to do this in a proper manner is a reason why any one else might do it. Every other company could do the same; their interest in the result would make them equal to anything that might be required of them?—I have no doubt the object of this Bill is good; but still, I think you have undertaken a very large task. I think it would have been better to have started with an inspection for health, and then, when you would have got your department under control, and you thought other abuses might be remedied, it would be time enough to take up those other matters.

38. Just look at section 39. You see there we have taken powers to suspend operations?—Yes, I see that; it reminds me of the Premier's clause in the Old-age Pensions Bill, which means that nobody is to be disappointed if it does not come off.

39. If we have put this power in the Bill to suspend operations if we thought we were not able to do good work, what objection can you raise to that?—It is too much in the negative direction. I think you will find this business very onerous. I think you should proceed gradually.

40. When we know there is wrong being done we must not shrink from our duty. And now, with regard to the inspection of slaughterhouses?—I do not think much of that. Was it ever intended that one man, being a J.P., might come and inspect your books?

41. I could tell you of one hundred and fifty sheep being stolen, having been taken out of a paddock and driven to Wellington. If there had not been in the Act powers for the inspection of skins that crime of sheep-stealing would never have been discovered?—My experience is that sheep-stealers in the South are more astute than you think. There are so many Justices inter-