

in value between a prime South Island sheep and a prime North Island sheep? Do you say that that difference is correct or incorrect?—I say it is incorrect.

120. Do you believe that the difference is anything like 5s.?—No, sir.

121. *Mr. G. W. Russell.*] How many times have you shipped to Addington?—Three times; in 1900, 1901, and in 1902.

122. If those prices are so much higher than can be obtained locally and are got so easily, how is it there is not a general shipment from the North Island to the South Island?—There is a great deal of trouble involved, and people do not know how to go about it. I have a system of my own, but I do not advertise it. I tell people who want to know, but I do not go about lecturing on it.

123. Are you of opinion, from your own experience, that if sheep were regularly forwarded to the Addington market they would always bring these higher prices you have given instances of?—Yes. It is the cost of sending them that kills us.

124. I suppose you do not deny that the South Island sheep, as regards their breed for mutton purposes, and as regards the system of feeding them on turnips and rape, and so on, for market, produces a better article than the North Island?—They have sheep that are superior to ours, but not if taken as a whole.

125. Do you not consider that the cross of the Leicester with a pure Merino produces a better mutton sheep than the Lincoln that you have up here?—The Lincoln is going very much out of favour up here.

126. The bulk of the sheep in the North Island are Lincolns. Do you not admit that the South Island sheep are better for the quality of mutton and in the value of the wool?—I would not say much about the wool. I did believe that the sheep were of better quality, but after I tried experiments I did not think so.

127. When you visited Addington did you not see a better class of stock yarded than in the North Island—I mean, as to quality?—I suppose I did; but I did not see any fat-stock market here, except at Johnsonville.

128. *The Chairman.*] With regard to the sheep that you sent down to Addington, and which brought from 12s. to 13s. per head—the wethers and ewes: did you consider them fat or stores?—Well, I considered them fat, but Mr. Richards considered that they were not, and I sent them down for what they would bring. There were four wethers and the rest were ewes. The wethers fetched the lowest price.

129. Shortly, what you complain of is that you are not receiving sufficient value for your stock?—That is so.

130. And you put it down to the fact that there is a combination of the freezing companies against you?—Yes.

131. Have you made any efforts to get clear of this disability, by co-operation or otherwise?—We formed a Farmers' Union, and that is one of our objects.

THURSDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

CHARLES MARSHALL CRESSWELL, Secretary of the Wanganui Meat-freezing Company, examined.
(No. 4.)

1. *The Chairman.*] In tendering your evidence, would you rather make a statement to the Committee or answer any questions that may be put to you?—I would rather answer questions. I do not exactly know what you require of me.

2. Is there any improvement you can suggest with regard to the carriage of sheep to your factory at Wanganui: have you a sufficiency of trucks?—During the busy part of the season there is a great shortage. At times we have had sheep waiting for more than a week on account of the scarcity of trucks.

3. Is there a waste or deterioration in the carcasses in consequence of that?—Yes; sheep lose in weight, and do not kill out so well. They do not show the bright bloom as they would if they came direct from the grower to the works.

4. You would suggest increasing the rolling-stock?—Yes.

5. I presume that the appliances in your factory, like those in other factories, are well up to date?—Yes.

6. You have adopted the ammonia process?—Yes.

7. What shipping company do you employ?—The Tyser Company. We have a contract with that company to carry all our meat from the works.

8. Is the service quite satisfactory?—It is very satisfactory now.

9. Do you consider that any benefit would be derived by the concentration of supplies through one or more offices in London?—I have never been Home, and have had no actual experience at the other end at all. The experience I have gained has been from this end. In dealing with frozen meat I would not pose as an authority in that way.

10. With regard to the distribution of your meat at Home, I suppose the fullest sources of distribution are available to you the same as they are to others?—Yes. I think there is no doubt that New Zealand frozen meat can be procured in almost every part of England; but whether the distribution to those parts is the best I cannot say.

11. *Mr. Field.*] Does your company buy the stock, or do you simply freeze on commission?—The biggest proportion of the stock passing through our works is bought by the company. We would prefer to freeze on owners' account; but they do not seem to care about freezing themselves, and we have to buy their stock to keep our works going.