

the grass is dry in the summer, and the calves and young beasts carry a large amount of fat between the legs. You see large lumps of fat in a manner that I have never seen in New Zealand at all.

158. Will you give us some opinion with regard to the markets of the two Islands?—To sum up shortly, the difference is caused by the fact that there is more rain in the North Island, and when the grass grows the sheep become nearly like bullocks. My idea is that the Government ought to take the matter in hand. They should subsidise vessels and take the whole of the produce of the colony over, in the same way as we subsidise everything else. We subsidise mail-steamers, we subsidise local industries, we subsidise the navy for the benefit of the colony, we subsidise the gold-mines, the cost of mining, and I think the Government ought to do the same in regard to the produce of the country. I think it is necessary to open up markets everywhere—in South Africa, London, and wherever it is possible. There is no doubt that South Africa in a short time will be a large affair, when the people settle down and the mines are opened, and consequently there will be a large market there. But principally, I think, the Government should subsidise steamers, so that if necessary, in order to compete, we shall be able to land our produce in the markets of the world free of cost. Other countries are overrunning the world, and if we do not bestir ourselves—and we are rather late now—we shall find ourselves out in the cold. If we could send our produce away almost free it would benefit the colony as a whole, and we could compete with all other countries. I think the meat ought to be stamped and sold on its merits, and if that were done and it was graded properly we could compete with the world in our goods. The Government should take over the whole of the industry and do it themselves. The local market is the most difficult thing to deal with, because the producers cannot get the prices they ought to get; and I do not wish to deal with that very much, because I think the principal thing is our export.

159. *Mr. Field.*] What is wrong with the market here?—You do not get the prices you ought to get. There is a monopoly. The butchers and the companies have a monopoly. I will state a case to show you how the matter stands. I had some sheep to sell three or four years ago. The company here offered 6s. a head for them, which I refused. I killed the sheep myself and sold them as mutton at 2s. 6d. a quarter, and the mutton, skins, and fat of the sheep for which I was only offered 6s. realised an average of 15s. a head, so that there was a great deal of difference between the two prices. The sheep ran to about 70 lb. in weight, and in selling the mutton at 2s. 6d. a quarter I reaped an advantage; but still I think the margin between the two prices was too great.

160. Why did you not sell them to some other buyer?—There was no other buyer. 7s. was about the highest price we could get. There were no other markets, and we had to take what we could get.

161. Is it your opinion that there is a monopoly or a ring for the purpose of fixing the price of sheep?—There is clearly a monopoly, as they will not give you more than a certain price, and to me it seems that they quite understand what they will give, and that you cannot get any more.

162. You think there is a private understanding between the companies, and that they fix the price for the district?—To me it seems to be so.

163. *The Chairman.*] Your real objection is that there is not sufficient competition for your stock?—Yes.

164. Which you think would be remedied by a co-operative factory, by Government assistance, or by a central market?—Yes.

165. *Mr. Hornsby.*] Do you think if a central fat-stock market similar to that at Addington were established in the Wellington District at some convenient place that the competition which would thus be brought about would benefit the farmer?—No doubt, to a certain extent; but I think that if the Government would take the matter in hand for the whole colony, and subsidise steamers to carry the produce Home cheaply, they would realise more for the stuff than private companies would do.

166. Have you ever noticed whether the presence of southern buyers in the local market has had the effect of raising prices?—I have not sold to the southern buyers, but by the papers I notice that those who have sold say that they have had a rise in the price.

167. Has it come under your personal knowledge that your brother farmers have had the prices bettered by the presence of southern buyers in this district?—Yes, so far as they say themselves. I have not personally sold my stock to southern buyers.

168. But you know some of your brother farmers who have done so?—Yes.

169. And that when the southern buyers came into the market the companies had to raise the price?—Yes, quite so.