

45. You are speaking of c.i.f. buyers?—Yes, buyers in London.

46. Then, your opinion would be shortly this: that it would be an ideal system if it were practical?—Yes.

47. You are aware that a number of carcasses of New Zealand frozen meat have been sent to such ports as Hull, Liverpool, and Manchester?—There have been some sent outside of London, but very few.

48. Have you any knowledge of these shipments?—Only from hearsay, and I have also heard that they have had to be sent back to London.

49. Are you aware that a prominent member of the Argentine trade practically brought about a slump of New Zealand meat in Manchester on one occasion?—No.

50. Would that occur to you to be possible?—Yes. The Argentine meat is landed at Liverpool, which is a very short distance from Manchester, and any man who wanted to make a slump in our meat in Manchester could do so.

51. *Mr. Hornsby.*] Can you give us some idea of the difference in the value of the sheep in the North Island and in the South Island?—Not being concerned in the buying and selling of meat, I do not study the markets so closely as other people do; but, of course, there is a difference in value between Canterbury and North Island sheep. In the first place, North Island mutton is not worth so much in London; and in the second place, weight for weight, North Island sheep do not throw so much inside fat; and in the third place, for some considerable time, North Island sheep being cross sheep, the wool is not of so much value. For instance, I got a cable message as to the price of wool sold in the market, and I find that half-bred wool fetched 11½d. and crossbred wool only brought 6¾d. That shows the difference in the value of wool.

52. Can you give us some idea of the difference in fat in the North and South Island sheep?—I could not do that unless I had the weights in front of me.

53. Given a North Island sheep of 60 lb., and a Canterbury sheep of 60 lb., both prime, would there be any great difference in the weight of the fat between the two?—Yes.

54. What would be the difference?—I should say probably from 3 lb. to 4 lb. I have frequently known a 60 lb. Merino to throw 12 lb. of fat, whereas a Lincoln would only throw 5 lb. It is a common thing for half-bred sheep to throw 6 lb. of fat. Our works are larger than any in the North Island, and we are likely to get better prices. Our fat has an average of £1 a hundred-weight, and in Dunedin I think the average is not more than 14s. 9d.

55. Do you think there is a distinct difference in the quality of the fat in the South as against the quality of the fat in the North? It has been mentioned to this Committee that there is a decided difference in the quality?—Yes; our fat would be fuller, and the result is less residuary fibre—there is less waste.

56. Would you get a better price for it?—Yes; it would throw more stearine, and therefore be worth more.

57. Have you ever known any sheep from the North Island sent to Addington market to be frozen?—I believe I have frozen some at Belfast; but, if so, I have put a distinguishing brand on them. They never go under the Canterbury brand.

58. They are so much heavier than your own sheep?—Yes; we can always detect them from our breeds.

59. You have frozen some?—Very few; because buyers know that we will not class them as our brand.

60. Have you ever known sheep which originally came from the North Island topped up in Canterbury and then frozen?—There are some done in that way.

61. But if they are finished off well you would freeze them?—Yes, if they were prime sheep and have been fattened in Canterbury; but those cases are rare.

62. What is the average weight of lamb in Canterbury?—The average was 36 lb. this last season up to 42 lb. Over 40 lb. they are classed as tegs.

63. How do you regard the matter of the branding of carcasses?—I think it would be a direct and distinct disadvantage to the trade. I am sure it would be injurious in many ways.

64. Do you think it is possible at any time that New Zealand mutton has been sold as English?—I am positive there has been a considerable portion of it sold as English; and, while that is the case, until the Argentine and Australian dealers are compelled to brand it would be folly to brand ourselves.

65. Then, if such a thing could be brought about as that the Home Government were to work in with the colonies and insist on all meat being branded that goes into the London market, do you think that would be an advantage?—I do not think it would be much advantage, but it would be preferable to forcing us to brand until our competitors are compelled to brand.

66. How do you regard the prosecutions that have taken place? Supposing you heard any one say, for example, that it was a waste of time to prosecute the retailers who sell Argentine meat as New Zealand, what would you say?—I should say it would do harm to the trade, because it would induce English people to prosecute retailers selling New Zealand meat for English.

67. You think it is not a good thing to prosecute the Argentine people, then?—I think it is not a good thing.

68. About the multiplicity of consignments: Mr. Cameron, the Government Agent Commissioner in London, has very frequently sent out to this colony reports begging that there should not be so many small consignments of meat sent Home: do you think it would be a good thing if some plan could be hit upon to compel these shipments to be consigned to fewer hands?—It might be; but so long as farmers think their geese are swans it can never be done satisfactorily.

69. *Mr. T. Mackenzie.*] With regard to the question of branding, do you not think New Zealand is losing the benefit of her reputation through our best meat being sold as English?