

—I do not think so. The butchers buy on the chance of selling a proportion of the meat as English, and that is the reason why we get better prices for our meat.

70. Is it not a matter of fact that a person who buys our meat and sells it as English can sell a portion of it at 9d. in competition with men who sell it at 6d., while he gave no more for it?—He compels men to give more in competition.

71. Do you not think that New Zealand suffers through her superior meat being sold as something else?—I do not think so.

72. If New Zealand meat was branded, would it not be known on its reputation?—I do not think it would affect it, because you would at once prohibit its sale as English, and you would find our meat reduced in price.

73. Do you think our success depends upon the meat being sold as English?—A considerable portion of it is sold as English.

74. What proportion?—I think, probably 25 per cent.

75. If people who buy it as English bought it under the brand of New Zealand, would they not be satisfied to buy it as English, and not put the profit into the pockets of the middleman?—No, because hitherto they have not known they were getting New Zealand meat; and if you put it up as New Zealand meat it would deteriorate the price.

76. Then, you think a great deal of our success is due to the fact that a quarter of our meat is sold as English?—No doubt.

77. And if New Zealand sold it at a lower price than English meat the people would not take it?—They would not take it in many cases, because they are prejudiced against New Zealand meat.

78. With regard to the value of tegs as applied to lambs, would you think it reasonable for a man to state that he sold his tegs within  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per pound of prime lamb?—I should think he had done very well.

79. What is the position of a teg compared with lamb and mutton?—Tegs would be half-way between.

80. What would you think of a statement that buyers are not allowed to buy lamb under 40 lb. in weight?—I think the statement would be ridiculous, because the lighter the lambs are the more value they are. The last witness stated that in Wanganui they were buying lambs at 40 lb. I see that last season's average for Wanganui was only 34 lb.

81. There was an allusion made as to combination: is your company in favour of combination?—I should like to see a combination, if possible; but we could not make a combination now without altering the course of trade, and men have had their capital in their trade now for thirty years.

82. Do you not think New Zealand on its own account could sell at Home without these people if they did not agree to combine?—No; because these people would at once turn their energies and capital to other channels. I think it is patent that that would be the case.

83. You are not in favour of a controlling authority such as has been successful with regard to the Argentine output?—As I said, if it were possible it would be all right. But take our business and Mr. Anderson's company: I should think that fully two-thirds of the meat passing through Belfast is sold to people in England before it is shipped, and, having sold it, we have parted with all control in the produce; and, that being the case, we cannot say to the producers, "You cannot sell this meat unless under the regulations of a committee appointed by us."

84. Are you in favour of Government grading?—No; I believe in grading by people who have learnt the business.

85. *Sir W. R. Russell.*] I understand you to say that you put a separate brand on all South Island mutton that you freeze at Belfast?—Yes.

86. Is that because it is South Island mutton?—Yes.

87. Not on account of its quality?—Not necessarily, but we always use our certificate as "Prime Canterbury"; and, that being the case, we cannot call North Island mutton "Prime Canterbury," and we put on it a brand showing that it was frozen at Belfast.

88. And if you had prime sheep coming from the North would you brand it as prime quality?—If the sheep was classed as such we should put on that certificate. We are very jealous of our meat, and take care that nothing should be done to cause the slightest suspicion to fall upon it.

89. You say that it is Wellington meat grown in the North Island?—Yes.

90. What breed of sheep do you mostly freeze at Belfast?—We get almost no pure-bred Lincoln or Romneys; the bulk of our sheep are half-bred Leicester or quarter-bred Down.

91. What Leicester?—Half-bred Leicester out of Merino ewes.

92. The word "half-bred" in Canterbury means by a cross ram out of a Merino ewe?—Yes, a crossbred ram from a Merino ewe.

93. You occasionally get a three-quarter-bred Lincoln?—Very seldom.

94. When you do what do you do with them?—Anything of that cross goes at once under a second brand.

95. Would it not go under your best brand?—No. If it were really prime and not coarse it would go under the best brand.

96. Then, with really good meat, but a trifle coarse, what is the relative price between the best brand and the second-best brand?—Where people buy a factory certificate it ranges from  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. a pound less.

97. Can you account in any way for the southern buyers coming up and purchasing in the North Island?—I think it has been done largely to supply the local requirements of butchers.

98. But Canterbury buyers freeze up in the North Island?—I think that is generally because they have their own arrangements for selling c.i.f., and in conjunction they can sell a portion of North Island sheep and Canterbury sheep. They have to sell it under its factory brand; but there are several large dealers in Canterbury who have very large connections, and I know they do