

40. You refer to second and third class qualities going Home and being sold as first: is there much of that going on?—I consider all old ewes going Home ought to be classed distinctly. I would put them into the third class.

41. Are they not so classed at the freezing-works now?—Yes. I know they are graded there, but the tags are detachable, and there is nothing to indicate what quality they are when the tags are taken off.

42. The tags do show the grade, but that is rather connected with the question of branding sheep?—I think it applies.

43. What are the three classes of Christchurch meat sent Home?—They have got three brands, the "Eclipse," the "C.M. Co.," and the "Crown."

44. How many classes do the Belfast people send?—I would not like to say from memory. You could get that information from those specially interested in the works here. I know they have a Belfast tag, and they have another tag, with a sort of gridiron, I think, on it. But in connection with those brands it would be better to get the evidence from special witnesses.

45. Do you think the Government could discriminate these classes better than the companies?—Not better, but as well.

46. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Is English meat graded so as to prevent third-class-quality English meat being palmed off on the customer in place of first-class?—No.

47. Assuming that Government graders graded the meat, how would you keep them in line, in the absence of account sales or reports from c.i.f. buyers by which the grading could be judged?—At present if a freezing company's grader does not do the work properly there is an immediate check upon him in the adverse results of account sales or adverse reports from c.i.f. buyers in England, and that grader is immediately put in his proper place by being compelled to amend his work or discharging him. How would you keep the Government grader in line?—The same would apply if the complaints were found to be genuine. The Government grader would have to be dealt with the same as the freezing company's men would be.

48. The freezing companies demanding the discharge of the Government grader would have no power to insist upon that being done. As the matter stands at present the incompetent grader would be "shot out" by the companies?—Well, I suppose the grader would be "shot out" by the Government if he were found not to be doing his duty.

49. Would you apply your first, second, and third grades to the different breeds of sheep that are grown in the various parts of New Zealand? I presume you have in your mind a code of instructions which would be common to all Government graders at the various freezing-works; how would you apply such a grading to the various differences known to exist in the different breeds grown in different localities?—I should not grade according to breeds, but according to the quality of the mutton after slaughter. If it were finest quality mutton, and would be so recognised on the London market, it would be graded and branded as first quality here.

50. Irrespective of whether it was Lincoln or Southdown?—Irrespective of breed. Lincoln mutton would not, probably, often be graded first class.

51. Would you not have first, second, and third quality applied to the Lincoln as you would have in the finer Southdown breed?—No, certainly not under Government grading. That would be distinguished on the markets by the company's sub-marks. For instance, take the Wanganui Company's mutton, first grade. No one at Home would consider that mutton of the same quality as first-grade Christchurch Meat Company's "Eclipse" mutton. The Wanganui Company's tag would indicate which was Wanganui Company's mutton, and the "Eclipse" tag would show which was Christchurch Meat Company's meat. I have said that what the Government should grade for is quality, irrespective of the freezing-works or district the meat came from in New Zealand.

52. *Sir W. R. Russell.*] Do the butchers rely on their own judgment in purchasing?—Many rely on their own judgment, but not all. Meat is often bought on the London market the same as cotton goods are bought—according to the trade mark.

53. *The Chairman.*] Would you suggest any change in the present system just now in order to improve the position of meat on the London market? Do you think that grading is not sufficient now to bring about the best results, or do you think you would leave the grading as it is?—Without going further, I advocate all meat being graded into first, second, and third qualities, leaving the grading as it is, inducing, if possible, any companies that do not grade sufficiently, but who slump their meat, as you have just stated, to grade as the Christchurch Meat Company and some others do.

54. Would you mind embodying in your report what you think should be done regarding grading? I am not so clear whether you think the system at present is so serious that you suggest an immediate change or would allow it to remain as it is. Now, with regard to the question of arbitration, it has been pointed out that certain meat companies sell on their grade certificates. Is it not a fact that, as a rule, two prices are fixed—the price the purchaser will pay subject to London arbitration, and the price in the absence of London arbitration—are you aware that that is the practice when selling?—In dealing with the subject myself I can only state what I have heard, and that is that such arrangements as you refer to are made.

55. Do you know as a fact that that is the practice?—No; I do not know that it is the practice.

56. Now, with regard to the question of arbitration, do you feel satisfied that the system now obtaining of arbitrating when a claim is made allows justice to be done to the seller who ships from here?—You mean that if a seller has sent meat Home the purchaser has a claim for quality at the other end?

57. Yes?—Do you mean is the system adopted in assessing the damage satisfactory?

58. No; the quality. Suppose a man sells 1,000 sheep subject to London arbitration, at 2s. 6d. per stone. Appeal to arbitration is made, and the assessor, on seeing the sheep, declares