

vocated keeping back a portion of the largely increased quantity in the heavy months, storing them, and sending them forward in the following months so as to avoid the disproportion, and to regulate your supplies.

102. *Sir W. R. Russell.*] Who is to pay for the storage?—You have to pay for it in London, and it is as cheap to do it here.

103. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You know the system adopted by the River Plate companies, but that owing to the climate cannot be carried out in New Zealand; you know that the Argentine covers many degrees of latitude, and you have heard from Captain Pearse that they have consequently a large number of sheep coming in all the year round, and therefore they can send forward steady supplies. Is not your remark in the report in respect to this somewhat misleading?—I consider that you must regulate your supplies if you wish to keep your market.

104. *Mr. Duthie.*] You want to equalise the shipments all the year round?—Yes, as far as possible.

105. It really is a seasonal matter; and I should think that if by Christmas our fat mutton could reach the market, when the Home supply is scarce, and from January until the end of June, before the grass-fattened sheep are available at Home, the market for our mutton would be more favourable than if the mutton were sent Home in the autumn?—I agree with you, and that is why I want the supplies regulated during the year to get them on the market at that time. That is the time of the year when mutton is generally scarce at Home. The supplies from here arrive in large quantities about July, August, and September, while there are very small supplies going on to the English market in the months you mention.

106. Our season is pretty well over in April?—Yes.

107. What you want is to hold back our mutton so that it may reach Home during September, October, and November; but I understand that at Home English mutton is plentiful when ours arrives, and we want to get it into the English market when their mutton is scarce?—New Zealand mutton is sold in competition with English mutton.

108. Is it not a fact that two-thirds of it is sold without it being disclosed that it is New Zealand mutton?—No, not anything like that.

109. That was my information, that two-thirds of it was sold as English, without it being disclosed as New Zealand mutton—that is by the retailers?—Oh, no, nothing like that.

110. Is any proportion sold in that way?—Yes, a considerable proportion of your finest mutton is sold as English, and you get no advertisement for your fine mutton in consequence of that.

111. Do we get any difference in price?—No.

112. One of the inducements, then, for butchers to push it as English mutton is that they make a bigger profit out of it?—Yes, they make money under false pretences.

113. Well, it eats very well, and I suppose that is the main outlet for our mutton in the English market?—No, it is not the main outlet.

114. *Mr. McNab.*] Are you quite satisfied that the class of people who buy English and Scotch mutton are not the class of people who buy New Zealand mutton?—New Zealand mutton, when sold as such, is not at present sold to any large extent to those classes.

115. The question I ask is, whether the people who buy and eat Scotch and English mutton are not the people who buy to eat New Zealand mutton?—They are not the same people.

116. Therefore the large supplies of English and Scotch mutton going to the market at certain seasons of the year is not a reason why we should shut off our supplies during those months?—No, no reason whatever.

117. Do you attribute considerable importance to this aspect of the case, that we should equalise our shipments throughout the year?—I do, decidedly.

118. In regard to the improvement in the means of communication between the grower and consumer, will it ever be possible to get over the difficulties that follow when the meat is landed at Home after it goes out of the vessels?—I think very considerable improvement could be made in the distribution of the meat at Home.

119. What improvements do you suggest in taking the frozen carcasses to the up-river stores?—I do not see that any great improvement can be effected in taking meat to the up-river stores. What I particularly refer to in the way of improvement is in making use of cold-air stores throughout the country as a means of distribution.

120. Then you would suggest taking the meat from the ship's side to the country stores?—I would. It is not done now to any extent.

121. That does not apply, of course, to the meat sold at Smithfield?—No.

122. In what direction is it capable of improvement, seeing that you have no railway going into Smithfield? I refer to the communication from the ship's hold to Smithfield?—I do not think you can effect a great alteration for the better in the manner of delivering the meat from the docks to Smithfield.

123. Do you consider that the defects I have referred to in England are a material factor in regard to the profits made on the meat?—I am not prepared to say the profit would be affected to any extent. Naturally, if our meat is put on the market in better condition it follows that the price realised will be higher. At present the damage is covered by insurance.

124. For which the grower has to pay?—Yes.

125. Then you do not hold out any hope for very many improvements in connection with the meat sold in Smithfield?—I do not.

126. Do I understand, therefore, that you would avoid Smithfield as much as possible and sell at country depots?—What I would advocate is that our meat, instead of being all stored in London, as it is at present, should partly be railed in refrigerated vans, as is possible, direct from the ship's side to the numerous cold-air stores in the large towns throughout Great Britain, to be stored and distributed from there.