

98. What were the conditions prevailing when I submitted the scheme referred to by Mr. Field? Could you reply upon the market salesman giving you the price he sold the meat at?—You handled the meat directly; I do not. You are in a better position to say than I am.

99. I wish to know whether you are aware of the state of trade in the market when I submitted my scheme? Could you rely upon the salesman giving you what he sold the meat for?—I cannot give you evidence on that.

100. Could you rely in selling meat c.i.f. on getting what you sold it for? Could you rely, if you sold a man sheep at half a crown a stone, on getting that price when you landed them?—I should say you could.

101. Suppose the market fell and you get a claim for quality?—Naturally, if the quality was deficient the buyer would get an allowance.

102. And if it was not deficient?—If it was not deficient he would have to pay the price agreed on.

103. Are you aware that a claim was always made by certain firms?—The inference from that is that the quality was deficient.

104. No, it was simply because the butcher, acting as his own assessor and nominating his neighbour as arbitrator, had the case all his own way. The settler had no show. That being so, and there being no reliance, in many instances, to be placed either on market sales or c.i.f., do you not think the plan was practicable to buy the site alluded to, and to pass the meat through the market there instead of through Smithfield?—I understand you suggested that all New Zealand meat should be sold through that market, and those who were interested in the meat should become shareholders in the concern. Where I considered it impracticable was in this: if all New Zealand meat were placed in that one market for sale, and handled solely by representatives of the colony, it would be impossible to get sufficient buyers for the large quantity arriving, most buyers being the customers of the salesmen who previously handled the meat.

105. Have you not said that concentration and combination are what we should try to get?—Yes.

106. And if the people wanted the meat, would they not get it from the concentrated market just as well as from the different salesmen?—You would prohibit these different salesmen who had previously handled New Zealand meat from handling it. You would have the full competition of these men against you, and they would fight to retain their old customers.

107. Was River Plate meat five years ago fit to sell against New Zealand meat?—I do not say whether it was fit or unfit. I say you would create competition on the part of these men against you, and you would have to get their customers to become your customers.

108. You advocate control?—Yes.

109. Does that not point to a combination in order to insure New Zealand meat being sold for what it is?—I say I would sell to the wholesale men in London. It is a different concentration that I advocate. Your concentration was that all meat should be handled by one party at one point, and that Smithfield salesmen should not handle it. I say I want to sell it outright to the wholesale men and not to consign it to them.

*Mr. T. Mackenzie:* My plan was by one controlling body, but not sold all at one point.

110. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You say you advocate the concentration of New Zealand meat in the hands of a limited number of representatives of New Zealand who should control the sale of the meat in London?—Yes; representatives of the refrigerating companies.

111. Are you aware that the greater portion of New Zealand frozen meat is bought and owned by London buyers before it is shipped?—Yes. My belief is that the position has become more difficult quite recently. More buyers have been coming here. As you will see by my report, I do not object to c.i.f. sales being made.

112. Are you not aware that, in Canterbury more especially, that has been the case for years?—Yes, but I say it has increased considerably recently.

113. What would you do with these London buyers, who are looked upon in Canterbury especially, where they have been longest known, as the best friends of the farmers? Would you shut them out, or, if not, how would you get them into the combination that you mentioned?—I recognise, as I say, that it is more difficult to alter the system of recent years. I do not profess to know details so well as you and other gentlemen connected with the freezing companies. I am in favour of representatives in London of the freezing companies handling the meat that goes through each company—the Wellington Meat Export Company's representative would handle the Wellington Meat Export Company's meat. These representatives would sell to wholesale buyers. If c.i.f. sales were effected in the colony the representatives at Home would be notified by the manager of the company here at what price that meat was sold.

114. What I want to bring you to is this: would not that entail shutting out the London buyer, who has been operating as I have described for years?—It would shut him out from buying on the hoof, but it would not shut him out from buying c.i.f.

115. If he bought c.i.f., how could a company step in and say, "Such-and-such is the method by which you must dispose of the meat in London"?—I do not say the c.i.f. buyer must sell through the representative. I say the grower here who sells to the c.i.f. buyer must inform the company what the buyer purchases from him as a guide to the representative in London.

116. You have come here as the Commissioner to cure what I might term the ailments of the meat trade. You have told us what is wrong from your point of view. Is it not equally your duty to point out to us the cure, including the details of how that is to be brought about?—I have suggested the cure in the 5th, 6th, and 7th paragraphs, on page 5, of my report. I say there should be an agreement, in the first place, between the freezing companies in the colony that they shall not freeze for any one unless they have the disposal in Great Britain of all meat shipped Home other than c.i.f. sales.