

50. Why should not your produce be stored in London as well as here?—You are asking me upon the general question: I will answer it by reference to a particular case. I am satisfied that the success which has attended the Wellington Meat Export Company's business is mainly owing to the fact that the meat has been sold with as little storage as possible in England. Of course the purchasers of it store it to some extent, but storing deteriorates it.

51. Supposing you had no refrigerating-chamber here for storing, why not hold the meat in England?—We hold a good deal here.

52. But, with a view to regulate shipments, why not store in London instead of here?—If you have a lot in store in London you create a slump at once, but if you store it out here they do not know so much about it in London. They are guided almost entirely by the shipments arriving at Home and advised as afloat.

53. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Supposing there were many thousands of carcasses ready to be shipped to Wellington from other ports, and one large steamer by arrangement between the three shipping companies were to take that instead of three, as is the case now—namely, the Tyser Company, Shaw-Savill's, and the New Zealand Shipping Company: if that could be arranged would that not effect a big saving for the steamers?—Yes, probably there might be a saving in that way. For instance, the Gear Company ship through the Tyser Line, and we ship through Shaw-Savill and the New Zealand Shipping Company. No doubt if we shipped in two lines instead of three, it would have the effect of diminishing the number of ports the steamers had to call at, as the ships would pick up more in Wellington.

54. *Mr. Aitken.*] Following up what Sir William Russell has said, have not the shipping companies helped, by their own action, very largely the necessity of going round the coast as tramps from port to port, because if they had put their foot down at once and said they could not do so, would not that have saved the position?—I think so. When I discussed the matter with Mr. Gibbs some years ago, I said that we must necessarily be paying higher freights by being charged a uniform rate the same as for open roadsteads, where it takes longer to load, and more risk is involved in taking cargo. At one time the shipping company threw cold water on the idea of going to Wanganui, but the Tyser Line came in. The next place was Waitara, and Mr. Gibbs said, "You saw what took place at Wanganui; if we did not go to Waitara some other company would"; and I replied that I would always be willing to let my opponent in business take the worst jobs.

55. You were asked the question, comparatively speaking, how much meat was sold c.i.f., and how much was put on board on consignment, and you said that you were not able to answer that question. It might be some guide to the Committee if you could tell us from your own company's operations what the proportion is?—We must sell at least nineteen-twentieths c.i.f. of our own purchases.

56. *Mr. Duthie.*] Supposing these butchers' shops are established, can they be conducted for the sale of frozen meat alone, or will they require to sell English meat as well?—Except in the very large towns I do not think shops for frozen meat alone would do. Most of the shops I saw—that is moderate-sized shops—sold all kinds of meat. They would have New Zealand mutton, American or Canadian chilled meat, and also fresh meat.

57. Do you think New Zealand meat is so well known that a trade could be established in it alone?—I am very doubtful about it. So far as I could see, nearly all the retail shops dealt with all kinds of things—what they call "small goods."

58. We were told that some of these River Plate companies have a large number of shops—some seven hundred or one thousand?—There are firms that have a large number of shops, and they suit themselves to the localities they are in. They sell other classes of meat besides River Plate meat.

59. Fresh English meat and small goods?—I think they deal more with chilled beef and River Plate mutton. I think Eastman's take the whole range of the butchering business.

60. The evidence we have had would lead us to believe that they are all confined to the frozen meat?—No; they are not so.

61. Then, to establish shops in different centres for the sale of New Zealand frozen meat would be a somewhat hazardous experiment?—I think it would be. Mr. Cameron had an idea, when he explained his scheme to me when I was at Home in London, that he would open shops and sell specific brands to his customers; but I pointed out to him that in certain seasons of the year he would not be able to get those specific brands.

62. Then you do not think the experiment is likely to result in success or would be of benefit to the frozen-meat industry of New Zealand?—I do not really know much about the retail butchering business, and I hesitate to express a decided opinion; but I do not think it would serve any good purpose.

63. You have told the Committee that the margin between the wholesale carcass price and the retail price is no more on New Zealand meat than on English meat?—I think it is slightly more, but there is hardly any difference in the ratio.

64. *The Chairman.*] If shops were established in the territory now largely controlled by the Argentine, do you think that would lead the Argentine people to cut against our people?—I doubt if there is any territory controlled by the Argentine people.

65. It has been stated by Mr. Cameron that fifty miles north of London you practically reach the limit for the sale of New Zealand meat?—He is mistaken in that. What happens is this: if the Argentine people control any locality it is where the consumers want the cheaper meat.

66. It was given in evidence that the best Argentine meat now is equal to the best North Island. If the Argentine people placed some of that meat in the territory they have large influence in against New Zealand meat, and sold it at a lower price than New Zealand meat, do you think the New Zealand shops would secure the business?—Well, they might to some extent. From all the information I could get the Argentine meat is not so acceptable as New Zealand, and people who