

could be conducted at the rates set down. It is pretty well accepted that the expense of selling meat, apart from the loss in weight, &c., is from $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per pound. From the statement I have made, the profit estimated would be turned into a loss of £230. There is no doubt that the loss would be largely diminished after the second or third year, when you have got your connection; but, of course, we could get any one to work on these profits if that could be assured—our company would, for one.

53. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Could you suggest any plan by which to regulate the output to London so as to prevent the occasional gluts which now occur?—I think the stock has to be held here, but then comes the trouble that the farmers will not hold their stock here. My experience is that you can hold the meat in the colony without virtually any deterioration, because after the meat is frozen it is put in store with an even temperature from year's end to year's end. I have eaten meat which had been in store for two years, and could not detect any difference. I do not think any deterioration or discolouration experienced in London takes place in the meat here. No doubt when one goes through the stores in London one sees a good deal of faded meat. That, I think, is caused for two reasons: the very act of shipping the meat causes it to get damp, and the same thing takes place when it goes into the store in London. The temperature is not even, and I was surprised to find that there is not a system of air-locks in the stores. They do not seem to have any regard for keeping the temperature regular.

54. Do you remember the slump that took place in London in June and July of 1901?—Yes; there was the same slump this year to some extent—at least, there was in lambs.

55. You remember that the freezing companies throughout New Zealand were compelled to store large quantities of mutton that year?—Yes.

56. Would you be surprised to learn that the Meat Export Company received many complaints of want of brightness in the meat that was stored here under the very best conditions until August, September, and October?—I should not think there would be any cause for the complaints. Of course, the Smithfield buyer is not backward in making a claim if he gets the chance. We met that difficulty by having our own representative there. We know that if there is the least suspicion on the part of a Smithfield salesman that he is buying meat that has been stored here he will call it "off colour" there.

The Chairman (to Mr. Buchanan): Had you a reliable man at Home to see if the meat was faded or not, or did you take that opinion from the buyers of the meat?

Mr. Buchanan: We have no representative at Home, but our own observation here leads us to believe that there is substantial ground for the statement that there is a slight deficiency in colour through long storage.

Mr. Anderson: We altered our system of freezing so as to prevent any chance of "off colour." That is how we came to discard pipes and go in for the air-blast.

57. *Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.*] Would it be possible to concentrate the whole of the interests in the meat trade in the colony and in the Old Country so as to maintain a high price for the grower?—I think it would be possible to get up a combination, say, of the freezing companies, so that they could hold out for higher or more regular prices.

58. Would such a combination as that entail combination of the whole of the shipping lines as well?—No; I think the freezing companies have got on top. At one time the shipping companies dominated the freezing companies, but now the position is reversed.

59. You think that in reality it is only by an all-round combination that permanent prices could be maintained?—I think so.

60. *The Chairman.*] If the statement is made that outside a line fifty miles north of London New Zealand meat can hardly be found in more than a dozen places, do you think that must be incorrect?—Yes. I could have brought up letters from our Liverpool office that clearly state that it has sold so many thousands of carcasses to Glasgow, Edinburgh, Leeds, and so on.

61. We would like to know how many places you do supply from your Liverpool house?—You might say that virtually Liverpool could supply all the towns from a line north of Sheffield.

62. Would the conditions under which you managed Cardiff not be better than could be obtained by a wide scheme such as that proposed by Mr. Cameron?—We thought the Cardiff shop was an ideal one. We had men well up in the trade visiting the shop daily.

63. And a man managing who was thoroughly honest?—Yes.

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