

195. I understood you to say that the "Norfolk," referred to by Mr. Duthie, was not a contract steamer?—It was antecedent to the contract entirely.

196. The west-coast steamers are now going to the west-coast ports and not to London?—They are going to the west-coast ports, making Bristol the first port of call.

197. Under the contract London is not included in the ports to be touched at?—They are not prohibited from going to London.

198. It is not stipulated?—No. They are not prohibited, although it is not stipulated.

199. There were two steamers put on to the west-coast ports at higher rates of freight than those charged under this contract—one by the Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company and one by the New Zealand Shipping Company?—Yes.

200. Do you know why they were not continued in that service?—I suppose they could get the same cargo for London, and it did not suit them to go to Glasgow and the other ports.

201. How many west-coast ports did those steamers go to?—One each.

202. Mr. Duthie contends that the rates of freight were not 25 per cent. higher than the current rates to London?—He bases his estimate on the summer rate. If he takes it on the winter rate he will find it is 25 per cent. higher.

203. In this contract with the New Zealand and African Steamship Company are the rates of freight the same for both summer and winter?—They carry at the summer rate from December to May, and at the winter rate from June to November, to the west-coast ports. I am not sure about South Africa.

204. The contract says the rates of freight to be charged "shall not exceed the summer and winter rates now current between New Zealand ports and London": do you happen to know whether the producer of butter ships his butter on consignment to London or to the west-coast ports?—I do not think so. I take it that the producer of the butter is the man who milks the cows, and it passes out of his hands to the dairy factories, which sell or consign it.

205. Then, the dairy factories, as intermediaries, are those who negotiate for the freight on butter on behalf of the butter-producers?—Yes.

206. The butter as a rule is bought by the large butter-houses, who send their men out here for the purpose?—I think the bulk of the business is done on those lines. Representatives of British houses buy the bulk of it.

207. In any case, if the association were free as to where it should ship the butter, the producer would arrange the freight, anyhow?—Yes.

THURSDAY, 29TH SEPTEMBER, 1904.

Examination of G. S. MUNRO continued.

1. *Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.*] Mr. Munro, Mr. Duthie—in the course of his examination of you at the last meeting—challenged the statement you made that the "Buteshire" made Bristol her first port of call in the United Kingdom, and I think he stated that, according to his information, the "Buteshire" arrived in London on the 9th instant, and probably took a week longer to discharge her London cargo before steaming round to the west-coast ports: is that statement correct?—I have verified my own statement. The information came from the Agent-General. He advises the Department that the "Buteshire" arrived at Avonmouth, Bristol, on the 6th, Barry on the 8th, Liverpool on the 11th, and Glasgow on the 18th.

2. So that, according to the cable received from the Agent-General, the information conveyed to Mr. Duthie as regards the arrival of that steamer in London is not correct?—No; he was evidently misinformed.

3. *Mr. Duthie.*] Do you mean to say that she did not go to London?—She did not go to London, according to the cable advice from the Agent-General.

4. *Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.*] Now, with regard to the freight on frozen rabbits, what is the principal market in the United Kingdom for frozen rabbits?—Liverpool.

5. Am I correct in stating that hitherto all New Zealand rabbits have been railed from London to Liverpool?—For years past all the rabbits bound for Liverpool have been railed, excepting what were shipped by the "Rakaia." They had to go to London by steamer, and were sent on by rail to Liverpool.

6. Can you inform the Committee what that cost?—We have advices from the Agent-General stating that it costs £1 5s. per ton.

7. You say the Agent-General advises that the railage of rabbits from London to Liverpool is £1 5s. per ton?—Yes.

8. What would the London wharfage, dock dues, and cartage be before they were railed to Liverpool?—I should think about 5s. per ton.

9. What was the rate of freight ruling on rabbits from New Zealand to London before the contract was entered into for the west-coast service?—£2 10s. per ton.

10. And since the service was entered upon the rate has been reduced below the maximum the company were entitled to charge, by how much?—By 10s. per ton.

11. Can you inform the Committee what quantity of rabbits have been carried by the contract steamers to the west-coast ports of the United Kingdom since the contract was started?—Fifty-five thousand crates.

12. How many tons of rabbits would that quantity represent?—2,750 tons.

13. Then, with the saving of £1 5s. per ton in railage from London to Liverpool, the saving of 5s. in wharfage, dock dues, and cartage, which you understand is the cost, and the concession made by the steamship contractors, how much per ton reduction since the establishment of the service do you think those items mean to the shippers from New Zealand, as compared with the rates