

136. Did you claim on the Railway Department for the damage?—No, the wool was sent back to Belfast for reconditioning.

137. And the Railway did not have to pay?—I do not know—they may have paid the company.

138. You refused to pay the company, and they claimed on the Railway?—I do not know that they accepted the responsibility; but in putting in a statement on account we simply deducted the amount.

139. You considered the Railway or the company was responsible to you for the proper delivery of the wool?—Yes. I take it that the company would get it refunded from the Railway.

140. Is Fairfield a flag station?—Yes.

141. Do the Railway Regulations not provide that they will not recognise any responsibility for any damage done there except through any fault of their own?—Yes. When I was at Fairfield we were only sending fifteen bales in a truck, and the middle bales were stacked on end and the water would run off.

142. Did the Railway people ever refuse to take a truck from the siding if it had not the full quantity on?—No.

143. What would have been the result if you did not put on the extra number?—The Station-master at Ashburton made a complaint to me, and said the guard might refuse to pick the wool up because the truck did not contain the full number of bales, but he did not refuse at any time.

144. Had you any wool in the "Rimutaka"?—Yes.

145. Any of it damaged?—Yes, there must have been some damaged by fire according to the cabled advice of price it fetched.

146. With reference to the "Gothic" shipment, have you had any advices?—No.

147. You cannot give us any idea of the extent of the damage?—No. We had some wool in the "Gothic," but we can only tell from the catalogue the particulars of prices it brought.

148. Were any of your bales destroyed?—It was all shown in the catalogue.

149. Was any of it marked "Burnt"?—No, it was all marked "Water and fire damaged." There were only about seventy bales.

150. What is your brand?—"M B K."

151. What sort of prices did your damaged wool bring—were you satisfied it was fairly good?—You could not compare it with sound value—the highest price was 8½d.

152. There are various degrees of damage—fire-damaged and smoke-damaged. Could you pick your brand out of the catalogue [handed to witness]?—Yes. From the price I should say it was about half the value.

153. You should say the damage was severe?—Yes.

154. You had thirty-three bales damaged in "Waimate"?—Yes. We have not had any advices of the "Waimate" except as shown in catalogue.

155. Your brand is "M B K" under the Canterbury Frozen Meat Company's brand?—Yes, that is one of our brands.

156. There is one lot, "Slip super ½-bd. at 8d."—that is very low?—Yes.

157. And another lot, "Slip super fine X-bd. at 7½d."—would you assume that is very severely damaged?—Yes, it is.

158. I should have thought that as the wool was sold they must have rendered account sales?—We cannot complain. There is a deficiency on the wool between our draft and the sale price—it was right in the middle of the sales.

159. You are satisfied there has been no delay?—Yes.

160. Lot 548, "Slip super X-bd. @ 6½d."?—Yes, that is below half value.

161. "Seconds X-bd. lambs, 3½d."?—Sound value would be about 11d.

162. Those are all very low prices, and would indicate considerable damage?—Yes.

163. But you cannot give us any detailed information of any kind about this sale?—As to the cause of the fire?

164. As to the nature of the damage—whether it was really burnt or smoked, so as to be indistinguishable and deteriorated in value to a considerable extent?—No; we only know from the catalogue.

165. It might be that this was saturated with dirty water—charred, and smoked, and damaged with water?—Yes.

WILLIAM HENRY REYNOLDS DALE sworn and examined. (No. 62.)

166. *The Chairman.*] What is your occupation?—I am in charge of the New Zealand Shipping Company's wool-sheds in Lyttelton.

167. How long have you been in that position?—About seventeen years.

168. And you look after the shipping of wool?—Yes.

169. Have you anything to do with the dumping of the wool?—Receiving, dumping, and shipping of it.

170. When it passes out of your hands, who takes charge of it?—The new Zealand Shipping Company's stevedores. In the case of wool coming by railway it goes to the ship's side. Our sheds are on what is called the reclaimed ground, some little distance away from the ship. We put it into the railway-trucks at the shed for the ship.

171. Do you lose control of it then?—Yes, as far as I am concerned.

172. What is your supervision of this wool before you lose control of it in the manner you have described?—I receive the wool, dump it, and hold it in the sheds until such time as it is required to be shipped.

173. Do you exercise any supervision over the condition of the wool before sending it further on?—As far as the outsides of the bales are concerned only.