

245. Do you mean to say 10 per cent. more than the natural moisture?—I do not know what is the natural condition—what the scientists would say. Say we ship wool from here to London—there is always a loss or gain—and in a bale of wool weighing 3 cwt., if that lost three or four pounds between here and London we should say it is all right; but if that wool was to lose 30 lb. it would not be right, and you would have a lot of damaged wool.

246. But the 10 per cent. of water you speak of is practically what we understand as being in excess of the condition under which it would be found according to the atmospheric conditions?—Yes. The tighter wool is packed the quicker it gets hot. For a number of years I have known that if wool is likely to be damaged it is because of the dumping and on account of carrying moisture—wool put up in damp seasons or in the winter. I have always had those qualities shipped undumped, and I have never had any bad reports, only having them slightly caked.

247. *Captain Blackburne.*] You consider the danger of dumped wool is that the moisture and heat is compressed into half the space?—Yes, and cannot evaporate, whilst if not dumped the moisture would get out.

248. *Mr. Foster.*] Of course, you have had a very considerable amount of wool received at your fellmongery, and you have also sent a considerable amount from there to Lyttelton for shipment?—Yes.

249. Have you had any reason for complaining as to the provision made by the Railway Department as to carriage?—No, not for dampness—nor covers. The complaints I had were in regard to supplying dirty trucks, which affects the wool.

250. Do you mean dirty or wet?—Coal-trucks for wool.

251. By "dirty" what do you mean?—Coal-trucks for wool. You order trucks for wool, and they send you coal-trucks.

252. Have you ever noticed where those trucks came from—might they have come from Christchurch?—I do not know.

253. Did you make complaints?—Yes.

254. In writing?—Yes.

255. And to whom did you make your complaints?—Say, for instance, at Ohoku, when I ran a business there, I would complain through the people I was ordering from.

256. Would that be a verbal or written complaint?—I think usually verbal complaints.

257. Would that be likely to get through to the responsible officers?—I do not know.

258. So that if the senior officers said they were not aware of any serious complaints, you would imagine the complaints had not reached them?—I did not think about it—they seem not to have attended to it. Now, we used to order a truck from the Traffic Manager at the Department, and where we ordered a number of trucks and they are not in good condition, we would ring up the office and tell them they were dirty trucks, and sometimes they were attended to and sometimes they were not.

259. In regard to the carriage of wool, you have had very little to complain of either in sheeting or anything else?—I have never had anything to complain of.

260. And in regard to dirty trucks, you refer mostly to coal-trucks?—Yes.

261. Not in regard to any water or mud?—No.

262. Had you any wool in the "Gothic"?—No.

263. Nor the "Rimutaka"?—I have been out of business for a year.

264. Then I suppose, not being interested, you did not hear much about it?—I heard a few things.

265. I mean in the way of facts that you could impart to us?—The whole of those particular shipments?

266. Yes?—I heard all sorts of things in the street. I do not know anything about those shipments.

267. *Captain Blackburne.*] Have you ever seen a bale of wool on fire?—No, not on fire; but heated very much.

268. Charred on the inside?—Yes. I have seen it very black—wool which was shipped away from here. I have seen a lot of charred wool in two ships that put in here from Australia, one at Lyttelton and one at Dunedin—they were very much charred.

269. Can you make any suggestion as to how the general public and the shippers could be protected in this direction?—Yes, by all the skirtings and a certain percentage taken from the fleece wool being shipped undumped, or treated locally and shipped undumped—all skirtings and slipe wool.

270. Do you think they should prohibit them from being dumped?—Yes, because in New Zealand we have a lot of people in business who are not as well off as other people are, and in order to finance the thing they often have to hurry their wool away to get it on board the ship and get the money, and in doing so a man may let wool go away a little different from what it ought to be.

271. In what way could that be prevented?—This wool if it was not dumped would go fairly safe—you would have no danger—that is to say, if it got hot it would not ignite like a dumped bale would, because the moisture could get out of it. I have had bales in my shed which have been hot, say, for weeks and longer, and I have had no danger from that; it only injured the wool.

272. In what way are we to prevent people dumping such bales?—By prohibiting the scoured or slipe wool being shipped dumped.

273. *Mr. Foster.*] Would you say if those wools are properly dried that there is any risk then?—If they are properly dry it is a different thing.

274. Would you not rather legislate that the man who does not know his business should be legislated out of it than that the people who deal with their wool in a proper manner should be so treated?—An employer cannot always rely on his packers being so careful as they might be.

275. Would you say that every fellmonger should undergo an examination?—Yes; but when he has got a banking account to square up he might be blind and let the wool go away as it suits him.