

15. Do you attribute that to the pressure or to the fact that the heat is imprisoned more closely?—It is a difficult matter to say. I am not prepared to express a definite opinion upon that.

16. Were the dumped bales of the same brands as the undumped that reached a temperature of 150°?—I think I had better look that up. [After looking up record] I find I am wrong about that bale of 150°—it was dumped; they were all dumped bales.

17. As regards the dumping in Lyttelton, we understand it is not the same as that in Wellington, where it is all dumped by the Harbour Board. At Lyttelton it is dumped in different sheds?—The principal dumping is done by the New Zealand Shipping Company and the Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company in their own sheds, and great care is exercised by their officials in watching for heated wool. In fact, I think it would be very difficult to suggest much greater care than they take. For instance, the storeman of the Shipping Company is a man who has had a great deal to do with wool for many years; but you take the height of the season when there are four thousand bales in their sheds, it is a difficult matter for a man to sample every bale; in fact, it is an impossibility. The same applies to the Shaw-Savill Company's shed; the men are careful there, but the danger is this: that a great amount of wool comes down here without ever going into the shed, also wool comes by steamers and small craft which lie alongside the Home boat, and is taken direct on board. In many cases I have found wool in a bad condition on board small craft. I may say this: that a great deal of assistance is also given by the captains of these small steamers, who, if they know a bale has got wet, would come and tell me, but that does not always apply.

18. As representing the insurance companies, you are satisfied that the inspection that prevails in these sheds is as good as you could expect it to be?—It is as good as you can expect it to be, but I do not think it is sufficient. It is as good as you could expect it to be with the staff there, but I do not think it is absolutely perfect.

19. Do you think an increased staff would mean increased security?—I can only point to the fact that during the period that supervision existed on behalf of the local underwriters we did not have the wave of fire amongst the ships that there has been during the last few months.

20. You mean the special man appointed by the underwriters?—Yes.

21. What was the method that obtained during his appointment?—I used to have a steel pricker with a barbed end, and put it into the wool and test it. I had another arrangement by which I had a thermometer inside, but that was a difficult matter, because, as a rule, in putting it into the dumped bale you break the thermometer. Another method is to put a mirror on a bale in a shed after it has been lying in the shed for a time. I have tested wool by moving it out on the floor, and if it is heated you will find a mark on the floor.

22. What steps do you take to ascertain the condition of the wool?—Sample the wool. I used to take a pricker with me, and I think it is practically the same thing that is used in most of the ports of the colony.

23. The inspector would not depend upon reports from the owners or men in the sheds?—Oh, no, he would make a personal inspection. The foreman or storeman would also draw the inspector's attention to anything that was suspicious—that is a great help.

24. From what you said I assumed you considered the water-borne wool is somewhat more risky than the land-borne. You mentioned something about coming by boat?—Yes.

25. You consider there is a greater risk with that than with the other?—It is more likely to get wet with salt water.

26. And do you think the salt water is more dangerous than the fresh?—Yes, undoubtedly I think so.

27. Have you ever had any instance from which you form that impression?—No, excepting by a little experiment that I made by wetting wool in a small way. I found that wool that was slightly damped with salt water and screwed up in a letter-press got heated quicker than that which was damped with fresh water.

28. With the same proportion of water?—Practically the same—it was a rough experiment.

29. Has it come within your experience whether wool with a small amount of moisture heats more rapidly than wool with an increased amount of moisture?—Well, no I cannot say that. The scoured or slipped wool that has come under my notice—that is, a heated bale—has not had a large proportion of water in it; it has had a moderate amount of damp in it.

30. It has been given in evidence that it is a very clever flockowner who can absolutely say that his wool is dry—that is, before it is shorn. Supposing such a condition as this, that the owner was in doubt, would you imagine that that wool would be dangerous—that is, the man being in doubt as to the wool being slightly damp, but not sufficiently so to make the owner positive?—You are speaking of greasy wool.

31. Yes?—It is a difficult thing to say. It is difficult to tell greasy wool that is damp, but if the moisture is as slight as that I do not think, myself, that the heat would be sufficient to cause danger; but it is a difficult matter for a man to tell whether wool is slightly damp or not.

32. Have you had any advices from London in reference to the fires on the wool-ships?—Not yet.

33. And you cannot give us any information as to those particular fires?—No. Those ships were loaded since the services of the underwriters' surveyors were dispensed with, and I have no knowledge in connection with it.

34. Then you were one of the surveyors?—I was the underwriters' surveyor here.

35. What led me to ask you the question as to how your inspection was conducted was from statements we had in Wellington that Captain Bendall, who was the underwriters' representative there, simply had to depend upon the storeman or the manager of the store to report to him when they discovered any bales?—Yes.