

thing to handle. There is always this to be remembered: that as long as you have healthy competition it is a good thing for the country. What I take it we want to get is to maintain healthy competition and to do away with the dangerous condition of things which will eliminate such competition. What we want most of all is the assistance of the Home Government in order that they can assist us at that end.

118. *Mr. W. H. Field.*] You are quite satisfied that the only method of effectually dealing with this difficulty is to have combined action on the part of this Government and the Home Government?—You will never get it thoroughly effective unless you get the co-operation of the Home Government.

119. And how far those two Governments should take a hand in this matter you are not prepared to say at the present time?—No. It would have to be a very elaborately thought out scheme, and one elaborated in conjunction with somebody who is very closely conversant with the whole of the details of the meat business at the other end, and in touch with the ramifications of it. Relatively it is a much more simple matter here than in England.

120. But nothing short of Government control of the meat from the time it comes from the farmer till it reaches the consumer in the Old Country would be effective, would it?—Until it reaches the wholesale dealer. If you are going to follow it right up to the consumer you would need a tremendous organization in England.

121. Do you think the wholesale dealer would be far enough to carry it?—I think it would under ordinary business conditions. The arrangement in force now has resulted in a very big profit being made as between the wholesale dealer and the consumer, but in normal times I do not think that would occur.

122. I suppose control being exercised over meat in war-time will be some sort of help as to what we would be capable of doing in peace-time?—Yes, it has been a very valuable experience as a basis on which to deal with the thing in peace-time.

123. You say the American meat companies are acting independently until they are faced with a difficulty from outside persons?—Yes.

124. Then they combine together to fight that common enemy —Yes.

125. Did you get any information further than you have given us as to where Sims, Cooper, and Co. got their money from?—No, I could not. I have tried to get information by all legitimate means, but have not been successful.

126. Are there not sufficient freezing-works in New Zealand to deal with our meat at the present time and for some years to come?—Yes, I consider there are—that is, under normal shipping conditions.

127. When I speak of the control of the meat from the producer to the consumer or the wholesale dealer I do not suggest we should interfere with the present freezing companies—that they should take over the freezing and the shipping companies should undertake the business of shipping by arrangement with the Government: you see no difficulty about that?—No, so long as the freezing companies are constituted as they are at present.

128. I notice that amongst the papers you supplied was part of the report of the United States Commission. Can you tell us anything about that Commission? The Prime Minister told us he thought we had nothing to hope from co-operation with the United States Government?—That is a pretty old Commission which sat in 1890, at the time when the United States Government was dealing with the trust as a trust; but I do not think myself that the United States Government would be of any assistance to us at the present time, because the big meat firms and subsidiary firms, and those associated with them or controlled by them, are compelled to work with them with a knowledge that if they do not they will be pushed out of existence. I think they have such control over the whole of the meat trade of the United States that we would not be able to do much there.

129. The United States Government is in this position: the whole meat trade having been collared by these companies, they are unable to assist either the producer or the consumer?—I do not think they are able to do anything more than they are doing at the present time. I know that two or three years ago there was a great agitation about the retail price of meat in that country, but nothing tangible seems to have been done by the Government. Before the war broke out we had sent two or three shipments of meat direct to the United States.

130. *Mr. Scott.*] In this extract from the report of the British Departmental Committee in 1909 I notice the names of the Hammond Meat Company. They seem to have some connection with the American Trust. Have they operated in New Zealand at all?—No. That is a company which was really a selling company in Great Britain. The position was that in America, by-way of getting over the difficulty regarding the trust, the three big firms—Swift and Co., Armour and Co., and Morris and Co.—formed a company called the National Packing Company, which was controlled by those three firms. The Hammond Beef Company handled the National Packing Company's meat in England.

131. Has there been, to your knowledge, any direct offers made to the freezing companies to purchase the businesses in New Zealand by American representatives or Sims, Cooper, and Co.?—I have heard statements to that effect, but I am not in a position to substantiate them. If any of the meat-company representatives are coming before the Committee they may be able to state definitely.

132. In the event of the representatives of the American Trust, if they are here, purchasing any refrigerating-stores in New Zealand, would that assist them?—Of course, it would be of considerable advantage to them to have their own freezing-works, because now they have to pay the freezing companies to do the work for them, and a big freezing company wants to run its business in order to make sufficient profit.