

*The Chairman* : We cannot go into matters of that kind in regard to meetings held elsewhere.

*Mr. Rutherford* : Well, sir, I claim that a certain gentleman here has been going all round the country leading the farmers to believe that there are thousands of farmers in America who have been ruined through these trusts. That statement is a wrong one for a public man to make——

*The Chairman* : Each member is responsible for his own statements, and it is not for this Committee to make comments in regard to that man's action.

*Mr. Rutherford* : That man is allowed to sit here and make reflections on the firm of Armour and Co.

*The Chairman* : He has been appointed by Parliament as a member of the Committee, and you have no right to suggest that he has acted unfairly.

*Mr. Rutherford* : All I want is a fair deal from this Committee.

*The Chairman* : And you will get it. By that statement I do not want to imply anything in regard to the decision of the Committee, but so far as the conduct of this inquiry is concerned you will get a fair deal in the matter of the evidence placed before the Committee.

*Mr. Rutherford* : I do not have many opportunities to be able to point out to the people generally that the sheep-farmers—whom I claim to be the people mostly interested in this vital question—are not getting a fair chance of submitting their case. I feel I am representing a very large body of sheepowners, and I am doing the best I can in an amateur sort of way.

*The Chairman* : You have been given a good opportunity of submitting your case, and surely you are aware that we are giving you a second chance of addressing this Committee. I may say that this is an unusual course to follow by a Committee.

*Mr. Rutherford* : I thank you, sir. I would like to ask Mr. Lysnar a few questions if I could be granted permission.

*Mr. Lysnar* : Certainly.

*Mr. Rutherford* : May I ask you, Mr. Lysnar, the number of sheep you put through your hands in a year ?

*Mr. Lysnar* : I think, about eight to ten thousand—probably ten thousand sheep and about three hundred head of cattle.

*Mr. Rutherford* : You are dealing in sheep ?

*Mr. Lysnar* : I have not been dealing for years.

*Mr. Rutherford* : You deal in wool, do you not ?

*Mr. Lysnar* : No, solely in my own wool.

*Mr. Rutherford* : You have an interest in freezing-works, have you not ?

*Mr. Lysnar* : Yes, I help myself and others.

*Mr. Rutherford* : You are not, like myself, a *bona fide* farmer ?

*Mr. Lysnar* : Oh, yes, I am.

*Mr. Rutherford* : Not with all your interest in one thing ?

*Mr. Lysnar* : Yes, except I put some money into freezing-works to help them along. I may say also I have some money in a bacon company, but I am not a dealer in meat. I have not bought anything for years except two cows.

*Mr. Rutherford* : With regard to the statement made by Mr. Lysnar that Messrs. Armour and Co. have ruined thousands of farmers in America, I would like to say that I have been in my present holding for sixteen years, and during that time I have had thirty-four different farmers in the vicinity of my place, and I am quite safe in saying that at least fifteen of those farmers have gone out bankrupt, and I cannot put it to the doors of any meat trust that those farmers have become bankrupt. That is my answer to Mr. Lysnar's statement.

*Mr. Hawken* : How long was the petition in circulation ?

*Mr. Rutherford* : Only a very short time. I cannot give you the exact date when I heard that Messrs. Armour and Co. were refused a trading license. When I heard I felt so indignant that I obtained a certain number of signatures to the petition before coming to Wellington, and I do not think it was more than ten days or a fortnight between the time the rest of the signatures were obtained and the petition was sent to Parliament. I may say that the original copy of the petition is in my own handwriting, and there were no suggestions from anybody. After my secretary knocked the petition into shape a bit we handed it over to Mr. Alpers so that he could put it into proper legal form. That is how the petition originated.

*Mr. Hawken* : The petition itself represents a comparatively small number of sheepowners, and naturally, of course, one would expect, after the petition had been circulated, that it would have been much more representative of the sheepowners. Do you think it is because the petition has not been sufficiently circulated ?

*Mr. Rutherford* : Certainly, sir. Give me a month and I will get 90 per cent. of the farmers to sign the petition.

*Mr. Hawken* : It is simply that the petition has not been sufficiently circulated ?

*Mr. Rutherford* : That is quite true.

*Mr. Lysnar* : I would like to ask you, Mr. Rutherford, how many were at the meeting you spoke of that was held during the racing meeting week at Christchurch when the resolution was passed ?—There were between forty and fifty at that meeting, and they represented a good many million pounds.

This petition was sent to all parts of New Zealand, was it not ?—It was sent round very hurriedly.

You sent it to Hawke's Bay, did you not ?—Yes.

There are seven signatures from Hawke's Bay ?—That would be correct.

There are twelve signatures from Auckland ?—Yes.

There are eight signatures from Oamaru, but there does not appear to be any from Timaru ?—South Canterbury was included in that number as far as I remember. I would like to say that we got the petition up hurriedly, and sent it forward for this Committee to deal with the matter.

At the Sheepowners' Federation meeting can you say whether the representatives of the North Island were opposed to the resolution ?—Mr. Marshall was the only one who stood against it.

Was Mr. McLeod for it ?—He voted for it, I think, and I am sure he did not vote against it.