

We have had the experience of abattoirs with a vengeance, and if you could possibly get any other Auckland butchers to state what is their aim and object, the reply would be, to have their own yards. And why? It is because their interests are not looked after in the present City Council abattoirs. Your stock is never your own. You might go in the morning for beef. You find it down town, and the rats have been on the track. All this kind of thing. There is no grass in the paddocks, though I admit there is abundance of water. All these things can be looked after more effectively under our own control. I believe it to be admitted by the Inspectors that a bullock, if heated when he is being killed, is as bad as diseased. Let us take the case in the abattoirs of a small butcher, whose weekly killing may be four head of cattle. He sends four over to these abattoirs. He wants one in on the Monday. Where are his remaining three? They are still standing in the pen, or perhaps in the yard, with all the rest of the butchers' beasts, at the mercy of all classes of cattle, to be horned and knocked about. The consequence is that when he goes to kill again the meat will kill dark, and is not nearly the quality of meat he would have if he were at his own slaughter-yards. I think we have, even in Wellington to-day, an ocular proof of it. I did not know, but I was going round the town this morning and saw it, and, without any butcher's experience, I believe it is quite possible for any one to take out from the Wellington butchers' shops to-day the meat that has been slaughtered at a private slaughterhouse. We do not shirk inspection. We invite the Inspectors, and the most rigid inspection the Government may choose to set up, and we are prepared to pay the cost. But we do say that while there is no complaint in Auckland and district we should not be meddled with; and we ask you, in the name of liberty, to give us the right to manage our business from start to finish. That is with regard to our private slaughterhouses. We take exception to sections 30 and 31 as being unworkable. I would qualify that by saying that the words after "without fee," be struck out of section 31. We object to any individual person being enabled to go into our business affairs without paying, or some such arrangement. We likewise take exception to subsection (3) in clause 31 as being unworkable. I think it is hardly necessary for me to advance arguments against that: I have no doubt some members of this Committee are conversant with at least some portion of a butcher's business. We could not manage to go to an Inspector to get a permit to kill a sheep or a lamb. We have not weather that Wellington butchers have. Wellington butchers can get meat in to-day to last to the end of the week. But take, for instance, the Auckland butchers: A very large number of them are obliged not to give their Saturday orders until Friday night. We leave our orders for killing until the very last thing; then we have to kill directly. With regard to the sheep, we get them in on Saturday morning. People will have hot dinners on Sunday. I am sorry that, in regard to compensation, I cannot support the question at issue as laid down by previous speakers. It is a very warm question in the Auckland Province. I wish to touch on compensation in two phases—that is, compensation to the butchers who have erected plants and have conformed to every fancy of the local authorities and Inspectors. I would ask, is that to be overlooked? If so, it does seem extremely hard; and we ask you to favourably consider that, gentlemen, when the time comes. With regard to the compensation on stock, we have spent more time over that question in Auckland than on any other. We contend this: that the butcher practically is a servant of the public; and why should we be expected to bear the loss? Briefly, our contention is this: What is this Bill but a Bill brought forward in the interests and for the safeguard—practically for the insurance on the whole—of the public? The public should pay. And if the public are clamouring for it, it is only fair and just that they should pay the whole of it. That is the recommendation from Auckland. With these remarks I am pleased to draw to a close with a last injunction. The Auckland butchers, if you can see your way, say, By all means let us have our private yards, notwithstanding what rigid inspection you may choose to make.

15. *Mr. Lawry.*] How many butchers in Auckland do you represent?—Approximately, sixty.

16. Do you say that they were absolutely unanimous in the desires you have expressed having legislative effect given to them?—Unanimous.

17. Are you aware that recently in Auckland a private butcher has gone into a very large expenditure in erecting an abattoir?—Yes.

18. How much money do you think he has expended on a private abattoir?—Between £2,000 and £3,000 he must have spent.

19. Do you know whether any local body in Auckland has taken up the question "of slaughtering and inspection" now before the House?—Yes; the local body I am a member of is strenuously opposed to it.

20. Have you received any official notification since you have been in Wellington?—I have seen a telegram asking one of the members to oppose it.

21. That is, the Hon. Sir Maurice O'Rorke has received a telegram from that local body asking him to support you to the utmost in what you say to-day?—That is quite right.

22. The Committee, I suppose, are given to understand that there has been no complaint lodged against the butchers or the way the inspecting is conducted?—None whatever.

23. In other words, the Auckland butchers are perfectly satisfied to let things remain as they are?—Yes.

24. *Mr. Flatman.*] I did not understand whether you had any objection to subclause (2), clause 3. The only objection to it is so far as pigs are concerned?—No, we object to cattle as well; we object to it right through.

25. *Mr. Wason.*] You have public abattoirs at Auckland?—Yes.

25A. But they are not giving satisfaction?—No.

26. There are a number of cattle and sheep killed there?—Oh, yes.

27. But they are not giving satisfaction?—No great satisfaction.