

131. And they do not inspect the slaughterhouses?—The local body gets the fees. If our fees went to the City of Wellington, then they could appoint their Inspectors.

132. Do not you think it advisable that the local authorities in whose district the meat is sold should appoint the Inspectors outside?—Yes, they should have that power.

133. *Mr. Massey.*] Though you have no inspection of abattoirs in the Wellington District, I suppose the stock is inspected before being sold in the sale-yard?—Yes; I have seen Mr. Johnson repeatedly.

134. Are they inspected privately?—No.

135. Can you give us any idea of the percentage of stock condemned purchased in the sale-yard?—About 1 or 2 per cent.—very few indeed.

136. A suggestion was made by one of the previous witnesses that a fund should be established for compensating owners of stock where they are condemned. I want to know what percentage would be necessary. Do you think a charge of 2 per cent. would be sufficient for that purpose?—If it only applied to fat stock; but in our sale lines a large number of culls are bought and purchased for potting.

137. By speaking of “culls” you mean sheep?—I mean old ewes and old cows, which might be bought for preserving purposes, or for their bones and hides, to make manure, &c.

138. What do you think of the establishing of this fund for the purpose of compensating?—I think the producer of the stock should be held responsible.

139. For the whole of it?—If he sells a diseased animal he should bear the loss.

140. But he may sell it without knowing?—Yes; but I think the tendency now is to teach him better.

141. Is it not possible for an animal to have tuberculosis without the disease being visible?—It is.

142. Did you say anything about compensating owners or lessees of slaughterhouses in case of establishing abattoirs?—Yes, I did.

143. What is the feeling in Wellington generally among the butchers with regard to the proposals of this Bill?—Those butchers who have slaughterhouses would like inspection; but if they were abolished they would certainly like a public abattoir and all put on one footing—that is, the public supply of meat for Wellington should all come through that one channel.

144. Is there any feeling in Wellington about inspection of meat?—One or two doctors seem to be driving the matter forward.

145. *Hon. Mr. Lee Smith.*] I suppose I am right in assuming that the chief objection to clause 16 is that the butchers as a body are afraid the export companies might enter into competition with you and supply for local consumption?—Yes. One company is entering into competition with us already; it has four or five shops in the town.

146. Well, of course you would naturally be against that. In the case of private slaughterhouses you would be at a great disadvantage in competing with them?—Most decidedly.

147. You say the butchers have been paying for inspection. How have you been paying?—We have been paying for inspection, and have never had it; and we pay £1 a year for license, 3d. for every bullock and calf, and ½d. for every sheep, &c.

148. But it has not been done. But how about compensation?—I think the grower should be responsible for that, as the butcher only has them in his hands for a few days.

149. Do you understand that when they are established towns distant twenty or thirty miles away may send for their meat. For instance, you are not aware that towns forty miles off are sending to Dunedin for their meat—such as Palmerston South, Lawrence, and all those places?—No. I might also state that we do not agree with chilling meat. The temperature is often too cold, and when it comes into the warmth the meat tends to drip.

150. *Mr. Symes.*] You say you have paid fees to the County Council. That is only what they call slaughtering fees?—That is intended to cover the cost of inspection; but we have never had that inspection.

151. But one of the local bodies, as a rule, had to see that everything was kept clean, and collect the fees?—Yes, the fees principally.

152. Has that been done for a number of years?—Ever since I have been killing in a private slaughterhouse.

153. Now, during your long experience, how many beasts have you condemned? During the past five years, say?—I have only had one cow.

154. Have you ever seen swine affected with tuberculosis?—Yes, I have.

155. Do you think it would cost a very great amount more to inspect the meat as the slaughterhouses are now situated than at the abattoir?—It would cost one more Inspector, at least.

156. But it could be thoroughly inspected with one more Inspector?—Yes.

157. You have no Inspector now, so you would require two?—They require two for the private slaughterhouses here, and one for each of the companies—they require at least four.

158. Do you think one could do the work?—Well, I would like to say two, to meet the case of outside butchers.

159. Now, supposing that done, who do you consider would pay the cost of inspection?—The butchers would pay in the first instance.

160. But do you consider it is the grower or consumer who actually pays?—The cost of inspection? Well, I think it would all come out of the grower in the long-run, because we should buy accordingly.

161. You have been in business a great many years in Wellington: have you ever known any butcher in Wellington kill meat behind his shop?—No; but I have known it done in London.

162. Do you consider it an advantage, killing behind the shop?—No, I do not think it is. It is the driving of stock through the streets I most object to. It really means the question of cleanliness. In London they remove the blood and everything else, and when night comes there is nothing left whatever.