

163. *Mr. Buchanan.*] I suppose you have invested a good deal of money, time, and labour in your business?—Yes, considerable.

164. If this Bill came into force you would lose heavily?—I should lose about £2,000.

165. And you therefore do not think you should be called upon to pay that amount for the general public benefit?—No, I do not.

166. Are there many in the neighbourhood of Wellington in a similar position?—Three or four of us.

167. We have had it from yourself and other witnesses in evidence that the small butchers, through advantages that have been described, such as paddocks, resting-places, and personal attention, and so on, are able to present their meat in better condition—better dressing, better colour, and the like. How do the butchers who buy by the carcase—say, from any of the freezing companies, or from Mr. Banks, or from Hellaby Brothers in Auckland (whose extensive business you know something about)—how are they able to compete in their shops with the butchers who slaughter for themselves?—I may tell you I have seen very few butchers in New Zealand who have ever got on by buying dead meat. All those firms like Hellaby's started with private slaughterhouses. The meat does not look so attractive in the meat companies' shops as meat killed in a private slaughterhouse. I could give you ocular demonstration any day you liked; in fact, so might also your manager. Mr. Moore, of Ngahauranga, one day asked me how it was my meat looked so nice in the shops.

168. I want to get at things that puzzle me. Has the number of butchers round about Wellington who kill for themselves increased or decreased?—They have slightly increased within the last six or eight years, but not to any great extent. I think that two or three more are killing for themselves now than five or six years ago. I may say that at one time there were only three—the Gear Company, Messrs. J. and H. Barber, and Messrs. Pollock and Young.

169. Are there any butchers who previously slaughtered for themselves who are now buying slaughtered meat?—Yes, there is one gentleman—Mr. Barber. He is the only person I know of—the person I worked for when I first came to the colony.

169A. If the practice of slaughtering in a small establishment goes on and, as you say, the producer is held responsible for all diseased stock, how would you suggest butchers' claims for diseased stock being checked—that is, a butcher claims damage for an animal, say, from the west coast or the Wairarapa; the butcher kills it at Ngahauranga and sends in his claim? How would you suggest that claim being met?—He would have to leave the skin on the neck of the animal until the Inspector had noted the brand and ear-mark.

170. When you buy your stock from the farmer do you buy different sorts—that is, suppose there is a lot in the yard, and they want to dispose of them? If you buy them do you buy them as they stand—stock that is only fit for preserving mixed with different other sorts?—No, I never touch those lines; I only buy fat stock. There are always buyers from both companies to buy these lines, and I do not touch them.

171. The freezing companies buy in that way?—Yes, both of them.

172. And it necessarily is a great advantage to the producer?—Possibly so.

173. I am speaking now of purchases on the farm. If the freezing companies are prevented from selling locally, what would you suggest should be done in case of a little bruise on the leg from a nip in the trucks, or other causes—defects that are only disclosed after the skin is stripped off? What would you suggest should be done with such defective sheep?—That is, if this Bill goes through in its present form.

174. And if the suggestions are carried out that freezing companies are prevented from selling locally?—Then they would have to be used for tinned meat. Some butchers in Patea are buying nothing but meat for tinning.

175. Supposing the carcase is worth 8s. or 9s. for local consumption, and worth only half that for preserving. Who is to stand the loss?—That must be a question between the freezing company and the grower.

176. Would not the producer have to stand the loss in the same way as you suggest he should do in the case of diseased cattle?—I think it would come to him in the long-run.

Mr. J. JARMAN, Inspector for the Selwyn County Council, and also for the City of Christchurch, said: I was asked by the butchers of my district to say something upon the compensation clauses of this Bill. I may say that under the existing Slaughterhouse Act there is nothing stated about compensation. Unfortunately for the butchers, in the many cases condemned in the sale-yards, and the few cases in the slaughterhouses, the onus has come on the butcher, which, I think, is very unjust. They have not the opportunity to inspect the cattle at the yards, as they are so closely penned together, and their idea is not so much to look out for tuberculosis, but rather to look out for the weight and for what they are going to get out of the cattle. Unfortunately for themselves they are not in a position to detect these animals, and therefore they asked me to mention these facts to this Committee. I have condemned a large quantity of cattle during the past nine years, and the onus has come on the butcher. I have not only condemned cattle connected with the butcher, but also those of the dealer. In one or two instances I have assisted the butcher in getting his cheque returned from the auctioneer. The latter gets it from the seller. But there is generally a great fuss in the matter; and, for my own part, I think that under this new Bill if there was a clause inserted concerning compensation for butchers, it would save Inspectors a great deal of trouble. It is unfortunate for us that we have to run against these gentlemen; but we have to do our duty to the public. We thought perhaps the Bill would work better if we could have a clause inserted making provision for compensation. I have no more to say on compensation, but I am going now to a clause in the Bill concerning myself. This is part of clause 27. It is the latter part of it. I have been for nine years with the Selwyn County Council (I can send