

clerks—with big salaries attached; and then, again, buyers and directors are provided with first-class yearly railway-tickets. Therefore, the small man can easily compete with any company that is under such extra expense, if he buys direct.

61. Do the companies' buyers not pay for their own railway-tickets the same as any one else?—No; the companies pay for these buyers, as far as I know.

62. Would not you be surprised to find that they pay in some cases?—I do not know.

63. You object to delegation by the city authorities to the companies?—Yes.

64. On what ground?—Well, if we delegate our power to a company, I contend we would not have that privilege which we might have in a public abattoir to kill our own stock the same as we would in a private slaughterhouse.

65. Supposing it is provided in the Bill that the delegation to a freezing company would mean, as far as the butcher was concerned, just as if a city erected an abattoir for itself, absolute liberty to the butcher to kill in his own pen, giving him also absolute right to do what he liked with his offal, &c., would you object then?—Well, the only objection then is the want of paddocks.

66. But would you expect a city abattoir to have paddocks?—Yes.

67. Do you know of any abattoirs in the world that have paddocks?—No, I do not know. In some parts of England, and in towns with a much larger population than Wellington, they are still killing in the middle of the city.

68. Supposing the freezing company was able to offer you good money for many of the by-products—having machinery to turn everything to account—say, in the case of rejected sheep or cattle, or any part of the offal—would you not be in a much better position in a delegated abattoir than in a city abattoir that could not have every facility for treating the by-products?—Well, I do not know. There are a lot of questions to go into—there is tallow, for instance.

69. I am supposing you to be a perfectly free agent, able to do anything you choose?—I certainly object to delegating any power to any company whatever.

70. Would you expect a city abattoir to have facilities for manipulating the fat and preserving the portions not fit for shop-use and so on, the same as the meat companies now possess?—A small butcher would have a very limited amount of that kind of thing. I would like to know what you mean. I would like the point defined.

70A. But the rejects being hung up in the shop the public have their eyes open, and know what they are doing. Let us suppose a nip in one leg from a dog, or an injury from a railway-truck—you would not send such meat Home to England? Would you not say at once, "This must be realised locally"?—As far as injury in the trucks is concerned, I consider they are only fit for the pot. Any sheep or cattle damaged in this fashion are not fit for human consumption.

71. You buy at Johnsonville?—Very little. I buy mostly in the Manawatu district.

72. The greater part of the mutton consumed in Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin are ewes, are they not?—I do not say that. I buy mostly wethers. I cannot say that I kill all wethers; but if I buy ewes they must be good.

73. Are not the majority of the sheep killed for Wellington ewes?—Yes.

74. The same is true, is it not, of Christchurch and Dunedin?—Yes.

75. Suppose you buy, say, fifty ewes at Johnsonville, what do you do with the rejects?—Well, I take care I do not have any rejects as a rule, but if there are any I put them into the pot.

76. Supposing they are fit for preserving?—I contend that if sheep or cattle have been trampled on in the trucks it is impossible to preserve them. I have heard people say you can preserve them, but I maintain that you cannot. I should ask you to define rejects.

77. What is not fit to go Home, I mean?—Well, I contend if you send Home first-, second-, and third-class mutton to England, rejects must be fourth-class here; and therefore, if it is not fit for the poorer classes in England it is not fit to put in our shops for sale in New Zealand.

78. Would you be surprised to know that I have often received only the sum of 1s. for sheep which arrived dead?—That would be a shorn sheep. Well, the skins are mine; but for the carcase, a very good price, too.

HENRY BARBER, butcher, Lambton Quay, Wellington, examined, said: My opinion is that under this Bill it will not be all gain, because there will be a loss of care and supervision in the treatment of cattle which under the present condition of things many butchers are able to give—that is, in the way of providing paddocks and slaughtering by their own men, the result being that the beef is better and brighter than cattle that do not get such treatment. There are very few people who have those advantages. To take the various sections of the Bill, there is clause 3, for instance, *re* farmers slaughtering on their farms and bartering for sale. I think, in fairness to the trade, a farmer should take his stock to the nearest abattoir, otherwise there would be practically no inspection. The farmer is the first man to discover if a beast is bad. Practically, "he killed it to save its life." With regard to clause 5, I think there should be separate apartments in the abattoir, to enable each butcher to have one for his own use, or two or three butchers could join together in using one place. It would also be a distinct advantage to have a boiling-down plant in connection with the public abattoir. Regarding clause 15, I have every sympathy with it.

79. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are in favour of clause 15, then?—Yes, partly on account of knowing that there is no place in Wellington suitable for an abattoir. Regarding clause 26, I will pass that for the present and go on to the smaller matters. Regarding clause 30, I think this clause very difficult—in fact, it is almost impracticable on account of sheep arriving in a dirty condition by the railway. So far as clause 31 goes, I consider it very objectionable that any private person should have the right to overhaul another man's books for inspection. If anything would drive the small butcher into dealing with the companies that would. With regard to subclause (2) of section 32, I consider this would be very objectionable on account of the exigencies of trade requirements,