

121. *Mr. Lang.*] Are you aware that many farmers are a long distance away from the place where an abattoir would be erected?—Yes, I know that. But there should be special clauses provided in the Bill to meet their cases.

122. Are you aware that in subclause (3) it states that it shall not apply if such farm is within three miles of a borough?—Well, I have seen that. I do not think it a very great hardship.

123. But does not that meet your case?—That acts as a protection, no doubt. I think it might be increased.

124. Would not that cover your objection?—Well, I think it should be increased to seven miles.

125. You say that if the line were opened through it would be a great advantage to Auckland?—Well, it would be a great advantage both to Auckland and the West Coast in enabling prime meat from preserving-works on the coast to be sent through.

126. Are you aware that there are very large preserving-places in Auckland? Do not they send stuff to the South Island?—Yes; but there in Auckland the preserving business is an adjunct of the butchering.

127. It is the prime meat from the West Coast companies that comes to Wellington?—Not now; they have done so, but I have ceased to deal with them.

128. What do they do with it?—They use it for local consumption, I suppose.

129. *Mr. Buchanan.*] On the question of compensation, supposing a dealer buys from a farmer, and the Inspector meets him on the road and discovers a diseased beast and condemns it, who should pay for the diseased beast?—Well, I think the farmer, the person who produces the article—that is, the person getting the major profit.

130. Supposing a farmer bought a lot of steers to fatten, and found subsequently that one or more were diseased, who then should bear the damage?—If it was quite evident that the disease was in the animal at the time of the sale I certainly think the original owner should bear the cost.

131. How would you ascertain whether a claim was correct or not in a case like that—the person purchasing might make a wrong claim?—I cannot say; my remarks only apply to diseased animals coming into the public abattoir.

132. You buy your carcasses instead of killing for yourself. Supposing you buy at Johnsonville yards or in the country whatever you wanted, would not the use of public abattoirs (either delegated or not) prevent any attempted monopoly by the freezing companies or carcase butchers?—Certainly it would.

HUGH M'ARTNEY, examined: I represent the Wellington Butchers' Association. I am in business in Wellington in Courtenay Place. The first clause in this Bill that I object to is subclause (2) of clause 3. I do not consider it right to allow a farmer to kill one bullock and five sheep in a week. This means about 1,100 lb. of meat in a single week, and that, I take it, is really a small business by itself. I knew of eight farmers between here and Porirua who were killing meat and hawking it all over the town, and most of this meat was not really fit for human consumption. With regard to clause 15, subclause (1), I consider it is not right that the city authorities should have the power to delegate their right to any company. I am against this altogether, for it means that there will be put into the market only two buyers to buy stock, and it would be very detrimental to the smaller farmers. In fact, if this were done, and the power delegated, it would simply result in shutting up all the little butchers. The reason there are not more small slaughterhouses is that land is almost prohibitive in price, and a small man is almost unable to get hold of it. Now, in connection with clause 16, I am of opinion that the word "human" should be struck out altogether, and the word "local" inserted in its stead. And if we are to have abattoirs, which I hope we will, I consider that the companies should be made to kill there, the same as other butchers, what stock they wish for local consumption. I cannot see where the point comes in of it being any hardship upon them, seeing the large staff of men they keep. It would only mean to them a little extra driving of the stock. If men like Mr. Rod and Messrs. Banks and Garrett have to kill at the public abattoir and shut up their own slaughterhouses they will be big losers, but the companies, on the other hand, will lose nothing. In connection with section 18 of the Bill, I consider that the words "and by the licensee thereof or his workmen" should be struck out altogether, for the reason that there are just as good slaughtermen working for small butchers as those working for the companies, and under this section of the Bill those working for the small butchers would simply have to stand and look on while their masters' work was being done. They could do this work, and would be getting paid, and it would deprive many lads of good opportunities when learning the butchering trade. They would get no chance to kill, and therefore could not become practical butchers without that teaching. In clause 24, I think, the words "export only" should be added. *Re* clause 56, the companies are growling now because they are asked to go and kill at an abattoir. But a little butcher has to go and do so under the Bill. After he has built a slaughterhouse he must give it up at a great loss to himself, and is compelled to go to the abattoir and have his meat killed there. I think the small butcher should have some slight compensation for the loss when the abattoirs are established and the small slaughterhouses closed. I think there should be a clause in the Bill providing for compensation in the case of condemned diseased meat. If there was an insurance per head on bullocks and sheep, &c., this might meet the case, and a sinking fund might be arranged, so that when cases did crop up there would always be enough in the fund to meet such cases. I think the matter could be worked in some way by an insurance fund. I do not think I have anything else to say, except that the butchers are very strong on the subject of delegation. They object altogether to letting the City Council have the power of delegating to companies, and, for my part, I do not think it would be right.

133. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you slaughter for yourself?—No; I buy dead.