

134. Do you know anything about the system of inspection here?—There is absolutely none. The small butchers are asked to pay a fee now, according to the by-law, but they get practically no inspection at all for it. Small men are asked to pay about £20 a year, and the large companies about £50 a year. The latter, however, kill about a thousand times more stock. They kill as much in a day as a small butcher kills in a year, and they are only asked to pay a little more than double fee.

136. Under the Bill you are aware that inspection would have to take place with regard to the companies just the same as with others?—Yes.

137. Well, why do you say it would be necessary they should go to the public abattoirs to kill?—Well, if small men are compelled to go to the public abattoirs to kill, why should not the companies be compelled also? The companies should not have the extra advantage of being able to kill in their own private places.

138. In other words, if they were allowed to kill on their own premises it should be only for export?—Yes, that is so.

139. Do you know if abattoirs were established all small farmers would be prevented from sending meat into the district?—Yes.

140. *Mr. Lawry.*] I suppose you are aware that in Wellington and in other parts of the colony there are carcase butchers who are making a good living, and they would not be able to carry on, because they have not sufficient capital? You are not opposed to those who kill and sell dead meat to the retail butcher?—No; I want them to be put upon the same footing.

141. You represent a number of butchers?—Yes.

141A. They must realise that the export companies are doing great good in sending away surplus stock frozen?—Yes.

142. You mean that if they enter into competition with you they must kill, and be subject to the same inspection as you?—Yes, that is so.

143. *Mr. Symes.*] You say there should be some sort of insurance. You could not have an insurance-fee. The only way would be to have a slaughter-fee. Is not that what you mean?—No; if a farmer has, say, twenty head of cattle ready to send away, he would only have to insure those twenty. Then it would only be the butcher would pay.

144. Do you mean to tell me that it is only the butcher—it must be the farmer? If there is a slaughter-fee you offer the farmer so much less naturally to cover that fee?—I do not know.

145. You must know that such will be the case?—I do not know.

146. Would you have it an insurance against disease?—The Government should take the matter of inspection up. I only suggest this. You, gentlemen, should work it out.

147. What sort of inspection do the local bodies provide for the inspection-fees?—Absolutely none.

148. You said you would place them all on the same footing—the butcher who kills for himself, the freezing company, and the man who buys the whole carcase and retails it. How can you do that?—By making them all kill at registered abattoirs.

149. What advantage will the small butchers gain by having an abattoir pure and simple, as against establishing an abattoir at the freezing companies?—Well, more care would be taken, but if this power were granted to the companies they would simply give us what they liked.

150. It has been pointed out that the companies have their works there?—Yes, but there are others in the district who have also works, and it would shut them out altogether. I think that would be very unfair.

151. But would not a public abattoir shut these people up just the same?—No, certainly not. Let each one run on his own account.

152. *Mr. Lang.*] One question *re* compensation for diseased stock: Is it not in the interest of the general public that the stock should be inspected?—Yes.

153. Do you not think that the consumer, which really means the general public, should pay the inspection-fee?—Well, it would be better if it were paid out of the consolidated revenue; but I was led to believe that there would be no way of getting that done. I consider, though, that if the public want this they should pay for it. The butchers I am representing want inspection as much as the public want it.

154. Well, it is a question of cost?—I consider the Government should take it up.

155. That is, compensation for diseased stock?—Yes. I think, as I said before, some insurance idea might be arranged.

156. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Do you know that as a matter of fact the Wellington freezing companies do not want this delegation?—I do not know about that.

157. Does that surprise you?—It does.

157A. Do you know that they want nothing but to go on as they are doing at present?—Well, why should they want anything else? There are any amount of little butchers who have slaughter-houses of the very best—clean and nice places—and if they are to be shut up and made to go to one place, why not the companies?

158. Can you state any reason why I, a grower, and representing other growers, should not want as much competition as possible?—Well, I think you should see there is nothing delegated to the companies.

159. You suggest that the freezing companies should be made to drive stock intended for local consumption to the public abattoir, slaughter, and have it inspected there instead of at their own works, and carry back the carcasses and the various products to their own premises again, or put an extra man in the public abattoir to dispose of these things in open market?—Yes, that is the process.

160. You said the companies would give you whatever they liked if the powers were delegated to them?—Yes.