

abattoirs, the charges, no doubt, will be fixed either by the Government or by the local body. In either case, if only a very few butchers killed there, then the charges, which, I presume, would be based upon paying interest upon a certain amount, would be prohibitive.

30. The local bodies would not put up abattoirs and allow others to compete with them?—Well, what I mean is this: Take Wellington: Supposing the export companies were sending meat in as they are doing now, then they would undersell the small butcher who was killing his own meat. It would simply ruin the small butcher. Then, with reference to sections 24 and 26, the definition of a freezing company is a company that kills the majority of its meat for export. That means that it would have to kill five-eighths of its output for export. Therefore it is very hard on the small butcher if a company in the district can kill five-eighths of its stock for export, and the rest for local consumption. There is no doubt it is to the companies' interest to buy large mobs. They get a certain number of sheep or cattle that are not quite fit for the London market; the majority of these are sent into the local market, being quite good enough for ourselves, but not for London. With reference to sections 30 and 31, one has to send in returns with the brands and ear-marks of stock specified. No doubt this is a most necessary clause, but it is practically impossible to do such a thing. In buying stock you may buy a mob of sheep, for instance, with many brands and ear-marks, and many of them are unreadable. The same with cattle. I know from experience many brands are unreadable, and ear-marks in both sheep and cattle are the same, and having this clause in the Bill simply means that it would be impossible to comply with it. I myself have had a good deal of difficulty with this kind of thing in the ordinary station stock. The clause, to my mind, is unworkable. So far as the Bill relates to taking the various ear-marks, brands, ages, and sexes of stock in mixed mobs, it would mean telling a man off specially to do that class of work before they were killed, and this might cause vexatious delay and expense. With regard to the clause in the Bill which gives an Inspector or Justice of the Peace the right to inspect books, I consider that quite right, but it is absurd to allow any one to inspect the books on payment of a shilling, unless they are accompanied by a Justice of the Peace or Inspector. If a person is accompanied by a Justice of the Peace it is not so bad; but I have heard that in another district the present system of inspection has been carried out to the detriment of those concerned in the trade. Regarding that clause of the Bill on page 12 which compels all the small slaughterhouses in the district to be closed without any compensation whatever, while the meat companies can still go on as before, I think it unfair. Of course, I have nothing to say against the export companies, but I think compensation should be allowed in this matter. Certain butchers have gone to great expense, and they are small butchers, with not too much money. They have put their money into their own slaughterhouses, and if they are to be compelled to let their premises lie idle and useless for anything else, I think, being small men, they should be allowed something for their loss. With reference to condemned stock, I know most of the butchers in Wellington, and I have spoken to them and to others in other districts upon this question. They all want inspection, and I never heard a butcher yet say anything against inspection. I myself begged for inspection. I have asked for a man to come out to my place and tell me what he wished done, if anything. So far as I know no one has ever been out to Miramar upon business of that kind. I have always paid slaughterhouse license-fee besides slaughtering fees, which is supposed to pay for inspection.

31. How do they do it, then?—Well, they generally send me a debit note. If this Bill is passed, and all condemned stock buried or burned, they should be allowed to take the hides or skins off them. If a man goes to the sale-yard and buys stock, and then some are condemned, is he to lose the total amount, because it takes an expert to tell if a beast is unsound before he is killed? The auctioneer will not guarantee the stock sound, and the farmer will not guarantee them either. Therefore, the loss presumably falls on the butcher, who should not stand all the loss. At any rate, it seems to me that if a man is killing, say, four to six bodies of beef per week, besides sheep and pigs, and gets part condemned, it is extremely hard on him, and takes him a very long time to make up his loss again. With reference to the immediate slaughter of pigs, I cannot find the clause, but I am told there is something about it in the Act to the effect that as soon as pigs arrive they must be immediately slaughtered. This, I consider, a hard provision, because it stands to reason that the pigs ought to be slaughtered when perfectly cool. If they come down by train, for instance, they must rest a day or two. If they are immediately slaughtered the pork would not be so good; and the butchers very often cannot get the pigs delivered when they want it if for immediate slaughtering.

32. What borough are you in?—I am in the Hutt County Council. I pay the fees to them.

33. How do animals get to your slaughter-yards?—Well, sheep we bring through practically any time of the day, because they are not much trouble. Cattle start from Kaiwarra about 11 o'clock at night. One matter I would like to refer to in connection with public abattoirs for Wellington, on account of its peculiar situation and extreme length. I heard one witness speak about Miramar. I certainly think there should be two abattoirs, one at each end of Wellington. Wellington is growing very much out Newtown way, and I think will grow that way very considerably, and it would be very hard on a butcher if he has to kill his stock at the north end of the town and cart it through the streets on a hot summer's morning to the other end of the town. There are more butchers' shops to the south end of Wellington than in the north end, and I think there is every evidence that more meat will be sold at the Newtown end as population increases. So that, all things considered, there should be an abattoir at each end of the town.

34. You spoke about the companies being able to get rid of part of their stock which was not diseased, but was hardly good enough for the London market. How would you alter this?—Well, in the first place the companies ought to buy closer; and if they did not sell the quantities which they do now in the towns they would buy closer. Anything they have on hand after buying closer they could make into potted meat or manure.