

Auckland Farmers' Killings.

In Auckland the situation is on a par with that revealed above, if not worse. With reference to Auckland Mr. Stringer submitted figures as under:—

	Lambs.	Sheep.	Cattle.
1915 (previous to opening Horotui and Moerewa)	117,131	95,842	21,076
1926 (after expenditure of £120,000 Horotui, and £226,623 Moerewa—a total of £346,623)	115,242	23,100	6,163
Decrease	1,889	72,742	14,913

The figures on expenditure, Horotui and Moerewa, are exclusive of expenditure in Auckland for butter and cheese, or for additional storage for meat during the period of shortage of shipping.

Apparently an increase of capital investment totalling £346,623 was made in order to slaughter nearly 90,000 less animals.

A Company Perquisite.

Mr. Stringer then stated that the increased value of runners (entrails, &c.) per lb. weight of sheep and lambs slaughtered to-day as against 1914 is as follows: Lambs, 0-337d.; sheep, 0-333d. In 1914 lamb runners were worth £5 per 1,000; sheep, £10 per 1,000. In 1926 lamb runners are worth £50 per 1,000; sheep, £85 per 1,000.

Wages Cost of Freezing, 1924-25.

Mr. Stringer next gave the wages cost of freezing in the above year as follows. The figures are in pence per pound of meat slaughtered: Slaughtering, 0-0981d.; assistants, 0-0463d.; grader, 0-0044d.; ticket boys, 0-0021d.; cooling floor, 0-0088d.; freezing hands, 0-0509d.; yardmen, 0-0012d.; bag-room, 0-0061d.; firemen, greasers, &c., 0-0748d.: total, 0-2927d. This is less than one-third of a penny per pound. The 10 per cent. increase asked for by the unions would be 0-0297d., or one-thirtieth of a penny per pound.

Wages only.

Fellmongering wool: All wages, per pound—1-3d. at 10 per cent. = 0-13d. per pound of wool.

Curing pelts: All wages, per dozen—16-7380, at 10 per cent. = 1-6738 per dozen.

Rendering tallow: All wages, per hundredweight (including gutties)—2s. 9-760d. at 10 per cent. = 3-37d. per hundredweight.

Excessively Costly Farmers' Administration.

Mr. Stringer then gave a table showing the value per head of stock slaughtered and annual interest charge per head against same, based on the stock killed for year ended 30th September, 1926, taking each head of cattle as ten sheep, and the rate of interest at 6½ per cent.

	Capital Charge.		Interest Charge.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.
1. Average all works in New Zealand	11	7-3	0	9-0
2. Gisborne Sheep-farmers	19	6-2	1	3-2
3. Hawke's Bay Farmers	5	10-4	0	4-5
4. Gear Meat Co.	2	0-0	0	1-5
5. Feilding Farmers' Freezing Co.	10	2-5	0	7-9

The difference between the capital charge to the Gear Meat Co. and that of the farmers' concerns is remarkable.

Comparison between Annual Interest Charges on Stock.

The final table laid before the Court by Mr. Stringer made the above comparison. His figures are below:—

	s.	d.
Value of land, buildings, works, plant, &c., per carcass killed in 1914	4	7-2
Annual charge interest at 6½ per cent.	0	3-5
Value of land, buildings, works, plant, &c., per carcass killed in 1924	11	7-3
Annual interest charge at 6½ per cent.	0	9-0
Increased value of land, buildings, plant, &c., in 1924 over 1914	7	0-1
Increase in annual interest charge at 6½ per cent.	0	5-4

These statistics speak for themselves. The load the industry is now carrying is plainly due not to excessive wages paid to the workers, but to the unnecessary and extravagant increase in the capitalization. This over-capitalization and the construction of superfluous factories which followed have sadly affected the workers' position in the industry, by making the killing seasons shorter and the work more irregular. The remedy is not to reduce wages or take away ameliorative conditions, but drastically to reorganize the industry on an economic basis. (*Applause.*)

Questions.

Mr. Turner: I only desire to ask two short questions. The first one is, whether Mr. Revell can give us the figures of the proportion of pieceworkers and timeworkers in the industry; secondly, whether he has taken into account Mr. Justice Frazer's remarks in the last award in which he said he desired also to impress on the workers the necessity of their showing a spirit of willing co-operation, and of the avoidance of friction. In asking these two questions I would like to say that I do not think that the employers on this side will ask any more questions on this paper. That is not out of any discourtesy to Mr. Revell, but because these are largely matters of detail that will be dealt with in committee.

Mr. Revell's Reply.

Mr. Revell: I should say that the proportion of pieceworkers to timeworkers in the freezing industry would be about 60 per cent.; but they are so distributed through the industry that their influence is felt in every department. The piecework system is undoubtedly so much wedged into the scheme of things that the pieceworker is used for the purpose of speeding up the unfortunate time-worker in front of him or behind him. He is in fact used for that purpose. The other question referred to Judge Frazer's remarks about the award. In that connection His Honour also said that the time had gone past when an employee or labourer should be treated merely as a commodity: so that we are about "fifty-fifty" on that point.

Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. Roberts: Possibly some delegates attending this Conference may consider that the question of workers' compensation is not one for the Conference to consider, but we on this side think that the