

buys a great deal and knows what he is buying. Under this clause (38), "Tinned meat shall not be deemed to be duly marked unless each tin, and also each case or other package wherein the tins are packed, are distinctly and indelibly stamped or marked with the following particulars: (1) The words 'New Zealand'; (2) the name of the exporter or owner, and also his registered trade-mark, if any; (3) the net weight and true name and description of the contents." With respect to this, I might say that the tinned-meat trade has certain well-defined rules like many other trades—the "square tower" or "pyramid" tins are made on the American model, and are supposed to hold 2 lb. weight, but as a matter of fact they never have held 2 lb. If you want a bigger tin you cannot have it without sending to America for a new pattern and a plant for making that sized tin, which alone would cost between £6,000 and £7,000, for all the New Zealand factories. The buyers of these 2 lb. tins would object to the weight being marked on them. I do not see why there should be any interference with them, seeing that they have become a rule of trade, any more than the Government should interfere with "pint" and "quart" bottles. Seeing that the preserved meat is run with so much difficulty and so little profit, I think it is wrong to encumber it with such interference. It is easy to say that the trade should be run on other lines, but I may state to the Committee that all the profit of the last few years in this department has accrued from the fact that the company has been able to pay 8d. or 9d. for lean meat of fat ewes after cutting the legs off; and, according to information I possess, the meat-preserving works in Australia have just as small a margin. Then, as regards clause 43, "Any Justice may at any time inspect the skins of any stock that have been, or appear from the slaughter-book to have been, slaughtered in any slaughtering-place, and the manager or licensee shall, if so requested, furnish to such Inspector or Justice a full and satisfactory account, showing from whom such skins were received, and to whom and in what manner they have been sold or disposed of." I take it that this clause applies more particularly where skins are removed and sold. Skins are mostly dealt with on the spot.

*Mr. Watson:* It is not so with us.

*Witness:* Well, it may be only a few yards away—a few doors off; and that makes no practical difference.

7. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What about the Justice clause as to inspection of books, &c.?—No person likes the details of his business to be made more public than is necessary. Having this clause (43), it appears to me all that is wanted is that the Inspectors under the Act and the police should have the power to enter, &c. I cannot see any reason for the inspection of books by Justices. You have also clause 45: "Any Justice, Inspector, or constable may without warrant enter any place or premises whatsoever at any time of the day or night where there is cause to suspect that stolen stock exist or have been slaughtered, or are intended to be slaughtered, and may make such search or inquiry therein as he deems necessary for the discovery of the offence and the offender." Having these two clauses to authorise Inspectors or the police to act, I do not see what more is wanted. I heard some gentleman say that he had seen employes going through the consignment-cards of another company's trucks of stock to see who was the consignor. Referring again to pigs, I think that in the regulations to be made they should be kept at a sufficient distance from any slaughterhouse (clause 49). According to subsection (2), you must not allow them to wander, or to be housed or "penned," within fifty yards of any slaughtering-place. But you must pen them in a slaughterhouse to kill them. They should be immediately slaughtered. Then, with regard to fees (clause 54) for inspection: I think that a maximum fee should be fixed, for I am afraid, as with the stock-tax, this will soon become a source of revenue for revenue purposes. We have had an instance of this under the Slaughterhouse Act, where the local bodies have been allowed to collect  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per sheep. The Hutt and the Petone County Councils collected revenue in this way amounting to hundreds of pounds.

8. *Hon. J. McKenzie.*] You are opposed to this Bill?—No; the main principle of this Bill is inspection, and in that I am with you.

9. But you are opposed to grading?—Yes.

10. You see the reports coming from the Old Country in regard to the meat that is sent Home from this colony?—Yes.

11. Is not the mutton sent Home depreciated and reduced in price owing to the unsatisfactory system that prevails?—No; I think that the trouble arises from the rapid increase in the output of frozen meat from all countries.

12. How do you account for the large percentage of damaged meat that arrives in London?—I do not give any opinion, for I never see the meat after it leaves here. The circumstances that have come to be known are more than sufficient to prove that some of the damage at all events has been caused aboard ship.

13. You are aware of the complaints that have been made upon this subject by our people at Home?—My own advices inform me that the claims on insurance companies are much smaller than they were. It would seem from the correspondence upon this subject that certain firms are dilatory in taking delivery of the meat when it arrives in London. In some cases it is put back. Delivery ought to be taken on the spot, but I have heard of cases where it has been put back from one to three times.

14. You know that recent reports from the Agent-General, supplied to the department, show that a large quantity of meat was in a bad condition in the ship?—Possibly; but I do not think the quantity damaged is so much as people think. We sell nearly the whole of our meat c.i.f. London. It is very rarely that our correspondents refer to the matter, as the whole of our meat has been sold.

15. Do you know that the recent reports we have had from Home prove the fact that the sheep are not sufficiently frozen, for there was considerable "bone-stink"?—I do not think there has been any "bone-stink" in the meat sent from Wellington.

16. But it exists?—Yes, I believe it has occurred.

17. Do you think it follows that if the Government does its duty properly it should assist to prevent that?—Yes.