

Islington Freezing Company; and it is commonly reported throughout Christchurch and the suburbs that they are pretty sure of having this Inspector. I would like to point out, in the event of this Bill not passing, and if an Inspector is granted them, they will have a great advantage over all retailers, for no sooner will they have this Inspector granted them than they can state that they are the only people dealing in the retail trade who have an inspector. This association of master butchers is greatly against an Inspector being granted them unless we have an Inspector granted to us. We are in favour of a thorough inspection, but, whatever is done, we must be put on a level footing. The trade is getting in the way of a monopoly, for they have seven retail shops now. That is what I press very strongly on the Committee—the question of an Inspector. Whatever is done with them must be done with us.

7. *Mr. Lawry.*] Have you heard any expression of opinion from the local bodies as to the desirability of passing this Bill?—The City Council, I may state, will not borrow the money to build under the present Bill.

8. Generally speaking, from your knowledge you can corroborate what Mr. Hanson said yesterday—viz., that the Christchurch City Council was opposed to the Bill?—They are not opposed to the building of the abattoirs if the Bill is so amended that all stock slaughtered for local consumption shall pass through a public abattoir, so that a guarantee of revenue shall be given to them. Under the present condition no guarantee whatever is made. In the event of the Bill passing as it is, the Belfast Company are prepared to slaughter for the trade, and the butchers can be accommodated there better than at the abattoir. But we prefer being outside either of the companies.

9. Would you prefer to be as you are?—With inspection, yes.

10. And I understand you not only do not object to, but rather invite, inspection?—We invite inspection.

11. *Mr. Flatman.*] You answered a question from the Chairman on the subject of compensation for diseased cattle. I did not understand who you said you thought should pay this, or who ought to be responsible for any such bullock—whether butcher, farmer, or grazier?—In the event of a public abattoir being put up, I said I thought that the fees could be so arranged that an amount could be charged to the butcher, so that a balance would be on hand at the end of each year, and this could be supplemented from the Consolidated Fund by the Government.

12. Oh! you would create a fund?—Yes.

13. I do not understand whether you said anything relating to clause 30 in the Bill. Does it meet your views?—Well, it gives a deal of trouble, but there can be no good objection to it. It would be much more easily done at an abattoir than in one's own place, because we are not likely to have such a large amount of stock on hand if we slaughter at an abattoir. We have our own paddocks now, and we may buy, say, a couple of hundred sheep and they are not all slaughtered out, and the following week we get another couple of hundred, and they would be mixed up. But in an abattoir the amount of stock kept would be simply from hand to mouth.

14. You consider the question of inspection could be better carried out under an abattoir system than with a butcher slaughtering on his own premises?—I think so.

15. *Mr. Brown.*] I think you represent about seventy butchers?—Seventy-four.

16. Do they kill at private slaughterhouses?—All at private houses.

17. Do they all kill for themselves?—No; we have some butchers who kill for six or eight. I myself kill for several.

18. Could one Inspector do the inspection?—It would require at least two extra. That is what I suggest if the Bill is not passed—that additional inspection should be provided to satisfy the public taste at present.

19. Leaving the public out of the question, which do you prefer—to have all the cattle slaughtered at one abattoir, or at private slaughterhouses as at present?—They are in favour of an abattoir in preference to the present system, in regard to the competition we have at present.

20. *Mr. Massey.*] Did I understand you to say you were in favour of the Bill as a whole?—With the objections that I have stated.

21. If they were removed you would support the Bill?—Yes; I may say the City Council would support the Bill.

22. *Hon. Mr. L. Walker.*] With regard to clause 30, do you think all these precautions are necessary. All these four subclauses would give a great deal of trouble, would they not?—They have always been that; and they have never been carried out, to my knowledge.

23. They are vexatious, are they not?—Yes; and they are prying into one's business too much.

24. *Mr. Symes.*] I do not know if any one has asked what the effect of subclause (3), clause 32, would be?—Well, during hot weather that might lead to trouble. I may state that in Christchurch there is likely to be a freezing-chamber connected with the abattoir, and that would meet the difficulty.

25. *Mr. Buchanan.*] How many butchers kill for themselves round about Christchurch—or rather, the number of private slaughterhouses?—I cannot say.

26. About subclause (3) of clause 32. You have no doubt in your mind, roughly, the distance an Inspector would have to cover to meet the butchers needs in hot weather? Do you imagine, consistently with that clause, that two Inspectors could do the work?—Three Inspectors, with the one we have. That is, if they had the districts fixed.

27. Supposing Belfast declared an abattoir, with exactly the same advantages as you imagine would govern a public abattoir—that is, a butcher perfectly free to do his own work, and anything he liked with his offal, everything for his own benefit. Supposing Belfast under those conditions, what, then, would be the objection to the delegated powers; or would you have any objection?—We have very strong objections to do anything whatever with any meat-export companies at their works. To begin with, the distance is too far from Christchurch.