

30. Do you think it would be possible to erect a central abattoir in these country districts where the small butchers could manage to get their stock killed?—Yes, I think they could have them central.

31. Do you think it would work well with the smaller classes of butchers in country districts to have their meat killed in one central spot?—I do not see why it should not, if they had proper paddocks.

32. Do you think driving their small stock backwards and forwards would increase the cost?—Well, it would all depend upon whether there were paddocks or not. I have seen companies' sheep in a paddock, with nothing to eat for three days. Sometimes these paddocks, where I have seen these sheep, are like a ploughed field. That sort of thing would not permit of the meat killed being nice and bright. It would not come out well.

33. *Mr. Lang.*] I understand you object to subclause (2) of clause 3. If this is struck out one farmer cannot sell to another?—I am talking about back-country sections, where they say they could not get meat from a butcher. There could be a clause put in to meet these cases, but I do not object to any farmer killing twenty sheep a week, so long as he does not sell them in the district. It would be very unfair to allow a farmer to kill stock and sell to the public without stringent inspection, similar to that which we would have to undergo in the towns. They could then kill a diseased beast and bring it into the market, and no one would be any the wiser.

34. I understand you to say a clause could be inserted?—Well, some exception could be made to meet these back-country cases.

35. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You say that the meat companies have no facilities for bringing the meat out nice and bright. You kill for yourself, do you not?—Yes.

36. Do you buy from the meat companies any carcasses when it suits you?—I have bought a few legs of mutton occasionally. I do not think I have bought any beef from the companies, but if so it has been very little.

37. Any tails?—Well, yes, a few tails, and kidneys and tongues.

38. When prime parts are required, do you fall back upon the meat companies?—I generally have enough of my own, so far as prime meat goes.

39. So that the meat killed by the companies is not bad enough to take part in your business?—No.

40. It has been stated in evidence that there was only one butcher who had previously killed for himself in the Wellington District had dropped killing for himself and had taken to carcass-butchering—that is, buying his meat by the carcass from the companies. Do you agree with that?—In what way?

41. *The Chairman.*] He means are there many small butchers who have dropped killing and now buy for themselves?—I think there are two that I know of.

42. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You know all these butchers [names enumerated]?—Yes.

43. Is it true that these butchers were killing for themselves and are now buying by the carcass?—Some of them, but not all of them.

44. It has been stated that these butchers who buy by the carcass are only little people who have scarcely any shop at all. Do you agree with that?—No; it is a free country, and every one should have a right to live.

45. Is it not true that some of these carcass butchers are now in a first-class position?—Yes, some of them.

46. Would you be surprised to find that some of these butchers were the only ones who went Home to the Jubilee?—I am not surprised at that; but one man before he went Home was killing his own stuff.

47. Did not [names enumerated] go Home?—Yes.

48. Did not they buy carcasses?—Yes.

49. How many butchers carry on their business by buying carcasses?—I cannot answer that question. I have not counted them.

50. Would you be surprised to find that there are twenty-one of them? Can you give the Committee any reason why these twenty-one butchers have not taken to killing for themselves if they found they were unable to buy meat sufficiently good to compete with butchers who killed for themselves?—Well, it amounts to this: When they go to the country for stock they have to put their cheque down. But some of the farmers go so far as to telegraph to the bank to see if the cheque is all right before they let the stock out of the paddocks. Therefore, for the small butcher, it pays him better to buy dead meat instead of going to extra expense in the erection of slaughterhouses.

51. Do the butchers who buy from the meat companies get long credit?—I do not know.

52. Would it surprise you to know that their credit is very short indeed?—No.

53. Would it surprise you to know that they do not need it?—Well, I think some of them do need it. It has not been all honey in their business.

54. What do you do with your offal?—I give it away.

55. And you are unable to get anything out of it?—No.

56. What do the freezing companies do with it?—They make manure with it.

57. Can they, therefore, sell at a much cheaper rate, or give the producer more for the stock?—I cannot see that at all. It is a great expense making manure; but, of course, every branch should pay its way and show a profit.

58. Are you sure that every branch does not pay its way and show a profit?—I cannot say. I do not know.

59. If the meat companies are able to make a lot of money out of by-products, would they not be able to correspondingly pay more for the stock, or sell at a lower rate to consumer?—No.

60. Will you explain why?—Well, the company does a much larger trade, no doubt; but there have to be in each company some five or six managers, a lot of buyers and directors—with their