

especially in summer, when a butcher might require meat killed, and upon getting it in from his paddock would be unable to find the Inspector, perhaps, to get the necessary permit. Now, regarding clause 26, I am in favour of this clause as it stands. To excise the clause would be ridiculous, if it were not so serious in its effects. It would be ridiculous for the Government to stultify itself by saying that meat good enough for export was not good enough for local consumption. At present it is very much to the public benefit. Wellington, as a large centre and the seat of Government, is a wealthy place with a large passenger traffic, and there is a great demand in it for prime meat, a demand, I might say, greatly in excess of what the ordinary trade can supply. In addition to that, there are those small things which are really the luxuries of the trade—that is, such as tongues, tails, and kidneys—to the use of which the people of Wellington have been accustomed to in unlimited quantities. To cut these off by not allowing them to be sold locally would be a very great hardship. If there was any fear of a monopoly in consequence of this clause remaining in, the way to meet that would be not by restriction, but by leaving the clause as it is, and by allowing the works of other districts to send their stuff into Wellington. Whereas if the clause were excised altogether they would be forbidden to do so as well as the local companies. In connection with the export trade, the meat-preserving trade is an adjunct of the freezing business, and my opinion is that it will assume much larger proportions than at present. The essential feature of that business is that it shall have a ready sale for the primer parts of the meat. Preserving as a business is not possible unless you can sell the prime meats at the highest rates obtainable. I have been in business for some forty years. More than twenty years ago I wrote to Chicago to a friend who got into touch with the meat business there, and the reply I got was that he did not see how preserving could pay in New Zealand, because we had here no large cities to take the surplus stuff. In Chicago they first of all supply the local market, and the residue goes to the large cities on the east coast, such as Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Baltimore, &c.—in fact, to all those places where there was an unlimited demand and where good prices were obtainable. Unless that condition of things existed here meat-preserving could not pay. In connection with the preserving there was, so the reply went on to say, also a salting business, where the briskets and similar parts were salted down for the navies of the world. The very best qualities went to the British navy, and to the Government navies generally. If the clause were excised even the very bushmen, who depend upon tinned stuff, would be unable to get it; and the gum-diggers of the North, who generally use it, would be in the same position; while, to crown all, at Christmas time the ordinary citizen could not buy a tin of preserved tongues to take with him to a picnic. So I think I have proved that the excision of the clause would be absurd. Another thing I should like to point out is, that with the pressure that is put on a tradesman to get those luxuries, such as tongues and tails, no one, in my opinion, could resist the temptation to smuggle these contraband goods in order to gratify a perfectly legitimate demand.

*Mr. Buchanan* : That is a new way of looking at it.

*Witness* : To show that the thing has a universal application, when the Central line is put through the various companies on the coast will only be too glad to serve Auckland with prime meats in the same way as Wellington is supplied. There are two or three companies there, one of which is essentially a preserving company. It would add very much to such an establishment if they could take advantage of the Central route and supply Auckland. Interference with the clause would tend to raise the price of meat locally, and for this reason: No ordinary butcher's business can supply all the prime meats he wants. He would have to kill extra cattle, and to make it pay him he would have to charge more for that meat, because he could not get rid of the inferior parts. No matter how times may be, there is always a great demand for prime meats, and the trade difficulty is "clearing your shop of the rough meat." I do not think I have anything further to add.

80. *Hon. the Chairman*.] Touching upon that point in connection with the sale of inferior joints, is there a great deal of that class of meat sold—I mean at 2½d. and 3d. per pound?—Yes, a great deal of it. It has become the custom to ticket it up lately, and it is "catching on." Of course, it is meat really of the best quality, and deserves a better price than it is sold at, being without bone. It is getting near the shoulder.

81. What amount of inspection do you get?—I do not know of any other inspection except that the County Council have a man whom they send round at intervals. I believe the Inspector of Nuisances can come into your shop, and if he sees anything wrong condemn it, and take action accordingly.

82. Practically there is no proper inspection?—No, none.

83. Is there any inspection of the live animals?—I do not know of it in the Wellington market. Of course, the Government Stock Inspectors are about the country.

84. Practically, then, the inspection is very meagre?—Yes, that is so.

85. Upon the question of compensation, will it be a large question to compensate those in the trade who have erected buildings?—There are a lot of people who are no doubt entitled to compensation; but if the public want inspection they should pay for it. My own opinion of the thing is that if a person has a suitable place, and can comply with the sanitary arrangements of the Bill, I do not see why he should not be allowed to retain it. If a man has his paddocks alongside his yard, for instance, he has very great advantages.

86. With reference to the question of compensation for loss by diseased meat condemned, is there much loss of meat in this way?—My impression is that 1 per cent. would cover it all. Stock in this country are much healthier than in the Old Country.

87. Does that apply both to cattle and sheep?—To both.

88. Do you think it would be at all reasonable that that should be charged to the grower more than to the butcher?—My own opinion is that where it can be traced the farmer should be held responsible. Where it cannot be traced the municipal authorities should have a fund to compensate the butcher.