

MEAT PLANTS HERE CONDEMNED BY NEILL

Report Asked for in Congress May Include New York.

VERMIN IN SAUSAGE WORKS

Calves of Slaughtered Cows Used— President's Commission Spent Three Days in Local Inspection.

Maywood, Ill., May 29.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

My testimony before the Stock Yards Commission was principally on the condition of the workers. I know of two persons killed by falling into a rendering vat. The workmen in the pickling rooms had their arms covered with sores caused by the mixture used for preserving meat.

A large oversupply of labor is kept constantly on hand, compelling all to work on short time at starvation wages. No ventilation and inadequate toilet facilities are supplied for workmen.

Animals injured or dying in transit are killed at night in order to avoid inspection, many of the houses running their killing floors a part of every night for this purpose.

A. M. SIMONS.

If the resolutions presented in the House of Representatives yesterday are passed and President Roosevelt responds by making public his Special Commissioners' reports on the Chicago stockyard horrors, New York may be officially illuminated as to the meat plant conditions here, for Messrs. Neill and Reynolds, after their Packingtown inquiry, and found the butchers of the metropolis, and found a similar state of affairs, but on a smaller scale.

Upton Sinclair told of the New York trip yesterday afternoon. Until he did so nobody in the city, outside of the packing house officials, knew that the Commissioners had even been her. Mr. Sinclair was asked if they would incorporate the result of their investigations here in the report to be made by them. He replied that he was uninformed on the subject.

"Conditions in New York," he said, "are similar to those in Chicago and all other cities where there are trust packing houses, except in the case of the new plant here, where the air and light supply is better. When I tried to introduce evidence before the commission regarding the situation in the Kansas City establishments, however, I was informed that the inquiry had nothing to do with cities outside of Chicago. Judging from this it would seem probable that the New York situation would not figure in the report except possibly as a basis of comparison."

A reporter for THE NEW YORK TIMES was informed yesterday that in at least one east side establishment the young of slaughtered cows were made into food.

One workman, a sausage maker, held up his hands in horror when he was asked whether he ever ate any of the sausages made by himself and his fellow-workers.

"Eat them!" he exclaimed. "No, indeed! we don't eat them. We go out and get a couple of eggs and toast for our lunch. Maybe we will eat tongue, but never the sausages."

The two Commissioners spent three days in New York. It is understood that they gave a good deal of their attention to sausages. If they saw half what was described yesterday it is safe to say that there is a good deal of uneasiness in the ranks of the sausage makers now.

Charges of Graft.

Local graft is at the bottom of the whole condition, according to the representative of the Bologna Makers' Union. Whenever an inspection is demanded by any one, he says, a good day's notice is given to the suspected establishment, and when the Inspector arrives there has been a hurried renovation. And the place gets a clean bill.

As regards the beef proper, the great bulk of it consumed by New York comes already killed from the West. There are thousands of cattle killed here every week, though. They are almost entirely for the kosher trade. If any of the beeves happen to remain six days uneaten, they are then unavailable for the Jews, and are disposed of to Christians.

The rendering of fat into lard and oils is the part of the New York beef packing industry that reeks. Fat is shipped, by the hundreds of tons, from out-of-town butchers to New York. Boats laden with it land at piers on the East River. When it is unloaded upon the piers this fat is often decayed. Frequently, according to an observer, it is infested with so many worms that they can be seen ten yards away.

G. A. Christian, Secretary and business agent of the Bologna Sausage Makers' Union, told yesterday what he knew of the state of the bologna sausage industry in New York.

"I have come to the conclusion that it's no use to try for better conditions," said Mr. Christian yesterday afternoon. "I know absolutely that these abuses, these revolting conditions, exist, but I can't prove it to the public. Why? Because of the ridiculous character of the so-called 'inspections.'"

"On one occasion I noticed the authorities of a specific instance of bad sanitation—rather, no sanitation. 'Oh, we'll have to look out for that,' said the man I talked to at the Health Department. As soon as I got out of the building the telephone began to ring, and the place to be inspected was notified. Say that this happens at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Between then and morning there is hard work at the sausage factory, and evidence of the worst conditions is removed from view.

While Mr. Christian was describing the making of Bologna sausages, a man now employed in a factory came near and listened. It was he who broke in with an exclamation of astonishment when the reporter asked if the men ate the sausages.

"At one place on the east side where they make Kosher sausages," continued

Mr. Christian, "I discovered that there was no sewer outlet at all. There were sinks in the basement floor into which the waste was poured. When the sinks were full the stuff was bailed out into the yard. The case was reported to the Committee on the Prevention of Tuberculosis of the Charity Organization Society. They sent an inspector down there, but the boss found out he was coming and managed to make the place look fairly respectable.

"They mailed me the copy of the Inspector's report. He told all about how one wall was so many feet high, and so many feet from another wall, and gave a lot of figures, and ended by saying that there was nothing the matter. Now I knew perfectly well that the place was a disgrace, but what could I do?

"Now, if you could just go up to the Health Department and say: 'I want an Inspector to go with me,' and if he went straight with you and told everybody to get out of the bologna sausage plant, and if he put a seal on the door and let nothing be interfered with, then you'd find a state of affairs that would disgust you beyond measure. That is, if you did this on some ordinary day. Right now, of course, with all this talk of unclean meat, the bosses are mighty particular about their places.

"This red coloring on the sausages you see is a dye. In Germany, where I worked, the Government does not allow any chemicals to be put into the cans with the sausages. Haven't you seen these imported German sausages? They have a grayish color, a natural color.

Free Lunch Sausages.

"Over in Eleventh Avenue is a place where they make sausages for the saloon counters and for the Coney Island trade. They tell me that is the rottenest place of them all. Offal and unused scraps from the hotels are used as material for sausages.

"A big beef packer sells a lot of meat, say 300 pounds, to a hotel every day. He bargains with the hotel for the return of all that is left over. In that way the hotel gets its meat cheap, and the beef packer gets food for his sausage grinders. It is very economical.

"They put a great amount of back fat into the sausages. You can see that for yourself any day. Haven't you noticed, when sausage is brought to your table, how a large part of it has melted into grease and how small it is. That is the back fat which melts. They cut up this fat and mix it with the beef scraps—when the price of lard is low. If lard is high the fat can be better used in lard making, and then the sausage gets something still worse.

The handling of the meats from which sausages are made in New York is done early in the morning, in most cases between 4 and 9 o'clock. The rest of the day is taken up with chopping up the meat, and putting it into the form in which it is seen by the consumer. It is only early in the morning, therefore, that an Inspector can tell whether or not there is anything wrong with the material.

Mr. Christian's companion told yesterday of how the rats flourish in the place where he works. In the night the rats take possession of the meat and defile it. When the men come in the morning they do not wash the meat, only giving it a hasty shake before chopping it up for sausage.

An ex-butcher, who has worked in most of the New York slaughter houses, said yesterday that the "straight" meat business was all right in New York, and that the abuses occurred in the side industries.

It was agreed by several butchers that the rabbis, present in the slaughtering houses prevent a great deal of uncleanness. There are at least three rabbis in every one of the big houses, and they are careful to mark cattle that are not fit. The equivalent of "unclean" is written in large letters with an indelible pencil on the carcass of a beef that is old. That means that the beef will not be eaten by Jews.

USE OF FEDERAL INSPECTION.

Sinclair Tells How It Aids Packers—Need of State Laws.

Upton Sinclair up to last night had had no reply to the letter or the telegram sent by him to President Roosevelt regarding the disposition of the Neill-Reynolds report. It was possible, he said, that the reply had been mailed to him at Princeton.

"It is announced in this morning's papers," said Mr. Sinclair, "that Representative Crumpacker declares that there is hardly a single affirmative requirement of the Beveridge measure which would stand enforcement in the courts. It is also stated that Mr. Crumpacker has been commissioned by Speaker Cannon to consider how a substitute of the Beveridge bill can be framed which would be legal.

"Mr. Crumpacker's task is an impossible one, for the reason that the whole inspection system upon which the Beveridge bill is founded has been thrown out of the court. It has been declared in several decisions, which have never been reversed, that the Federal Government is powerless to establish an inspection of slaughter houses. The public should understand clearly this crucial fact about the Beveridge bill.

"The first of these decisions was made nine years ago, yet the Inspectors have continued to remain in the slaughter houses and continued to destroy cattle. Can any one point to another such anomaly as this, in our whole system of law? What clearer evidence could be wanted of the real attitude of the packers toward the whole inspection service? The packers need the guarantee of the Government inspection stamp to enable them to preserve their export business of \$400,000,000 a year in meat products. For this reason they submit themselves voluntarily to a pretense at Government regulations, but they know that they can violate this law with impunity, and that they can depend upon legal decisions to set them free whenever they are caught bribing Federal Inspectors.

"Is the public prepared to accept a bill which can be enforced only so much as the packers see fit to allow it to be enforced, and to accept this as a sop to keep them in complete ignorance of the crimes which for thirty years have been perpetrated upon them? The packers have their plans all made to get out of their scrapes on these terms, and they are already proceeding as if they had succeeded.

"After this bill has been forced through, the public is to be told that it has now a meat inspection such as President Roosevelt himself wanted. The whole of the present agitation is to be worked over to the packers' advantage.

"The Beveridge bill will compel the packers to shunt the bad meat off into the places where there are no Federal Inspectors. In other words, all diseased meat will now be eaten in the State where it is killed, and the public will be fooled as before. All these facts are contained in the Neill report. The public will have them; the public should know in detail and officially exactly what dangers it is to protect itself against all that the withdrawal of the Neill report at this hour can do would be to force the public to get the story from other and unofficial sources."

Mr. Sinclair mailed the following letter last evening to the Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture:

"New York City, May 29, 1906.

"The Hon. James W. Wadsworth, Chairman House Committee on Agriculture, Washington, D. C.:

"My Dear Sir: I learn from the newspapers that you have declared yourself as irreconcilably hostile to the Beveridge bill, and determined to prevent its passage; that you have declared that the subject shall receive a thorough thrashing out by your committee, and that the packers shall have a hearing; that you yourself are a practical stockman and a dealer, and have made a careful investigation in the Chicago stockyards and found conditions to be just what they should be, and that accordingly you intend to stop the precipitate course of the bill and have justice done to all.

"This seems to me an admirable view to take, and I write to express my cordial agreement with it. At a time when we are told that a statesman seldom acts upon his convictions, or allows himself to be influenced by ulterior motives, your course will stand out conspicuously.

"This whole subject is one of so many complications, involving such tremendous issues, and being of such supreme importance to the public welfare, that it deserves and should receive the most elaborate and painstaking consideration. We have recently heard the Senate praised for its caution and deliberation in the matter of the Rate bill—how can one reconcile with this its passage of so startling a piece of legislation as the Beveridge bill, absolutely without debate, and with the majority of the members in complete ignorance of what they were

doing? It seems to me that now is the opportunity for the House to redeem itself in the eyes of the people, and to do for the country a real and lasting service.

"The theory of our Government is democratic; our people are not supposed to have their laws handed down to them by a superior power; it is deemed right that they themselves should know the circumstances, should have their wishes consulted, and should have the ultimate decision concerning legislation. From this principle it seems to me we have completely departed in the present instance. Let the unwisdom procedure immediately cease, and let a real, democratic, and American course be adopted; let the House give hearings upon the question, and let all parties concerned give a full, free, and open statement of their point of view. Let the proposed law be scrutinized in every detail, let its constitutionality be discussed, let the possible efficiency or inefficiency be carefully considered. Let those who advocate the bill state specifically and in detail the evidence which they have in its favor, and let those who denounce it be given an equal opportunity. * * *

"You ask in an interview quoted tonight: 'Whoever heard of anybody dying from eating bad meat?' At their committee hearing which I request I assure you that I shall take pleasure in attending you and giving you an abundance of evidence upon this point. I have heard of numerous cases, and I desire the public to hear of them. I nearly lost one member of my family from ptomaine poisoning out of one of Armour's cans. While I was in Chicago watching the process of sausage-making I clipped a newspaper dispatch telling how a policeman in Milwaukee had died of ptomaine poisoning after eating bologna. A couple of months ago a newspaper in Los Angeles, Cal., reported that all of the inmates of an orphan asylum in Vallejo were at the point of death, a single can of Swift & Co.'s 'lard' fake being responsible. Only last Wednesday a New York paper had a dispatch telling that four people were dying at Millville, N. J., as a result of eating the 'boiled ham of commerce'—which you understand, of course, is ham cut from hogs infected with trichinae and found unfit to be eaten by the people of Europe. As I understand that you are a busy man, I will close with these few examples, and trust to have the pleasure of meeting you in Washington. Very sincerely yours, "UPTON SINCLAIR."

Mr. Sinclair yesterday received a telegram signed "Thomas Lawson, Raker," which said in part:

Rest easy about suppressing of hell pictures contained in Beef Trust report. The President of the United States is as close to his job as a cowboy to his broncho—the more it bucks the more he likes it and the tighter he sits. Theodore Roosevelt, the plain American, President of the Amalgamated Muck Rakers' Union of America, is onto his job, too.

A letter received by Mr. Sinclair yesterday was from the Rev. Artemas G. Haines, formerly pastor of the Armour Church, in Chicago, who said:

"I have been in many ways closer to the sheer devilry of the thing than even yourself, and I can bear testimony to the truth of your portrayal."