

The Meat Inspection Service

Everyone wants to be sure that the meat he buys in a shop is good food, not contaminated by any infection that will cause sickness to the person who eats it.

For this reason, the *Slaughtering Ordinance* 1964 lays down strict laws covering the slaughtering and handling of meat. These laws apply to all meat that is to be sold. Meat that is slaughtered under conditions which do not

conform to the Ordinance must be given away, not sold. Slaughterhouses are licensed by D.A.S.F. and are supervised by qualified meat inspectors who ensure that all meat leaving the premises is of acceptable quality.

The meat inspector's job starts with an examination of the animal before slaughter. Various troubles can arise while the cattle are being transported to the abattoir. If they are walked a long distance, there will be a considerable loss of weight. Even if they are taken by truck, there will be some loss of weight if the journey lasts several hours. There is always the chance of injury in transit, the main one being bruising. Pigs are especially subject to suffocation and there can be diseases induced by the journey (transit tetany, lobar pneumonia). So the inspector examines the animals before they are killed and animals showing any signs of disease or serious injury are removed immediately. After slaughter, the inspector looks for evidence of bruising or swelling, the state of nutrition of the animal, and the efficiency of bleeding. An examination of the carcass will reveal evidence of disease that was not detectable in the live animal. The head, visceral and body lymph nodes undergo marked changes in size, substance and colour if diseased.

The meat is handled and dressed under strictly controlled hygienic conditions, to guard against contamination by bacteria or insects at this stage. If the carcass is acceptable, it receives the official approval stamp, the number on the stamp indicating the slaughtering establishment. After leaving the slaughterhouse, the meat comes under the official control of the Public Health Department which ensures that it is transported and sold under conditions satisfactory to the community.



Plate I.—Stamping of beef at the Tiaba Abattoir near Port Moresby