

I will not now occupy more of your time on this point, but if you desire to follow it up I will gladly accompany you; meantime I refer you to Sections 69 to 78, pp. xx to xxii of my report laid before Parliament last Session, of which I enclose a copy.

A few words as to the counterpoise of large scales may be necessary to meet the allegations of the *Spectator* on that point. This counterpoise has usually been so arranged that its weight could be increased or diminished by the abstraction or addition of shot, as the conscience of the weighmaster might suggest. The necessity for such a state of things, even as a convenience, cannot be made out, and it is certainly most dangerous to the public. Its existence is the true explanation of most cases of short weight in coal and of over weight in grain. By this so-called *convenience* grain buyers have not hesitated to compensate themselves for possible losses by wasteful and slovenly handling of grain.

The counterpoise is as much a *weight* as any appliance for weighing can possibly be, and there is no more reason for permitting its value as such to be changed at the will of the weigher, in order to compensate the accumulation of snow, ice or dirt on the platform than there is for permitting a grocer to change the value of a ten or five pound weight, in order to escape the trouble of cleaning his scales. And I would here emphasise the fact that any error in the counterpoise is magnified in the ratio which the weight poise bears to the load weighed. If the balance ball as now admitted is not enough for effecting the adjustment the remedy is to take the *tare* of the excess or deficiency which will then become a part of the weighing, and will thus challenge the attention of both parties to the transaction. Such cases will however be very rare, and will occur only in the use of very clumsily constructed scales.

I have sometimes been surprised that there is not the same degree of anxiety to protect the buyers of goods sold by weight or measure, as there is to champion the manufacturer of and dealers in scales, &c. This absence of all care for the interests of purchasers presents itself with special force in connection with the Grove Trip Scale, which is next referred to by the *Spectator*. These scales while saving the grocer a very little trouble in taking care of his small weights, make it difficult, practically impossible, for the customer to check the weighing. He cannot see whether he is receiving full or short weight, because the side beam for weighing fractions of a pound is necessarily towards the weigher, who as a rule is the seller. The seller may always be honest, but since the custom of trade puts in his hands the determination of the quantities delivered and there-