

further the deliberations of the Conference in every way possible, and to bring any resolutions you might pass before the Cabinet.

Mr. Mills then retired. He subsequently forwarded to the Chairman for the use of the Conference copy of the proposed Federal tariff and copies of parliamentary papers A.-4 (Report of the Royal Commission on Federation, together with Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence and Appendices) and H.-29, Trade with Australia (tables connected with trade as affected by the tariff now in force and the proposed Federal tariff).

*The Chairman*: It is quite plain that this Federal tariff is an attempt on the part of the Commonwealth to employ its own labour in dealing with our raw material rather than have an added value of labour put on in New Zealand. Naturally, we do not like an arrangement of that kind. Naturally, we resist it; but I think it is very important to remember that, so far as was gathered by the Royal Commission on Federation, one of the deepest sentiments of the people of New Zealand at the present time is that New Zealand shall grow up, not as a State of the Commonwealth, but an independent nation. Of course, some change of sentiment may arise in the future; but, personally, I think New Zealand is wealthy enough to become an independent and powerful nation. That being the case, we see how very important it is, if we are to live as a separate nation alongside the Commonwealth, that we should cultivate a spirit of friendliness in all our dealings with them, just as, I have no doubt, they would be desirous of avoiding all unnecessary cause of annoyance to New Zealand. Bearing that in mind, I think we shall see how important it is that we approach a subject of this kind in a conciliatory spirit.

*Mr. Price*: I would suggest that we take 12 by 6 as the first item for discussion, to see whether there is anything to be done with it. I suggest we should put a duty of 1s. on that, so as to counterbalance the other sizes. I am very much in favour of letting the other sizes remain as at present; but I think we should put a duty on the balk sizes, so as to prevent them getting in all these sizes and excluding all other smaller sizes, which would prevent the timber being cut up to advantage.

*Mr. Bartholomew*: I should be very much against putting any duty on sawn timber—that is, 12 by 6 and upwards. There are not a great many white-pine millers in the colony. I do not see why they cannot charge the same price as they are charging at the present time. Let them have 12 by 6 or anything they like, it will not affect our labour; we must get rid of our small stuff. If we cannot get rid of that, then, of course, there will have to be a price equivalent got for the 12 in. and 14 in. stuff so that you can burn your off-cuts. Now, if you put too high a price on pines, the chances are that there will be some other commodity got. For instance, if a mill started to cut white-pine in Sydney or Melbourne, I do not think they would cut for less than 3s. per 100 ft. To my knowledge it has not been done for anything less. If you put an export duty on white-pine here it will run it up to a very high price, and the chances are that you will let the American timber come in. We know there are very large forests of pine in Puget Sound that are practically useless. That can be landed in Australia at a very cheap price. There is nothing to stop them doing it if you make the price of white-pine prohibitive. Another thing, I say the price that kauri has gone up to of late has given a great impetus to New Zealand white-pine in Australia. There are hundreds of thousands of feet of it used now simply on account of its cheapness, the price of kauri having risen so much. Now, if you put an export duty on that, it is throwing everything into the hands of the Americans in the way of introducing their timbers, and I would be very much against putting any export duty on it. With regard to the log timber, of course I do not know what to say about that exactly. I know ten or fifteen years ago there was a good deal of balk timber sent over to Australia from here, but that trade seems to have disappeared altogether now. Everything like that goes from Auckland now. A few years ago there was a line of vessels trading there in that line, but that seems to have died away. Personally, I am against putting on an export duty.

*Mr. Price*: It appears to me that unless the Commonwealth is prepared to accept our timber in the balk, as well as the small stuff, we cannot deal with them, because you cannot possibly get more than one-half of the log into 12 by 6. The other is either going to waste, or we have got to use it in New Zealand, and there is certainly not a consumption in New Zealand for all these off-cuts. For that reason I certainly think you should put a duty on the flitches of 1s. per 100 superficial feet.

*Mr. Goldie*: I will move, "That this meeting, very largely representing the timber industry in New Zealand, would urge upon the Government the necessity, in the interests of the workers of this country, of placing an export duty on all logs, either in the round or squared with an axe or saw, of such an amount as will prevent the export of such timber from our shores." I think that will meet all our opinions with regard to this matter just now. We know we cannot produce the timber at what they can in America. We are paying 7s. for logs, and they (the Americans) are producing and selling the sawn timber at 6s. 9d. in Sydney. What we want to do is to find work for our labour in New Zealand. I think about fifteen years will see the end of the kauri, so far as we are concerned in the North, and five years will see the end of the white-pine in the Taranaki District, between that and Wellington, so that the forests are getting very limited, and you cannot reproduce the timber. A kauri tree takes from five hundred to three thousand years to mature, so that it would be a mistake to throw our timber away as we are proposing to do. A member of the Conference said we are not sending many of these logs away now. Well, I have seen the report of an interview with a gentleman named McKenzie, in the public Press, who is very strongly opposed to this export duty on logs; but he forgot to tell the public that he himself had bought 2,000,000 ft. of logs in Auckland, and had a mill over in Sydney, and that he was down here for the purpose of buying them. If a duty is not put upon these logs, the Kauri Company have a very large mill in Sydney, and it would be a very easy matter for them to transport their logs and cut them there, and others would follow suit, to the detriment of labour in New Zealand.

*Mr. Jagger*: I will second Mr. Goldie's motion.