

At 2.30 p.m. the Conference resumed.

*The Chairman.*—We now come to the 3rd clause of the report of the committee, and I formally move the adoption of that clause, reading as follows: "Regarding remit No. 1, That frozen meat should be consigned and sold, as far as possible, through an organization of producers, or a Farmers' Co-operative Distributing Association, in order to bring the producer and the consumer into closer touch, and that a company should be formed for that purpose if necessary, the committee considers that the time is inopportune, seeing that there are several other co-operative companies in existence, and considers the present facilities sufficient for disposing of frozen meat."

*Mr. Albert Kaye (Christchurch).*—I have much pleasure in seconding the adoption of that clause. This Conference has brought before us many matters that we have not thought over before, and I think this question of distribution at Home is very largely misunderstood by many of our farming friends. I hold in my hand a specimen day's delivery to country buyers; it is a detailed account of one day's operations of a company in London as regards their country orders, and on this particular day they received 757 orders, and distributed in England and Wales 2,103 sheep, 2,761 lambs, 358 hinds of beef, 463 fores, besides 2,389 pieces mutton and 2,185 pieces beef. I want you to realize this—our farming friends particularly: that if this can be done by one firm, what a very large amount of attention is really paid to these deliveries into the country districts. I do not think they realize the immense amount of trouble taken at the present time to exploit these country towns. In all the principal towns most of the big operators in London are represented; and if this large amount of orders, or anything approaching it, can be filled by one company, you can imagine how the meat is being well distributed right throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain. It ought to be recognized now that there are a great many men who have gone from this end of the world who are thoroughly acquainted with the meat trade from the beginning of it to the end, and we surely ought to believe that amongst the large number who have gone there are a fair number who are honest men, and that the interests of New Zealand producers can be freely intrusted to their care; and I think that this resolution that the committee have come to is the right and proper one at the present juncture. We have not only men there on account of the large companies who have such a splendid reputation, but we have also farmers' co-operative companies who have their own representatives there, and they, at any rate, whatever they have failed in, we may suppose do their best for the farmers. I have much pleasure in seconding this resolution of the committee.

*Mr. W. G. Lysnar.*—I shall at this juncture propose the adoption of the minority report, and in doing so I think it is necessary for the Conference to appreciate the distinction between the parties here assembled to-day. I think that is the first point, and I think that a good deal of misconception has arisen at this Conference in the attitude that the freezing-works representatives have adopted, and the mercantile community, in assuming that the producers have a grievance against them. I do not intend to make any complaints or cause a war against them. We have no complaint against the freezing companies from the producers, as far as I know, and I speak as a member of a freezing company. There is no complaint against the freezing companies. But there are four classes of people interested—the freezing companies, the shipping companies, the seller or speculator, and, last but not least, the farmer. The interest of each is entirely different.

*A Voice.*—No.

*Mr. Lysnar.*—Somebody says "No." That will be a representative of the meat trade, not a farmer.

*Mr. Roberts.*—Hear, hear.

*Mr. Lysnar.*—At any rate, I can show where there is a great difference, I think. Then the second point of misconception is this: There is an idea going through the gathering that it is at this end the complaint is. It is the other end entirely that we wish to regulate. We have merely gathered here to invite and ask the aid of the freezing companies and other mercantile people interested, to extend their influence to the producers, who are not so well acquainted with the ins and outs of the trade. I ask you to show where the representatives of the freezing companies or the mercantile community have made any suggestions for reforms. They have stood up and objected to anything suggested, but they have not proposed anything in its place. They may have some suggestions to make presently, but up to this time no real aid has been offered by the mercantile people to the producers. The committee in this report practically tells us that everything is satisfactory. Now, I venture to say that is not the opinion of the farmers from one end of this Dominion to the other.

*Mr. Roberts.*—Hear, hear.

*Mr. Lysnar.*—They feel things are not satisfactory, and it is no use this Conference dispersing saying that everything is right, when we know full well that everything is far from right. If we take the discussion that has arisen over the damaged meat, and over the necessity of pooling, it must be at once admitted that something is necessary to be done; and I regret that while the Minister of Agriculture was speaking, a remark I had made and some figures I had quoted were challenged. To show you that my remarks in that respect were justified and should not have been challenged by Sir George Clifford, I have been handed a bundle of bills of lading since I came to Canterbury, and they support my case still more strongly. I have the figures here. They are all recent transactions, and I can quote the ships; and if anybody questions my statements, I have the permission of the person holding these bills of lading to show them to the Chairman. As far recent transactions, and I can quote the ships; and if anybody questions my statements, I have Canterbury Frozen Meat Company, 365 sheep shipped, 39 damaged, equals 11 per cent. My statement to this Conference was that from 10 to 13 per cent. was damaged in our district. I did not know then you were in the same position.

*A Voice.*—Who are the salesmen?

*Mr. Lysnar.*—I cannot tell that. But the Chairman is at liberty to inspect these documents.