

1920.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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# BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

(REPORT OF THE) FOR THE YEAR 1919-20.

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*Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.*

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## REPORT.

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The Hon. the Minister of Agriculture, Wellington.

SIR,—

1st June, 1920.

I beg to submit the following summary of the past year's work of the second Board of Agriculture, whose term of office expired on the 30th April.

We held several meetings during the year for the consideration of the matters that came before us from time to time, and had a conference with the Right Hon. the Prime Minister regarding the acquisition of Nauru Island in the Pacific.

We regret that, for health reasons, Mr. W. F. M. Buckley, of Christchurch, was obliged to tender his resignation as the representative on the Board of the agricultural and pastoral associations in the Canterbury District. The Board desires to place on record their thanks for the assistance rendered by Mr. Buckley in the work during two periods of office, and hopes that his complete restoration to health may speedily come about.

Mr. D. W. Westenra, of Dunsandel, was elected to fill the vacancy caused by Mr. Buckley's resignation.

### REGULATIONS RE TICKS AFFECTING CATTLE.

Draft regulations for controlling the spread of ticks affecting cattle, submitted by Dr. Reakes, were considered by us. After thoroughly discussing the provisions of the regulations it was agreed to endorse the principle set forth in them with the following amendments: To reduce the minimum fine from £20 to £10, and to add the following two clauses:—

- (1.) That any vehicle which has carried or is suspected of having carried infected stock must be thoroughly cleansed before being again used; and
- (2.) That no stock be shipped from the North Island to the South Island unless it has first been examined by an Inspector and declared by him to be free from tick-infestation.

### EXPORT OF STUD STOCK TO AMERICA.

The question of the export of stud stock from New Zealand to South America was brought up for our consideration. It was mentioned that owing to the cessation of a direct steamer service our market for this class of stock in South America was now practically non-existent, and that recently a stud-sheep buyer from Argentine came over to New Zealand only to find on reaching the Dominion that there was no steamer service between the countries. Inquiry from the principal shipping companies elicited the information that at present there did not appear to be any intention of sending steamers round Cape Horn instead of through the Panama Canal, but that if sufficient inducement in the way of freight offered the proposition might receive consideration later. As the Board are of opinion that a direct service to South America is a necessity to the Dominion, we would urge that steps be taken to have it reinstated as soon as possible.

### ACQUISITION OF NAURU ISLAND.

In response to the request of the Right Hon. the Prime Minister several members of the Board, together with Dr. Reakes, Director-General of Agriculture, and Mr. Aston, Agricultural Chemist,

met him in conference, when Mr. Massey explained to the meeting the position regarding the agreement which had been proposed between the British Government and the Governments of Australia and New Zealand for the administration of Nauru Island and for the distribution of phosphates therefrom. At a subsequent meeting of the Board the opportunity was taken to discuss with Mr. Ellis, manager of the Pacific Phosphate Company, the working of the phosphate-deposits at Nauru. With Mr. Ellis we went fully into this question, as well as the deposits on other phosphate islands in the Pacific, also the output, methods of working, shipping operations, &c. As the result of our inquiries and consideration of the subject we sent a letter to the Right Hon. the Prime Minister embodying the conclusions reached by us. This letter, together with the accompanying reports on phosphate islands and the need of a supply of phosphate for the Dominion's requirements, by Mr. Aston, Chemist to the Department of Agriculture, have been presented to Parliament and issued as a parliamentary paper—H.—29B.

#### PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH SCHOOL PUPILS' AGRICULTURAL COMPETITIONS.

Dr. Reakes brought before us a proposal of the Otago Expansion League to establish school pupils' agricultural competitions, with a request that the Government subsidize the project and generally assist in the movement. The matter was fully discussed, and the opinion was expressed that the conduct of the competitions could be more effectively and economically managed by the agricultural and pastoral associations' activities than by the Expansion League, and the following resolution was therefore passed and forwarded on to you:—

"That the Board of Agriculture think boy competitions, as is suggested by the Otago Expansion League, should be encouraged, but think that the agricultural and pastoral associations, which already have been doing this work, should be the medium by which they are carried out. If arrangements for this can be made with any agricultural and pastoral association the Board think the Government might well authorize a small sum of money for the purpose of giving prizes for such competitions, and to this end suggest that the Otago Expansion League confer with the Otago Agricultural and Pastoral Association in the matter."

#### CANADIAN SYSTEM OF DEMONSTRATION FARMS FOR NEW ZEALAND.

A letter was received from the Wellington Provincial President of the Farmers' Union, suggesting the adoption of the Canadian system of demonstration farms as a means of increasing production in the Dominion, and as a first step in this direction to obtain particulars of the scheme from the Canadian Department of Agriculture.

The proposal was discussed with Dr. Reakes, who expressed himself as being quite willing to fall in with it.

A reply was sent informing the Farmers' Union that we had discussed the proposal with Dr. Reakes, who willingly agreed to get the fullest information available on the subject of demonstration farms from Canada, and who would be very pleased, on receipt of the particulars, to pass them on to the union; and, moreover, will favourably consider the practicability of giving effect to the suggestions as soon as circumstances permitted.

#### PURE SEEDS BILL.

The importance of bringing forward legislation dealing with the sale of seeds was again discussed with Dr. Reakes, who informed the Board that the necessary measure could not be brought before Parliament this session. He mentioned that he was waiting until Mr. Cockayne, the Department's Biologist, returned from his trip to America, so that the ideas gathered by him abroad could be made use of in connection with the matter. The following resolution was passed and sent on to you:—

"That the Board of Agriculture, realizing the importance of a Seeds Bill, regret to find that it is quite impossible to get such a Bill through Parliament this year. The Board suggests that the Department have the present draft Bill printed so as to be ready for introduction in the early stages of next session."

#### AMENDMENT OF FERTILIZERS ACT AND PURE SEEDS BILL.

The secretary of the North Canterbury Farmers' Union wrote to us drawing attention to the fact that the Board's recommendations to Government in 1917 *re* an amendment to the Fertilizers Act and a Pure Seeds Bill had not yet been carried out, and urged that the Minister of Agriculture be pressed to give effect to these recommendations.

One of our members, Mr. Hunt, and Mr. Aston, the Departmental Chemist, who had gone into the matter of the suggested amendment to the Fertilizers Act, reported that they had agreed on the suggested amendments necessary. After the matter had been fully discussed we agreed that as it was one of importance the following resolution should be forwarded to you:—

"That the Board desires to impress upon the Hon. Minister of Agriculture that a very brief but very important amendment should be made in the Fertilizers Act, to provide that in the analysis of manures the citrate soluble phosphate-content be shown in addition to what is at present provided for, and that the method of arriving at the citric-acid test should be clearly laid down."

#### REQUESTS TO GOVERNMENT FOR EXPERIMENTAL FARMS IN OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND.

Dr. Reakes brought before us the question of the establishment of experimental farms in Otago and Southland, and with him we discussed the proposal to establish experimental farms

at Winton, Gore, and Oamaru. After hearing his proposals, with which members expressed full concurrence, we passed the following resolution and sent it on to you :—

“ That in order to meet the demand for experimental work and farms in the South Island the Board of Agriculture advises that the Department of Agriculture should extend the system adopted at Stratford, where a committee of farmers have rented a small farm which is managed and financed by a local committee (one member of which is a Government officer), and which is subsidized by the Government to the extent of £300 per annum. This has been found to be most beneficial in many ways. It is economical, and is a demonstration in which great interest is taken in the locality, and works on the lines of ordinary farming of the best type.”

#### APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTORS FOR DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

When the desirability of having additional instructors appointed to the Department in connection with the work of agricultural instruction was before us it was decided that the policy of instructors should be extended, and therefore the instructional staff should be increased by two or three men with scientific training who possessed sound practical knowledge, to enable them to meet the farmer on his own ground and discuss agricultural problems with him.

#### CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATION OF JOSIAH HOWARD BEQUEST.

Dr. Reakes informed us that a measure entitled the Howard Estate Bill, dealing with the Josiah Howard bequest, had been introduced into Parliament, *inter alia*, setting apart the estate as a permanent endowment for agricultural education, to be held in trust by the Public Trustee, and giving the Government power to lease the property, the revenue derived therefrom to be credited to the Howard Estate Account, and moneys in the account to be expended on a school of agricultural education known as the Howard Agricultural Institute, or for the improvement and development of the Howard Estate.

Dr. Reakes mentioned that everything connected with the management of the farm was directed by the Department of Agriculture, the Public Trust Department's officer in Napier being the medium through whom the instructions were issued.

When proposals as to the Institute are made, the Board is to have an opportunity of going very fully into the subject with the officers of the Department and making recommendations in this important matter.

#### IMPORTATION OF BLACK GAME.

We had referred to us an application from the North Canterbury Acclimatization Society for permission to import some black game (the black cock and grey hen of Scotland) from some parts of the British Isles. After the matter had been discussed we decided to reply that introduction of the game was approved of by the Board.

#### MEAT-EXPORT TRADE AND SHIPPING QUESTIONS.

We were requested by the Right Hon. the Prime Minister (as per subjoined copies of letters dated 3rd and 7th February, 1920) to take up the undermentioned matters, viz. :—

- (1.) The position created by the coming termination of the meat purchase by the Imperial Government as affecting producers and allied interests;
- (2.) The shipping question; and
- (3.) The question of a producers' committee to visit Great Britain in connection with the handling of New Zealand meat.

“ DEAR SIR JAMES.—

“ Prime Minister's Office, Wellington, 3rd February, 1920.

“ As you have no doubt seen in the Press, the Government has been officially advised that the Imperial Government's commandeer in respect of New Zealand meat and wool will terminate on the 30th June next. In these circumstances it will be necessary for representative producers and the Government to set about making arrangements as soon after this date as possible, so that operations will be able to be carried on without any unnecessary difficulty when the new season begins. I am strongly impressed with the advisability of convening a representative conference from producers and freezing companies in order that this important question may be fully considered, and I shall be glad if the Board of Agriculture will initiate matters having this object in view. Perhaps you will be so good as to bring the matter at an early date before the Board, and communicate to me your suggestions.

“ This leads me to another very important subject, in connection with which I invite the careful consideration of the Board. You will probably have noticed that a deputation of Wairarapa farmers waited upon me last week to discuss a number of matters, probably the most important of which being that of transportation, or, in other words, the question of securing sufficient supply of shipping-space at reasonable rates to carry their products to the markets of the world. The subject is one of great importance to the Dominion, and requires to be dealt with calmly and with full and careful consideration. I was somewhat disappointed with the report of my remarks in this connection as they appeared in the newspapers, and the condensed account of this portion of the interview did not, I am afraid, give a thoroughly correct impression of what was said.

“ In the course of my reply I pointed out that the first thing to be done was to get the cool stores cleared of the large quantities of Imperial meat waiting for ships to carry it to British markets, but while that was being done arrangements should be made to take up the business at the stage where it was interrupted in March, 1915, by the arrangement then made between the British Government and the New Zealand Government for the sale of the Dominion's meat to the former, and that it seemed to me the first step was to see what could be done with the shipping

companies trading between this country and Britain. Are they prepared to carry our products at a fair and reasonable rate? If so, well and good. If not, then let us do what under the circumstances seems to be the next best course; and I think a strong committee should be set up to look after the interests of the producers, consisting of the Board of Agriculture, and representative men from the Farmers' Unions, the agricultural and pastoral associations, and the freezing companies. I have sometimes heard it said that farmers are not business men, but I must say that is not my experience. Where their own interests are concerned there are no keener business men in the world. The men of whom I am thinking could hold their own with the representatives of the shipping combines, or the Meat Trust, or any of the other great organizations of which we have heard so much. Let the matter be left in their hands to negotiate along with a representative or representatives of the Government. If a satisfactory agreement cannot be arrived at, and if it becomes necessary to put additional ships in the trade, then the Government will assist to the full extent of its ability. Personally, I think if anything is done in this way the producers should at least be part-owners, because if such an undertaking is to be a success it will require all the support it is possible to obtain, and must be managed upon thoroughly businesslike and systematic lines. If it is left to be financed and managed by the Government, then the development fund will be seriously interfered with, and this will happen: contending parties will seek to outbid each other for political support. We had some experience of this sort of thing not long ago, and the result would be a constant reduction of freights and passenger fares until the balance-sheet showed a loss. This could not happen if the great bulk of the shareholders were producers anxious for the welfare of the company in which part of their capital was invested. If it becomes necessary to start such an undertaking the Government will do its part, either by guarantee or by taking up a proportion of the shares, whichever may be decided upon; but we must do our business as sensible business men, thinking not only of our own interests, but of the greater interests of the Dominion as a whole. If we act in this way and pull together with our full strength, there need be no fear of exploitation from any trust or combine.

"I am quite sure you will appreciate the very great importance of the subject, and I shall be glad to meet representative men to discuss the position at any suitable opportunity.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. F. MASSEY.

"Sir James Wilson, Bull's."

"DEAR SIR,—

"Prime Minister's Office, Wellington, 7th February, 1920.

"I will be obliged if you will arrange that the Board of Agriculture, at its meeting during the present month, go carefully into the matter of the proposed Producers' Committee for England, and its personnel. You are doubtless familiar with the facts of the matter, and I may also inform you that I have expressed myself willing to carry out the proposal to send a committee.

"I will be glad to have the opinion of the Board as to what specific points in connection with New Zealand meat in Great Britain such a committee could be specially instructed to inquire into and report upon.

"Yours faithfully,

"W. F. MASSEY,

"Prime Minister.

"Sir James Wilson, Bull's."

In accordance with the Prime Minister's letter of the 3rd February the Board intimated Mr. Massey's desire to the freezing companies and dairy companies, and asked them to send representatives to a preliminary conference to be held in Wellington on the 19th February. Representatives of the producers were also invited from all parts of New Zealand. Following is a list of the delegates who attended the conference:—

*Producers.*—James Boddie (Farmers' Union, Auckland), Thomas Gibson (Christchurch), Ewen Campbell (Wanganui), James Begg (Dunedin), O. Hawken, M.P. (Hawera), Sir W. Buchanan (Carterton), D. Jones, M.P. (Bennetts, Christchurch), Ewen McGregor (Hamilton).

*Freezing Companies.*—S. Ambury (Auckland), C. de Lautour (Gisborne), W. Murray (Christchurch), W. Harper (Christchurch).

*Dairy Industry.*—North Island: A. Morton (Egmont Village), H. D. Forsyth (Eltham), W. Fisher (Carterton), J. G. Harkness (Wellington). South Island: J. R. Thacker (Okain's Bay, Akaroa), G. A. Lamb (Dunedin), J. Fisher (Otatau).

The Board first considered the various aspects in connection with the whole matter, and with reference to the proposed Commission to visit Great Britain in connection with the handling of New Zealand meat, passed the following resolution, and forwarded it on to the Right Hon. the Prime Minister:—

"That the Board of Agriculture cannot see that any special advantage to New Zealand producing interests would be obtained by a Commission visiting England at present, although later it may be advantageous."

It was thought best, as a basis for discussion, to present a series of resolutions to the conference when the Board met it later in the day, and these were dealt with as set out below:—

(1.) The following resolution was initiated by the conference itself on cabled information laid before it by some of the representatives:—

"Reliable information before the conference indicates that eighteen refrigerating-steamers have come or will come to Australia in January and February, 1920, and that only one million carcasses were in store. The conference desires the Prime Minister therefore—seeing that our stores have five million carcasses, and every prospect of soon being completely filled—to make an urgent request to have some of these steamers diverted to New Zealand. The conference further urges that the Prime Minister should make investigations as to what vessels formerly engaged in the New Zealand trade are now carrying Argentine produce, and to urge the Imperial authorities to restore these vessels for the carriage of New Zealand produce."

(2.) The subjoined resolution, submitted by the Board,—

“That the shipping companies trading to New Zealand be requested to give such information they have available at the present time on the following points:—

“(1.) The extent of the service of refrigerated shipping which will be regularly in the New Zealand trade after the 1st July next; and

“(2.) The freight rates likely to rule for farmers’ produce after it ceases to be sold to the Imperial Government,”—

was first considered by the conference, but after a long discussion was replaced by the under-mentioned:—

“That the Government be asked to negotiate with the shipping companies usually trading to New Zealand for one contract for the carriage of all exports for twelve months, and to submit the terms of such proposed contract to the freezing companies, all other industries, and the producers, for consideration and ratification.”

(3.) The next resolution which was placed before the conference read as follows:—

“The Board of Agriculture is of opinion that producers should take steps to secure their interests in the matter of shipping, and that in order to do this a levy should be made on all produce exported, the amount accruing therefrom to be used as a fighting fund for the purpose of obtaining an assured and reliable shipping service at reasonable rates of freight, or for establishing an independent shipping line should such become necessary. Further, that the Government be asked to give such assistance as is necessary in order to carry out this project.”

Following, however, on the lines of the previous resolution passed by the conference, the following was substituted for it:—

“Failing to secure fair and reasonable arrangements with the shipping companies, the Board of Agriculture, with the consent of the Government, be asked to call at the earliest convenient date a meeting of delegates from freezing and dairy companies, agricultural and pastoral associations, and other producers’ organizations to discuss the position and to formulate proposals for the establishment of an independent shipping line, or some other effective method of dealing with the position.”

(4.) The next matter dealt with was the question of the extension of the meat commandeer, and the following resolution from the Board came before the conference:—

“After due consideration of the present-day position of the meat question in all its bearings, the Board of Agriculture considers that it would be in the interests of the Dominion that a further effort should be made to induce the British Government to extend the commandeer.”

This was confirmed, but added to and passed by the meeting in the following way:—

“That this conference confirms the following motion passed by the Board of Agriculture—viz., ‘After due consideration of the present-day position of the meat question in all its bearings, the Board of Agriculture considers that it would be in the interests of the Dominion that a further effort should be made to induce the British Government to extend the commandeer’—and recommends that the commandeer of meat be extended for twelve months on the condition that the Imperial Government undertakes to clear the stores of commandeered meat in New Zealand by the 30th December following.”

(5.) The conference then dealt with the unsatisfactory conditions brought about by the British Board of Trade’s disposal of New Zealand meat in Great Britain, and the Board placed before the meeting the following resolution:—

“That the present system of disposing of New Zealand meat in Great Britain is most unsatisfactory, and has resulted in such a congestion in the stores as to be a serious menace to our produce for the coming season. This, and the delay of unloading the cargoes of our produce in London must, if possible, be remedied, and the Board of Agriculture is of opinion that it is necessary for a further reduction in the retail price of frozen meat to take place, so as to encourage consumption and make room for the produce still shut out. Also, that the Government should make a further protest of the most emphatic nature against the present condition of affairs at Home in connection with our meat, and state that unless remedial measures are immediately taken the producer at this end will be placed at the mercy of speculators.”

When the matter was discussed, however, the following resolution was substituted for the one submitted:—

“This conference expresses its strongest disapprobation of New Zealand’s treatment by the British Board of Trade in permitting the existing congestion of the stores in Great Britain, while frozen and chilled meat is being brought to England from other countries and sold in a free market, the effect being the dislocation of insulated shipping and great delay in clearing the stores in New Zealand. It would request the Prime Minister to supplement his previous efforts by cabling the opinion of this conference of the imperative necessity for the immediate reduction of the controlled price of New Zealand meat now held, in order to stimulate consumption and relieve the position. If this is not done immediately the producers and holders of meat in New Zealand (who have done their best to assist the Imperial Government to feed and clothe the Army and the people of Great Britain) will suffer such difficulties as to cause a financial crisis in New Zealand.”

(6.) One of the representatives at the conference brought up the question of the serious position facing many freezing companies whose works were practically full, and as a result the following resolution was passed:—

“That the present serious position of many of the freezing companies be brought before the Prime Minister, and that he be requested to appeal to the Shipping Control Board to supply insulated ships to relieve the congested condition of the freezing-stores, and so prevent the closing of the works, which are practically full, while thousands of sheep and cattle are held in the paddocks waiting to be killed and cannot be held indefinitely without deterioration.”

Mr. Massey had expressed a desire to be present at the meeting, but was unable to attend, as his time was fully occupied at the Coal Conference which was then sitting. He, however, invited the delegates to meet him, which was done after the conference had concluded, when the resolutions which had been passed by the meeting were presented to him by the President of the Board.

Mr. Massey explained the position as to the control of shipping, and read cables which had been passing between him and the Imperial Government regarding the extension of the commandeers, the necessity for the reduction of the congestion in cold stores in Great Britain, the urgency of additional shipping being supplied to lift meat so as to relieve the congestion in the stores in the Dominion, also the alleged preference given to other countries in the matter of refrigerated shipping.

He further stated that he was prepared to agree with all the resolutions that had been submitted to him and to carry out the requests made by the conference. He promised to have a cable sent to England as desired in connection with the present unsatisfactory conditions in Great Britain for the handling and sale of New Zealand meat, and further stated that he would procure all the information it was possible to obtain regarding the employment of steamers in the New Zealand trade which had been diverted to other countries.

Before the meeting concluded Mr. Massey agreed to the President of the Board advising all the interests concerned of a further, larger conference which it was proposed to hold at a later date after the requisite information to be placed before the meeting had been obtained.

After the new Board had been appointed it was decided that, although there was no information from the shipping authorities in London as to the rates and conditions likely to prevail when the Imperial contract for the Dominion products was terminated (as had been asked for by cable by Mr. Massey), the congestion was becoming so acute that it was desirable to meet and discuss matters. A further, larger conference, as called by the Board, was held on the 27th May, and although perhaps, strictly speaking, it hardly belongs to this report, as it took place at the beginning of the term of the third Board of Agriculture, yet it seems opportune to mention it here in view of the importance of the gathering and of the conclusions arrived at.

The President of the Board was in the chair, and delegates from freezing companies, agricultural and pastoral associations, farmers' unions, Sheepowners' Federation, dairy associations, Woolbrokers' Association, Overseas Shipowners' Committee, and New Zealand Frozen-meat Exporters' Association, besides a number of individual representatives of producers and commercial interests, were present.

The Right Hon. the Prime Minister, together with the Hon. Mr. Guthrie (Minister in Charge of the Department of Imperial Government Supplies), as well as yourself, attended the conference. Mr. Massey furnished particulars of the telegraphic communications which had passed between the Imperial Government and the Government of the Dominion, showing how exhaustively he had gone into the question of getting relief from the present congestion of both meat and wool. Amongst the cables read by him was one which had been received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to the effect that the meat contract could not be continued after the 30th June, 1920, owing to the congestion of Imperial meat in England, in transit, and in the stores overseas. The position being definitely settled, the conference's discussions were necessarily confined to the best ways and means of coping with the problems independently of the Imperial Government. As the diverse interests represented at the conference could not well discuss their business in open meeting, it was decided that the conference should adjourn, in order that the different sections might meet and discuss the several matters from their own points of view.

The representatives of the Overseas Shipowners' Committee who were present at the conference supplied lists of the vessels owned by each company, together with their carrying-capacity, and stated that with the usual two voyages a year, after providing for the carriage of butter and cheese, there was space for nearly 10,500,000 carcasses. They gave particulars as to the present freight rates charged, and stated that until the requisition of insulated shipping-space had been removed, and definite information was available as to when the overseas carriage of free produce would commence, it was impossible for them to give definite information as to freights.

With a view of eliminating unnecessary discussion on such a wide range of interests as represented in the conference, it was deemed advisable to set out certain lines along which it was proposed to proceed so as to ensure the business of the conference being carried out as expeditiously as possible.

The freezing companies' delegates were asked for recommendations or opinions regarding the following points, also on any other specific points not mentioned if so desired by them:—

- (1.) Are market prices in Great Britain and purchasing-values in New Zealand likely to be sufficiently stabilized during 1921 to enable ordinary financial accommodation to be given to growers?
- (2.) What action do companies consider should be taken in regard to future shipping contracts?
- (3.) The proposed Commission to visit Great Britain: is it considered still necessary and desirable to carry out this proposal?

The producers' delegates were similarly asked for recommendations and opinions on the following points:—

- (1.) The decision of the Imperial Government as to the termination of the meat commander.
- (2.) The best way of meeting the position created by the termination of the meat commander.
- (3.) The proposed Commission to visit Great Britain.
- (4.) The termination of the wool-purchase, and the best means of dealing with next season's clip to the best advantage.
- (5.) Overseas shipping.

The Woolbrokers' Association was asked for its recommendations regarding the termination of the wool-purchase, and the best means of dealing with next season's clip to the best advantage.

The producers' representatives with the Board of Agriculture considered the matters referred to them. In view of the information which the Right Hon. the Prime Minister had placed before the conference regarding the termination of the meat contract with the Imperial Government, it was agreed that no discussion was necessary regarding item No. 1 on the order paper.

With regard to item No. 2—viz., the best way of meeting the position by the termination of the meat commander—the conference passed the following resolutions:—

(a.) "Recognizing that the Imperial commander of produce is to stop on the 30th June next, this meeting desires that the New Zealand Government should be requested to urge upon the Imperial authorities the following suggestion: That more active and practical steps should be taken to see that sufficient shipping facilities are provided for lifting all Imperial produce now in this Dominion before the commencement of next season's operations on the 30th October next."

(b.) "That there be absolutely open markets for our meat and wool, and that no restrictions whatever be placed on our selling in the best world's markets; also that a committee of five meat and wool growers be set up to look after their interests."

With reference to the proposed Commission to visit Great Britain in connection with the handling and disposal of our meat there, the following resolution was unanimously passed:—

"That this conference does not consider the proposed Commission to visit Great Britain necessary at the present time."

The freezing companies' delegates also reported as to this proposal that they had no recommendation to make.

The report of the freezing companies' delegates was presented to the whole conference, and its recommendations, which were as follows, were agreed to:—

(a.) "That without having any definite knowledge of the requirements of financial institutions before granting accommodation to growers, our answer to this question is in the negative."

"That, as it is our opinion that prices are not likely to be sufficiently stabilized during 1921 to enable ordinary financial accommodation to be given to growers, this committee of freezing companies' representatives recommends that the conference be asked to set up a committee of not more than ten—freezing companies' representatives, producers, bankers, and representatives of the Government—to discuss future financial accommodation, and, if the position warrants it, to draft proposals calling for Government assistance in the way of guarantees or otherwise."

(b.) "That a committee consisting of producers and freezing companies acting in co-operation with the Government should be set up to negotiate with the shipping companies for a uniform contract with a favoured-nation clause in each contract."

"That until normal conditions are restored no contract should be entered into for more than twelve months."

"Resolved, That this meeting urge upon the Government as well as our New Zealand shipping companies the necessity of acquainting producers when the control of ships will cease, and pending decontrol of ships that producers have the option of substituting free-meat shipment, carcass for carcass, with the Imperial Government meat purchased."

The following additional resolution was also passed by the whole conference:—

"That the Government should without delay take the necessary steps to secure that no freezing company shall, either directly or indirectly through any other organization, enter into time freight contracts with any shipping company unless the consent of the Government is first obtained."

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the number and personnel of the committee it was suggested should be set up, and it was finally decided to recommend that it should consist of ten members, two to be nominated by freezing companies, four by producers, two by bankers, and two by the Government. Of the last-named, you will remember you agreed that one should be a producer. It was stated by the chairman of the freezing companies' delegates that Sir Francis Boyes had been nominated by the meat-freezing companies to represent proprietary interests, with Mr. C. A. de Lantour to represent co-operative interests. For the producers Messrs. Marshall and Hawken were selected to represent the North Island, and Messrs. Rutherford and Bowmar to represent the South Island. The conference also passed the following resolution in connection with this proposal:—

"That it be an instruction to the committee that any question of sufficient importance affecting the interests of producers shall have their attention, and that purely producers' business be referred to the five producer members of the committee."

The report of the Woolbrokers' Association was presented to the conference, when the following recommendations were submitted :—

1. "That negotiations be entered into forthwith as to the necessary arrangements for the transport of the remaining stock of Imperial wool held in the Dominion on the 1st November next in conjunction with the new Dominion clip."

2. "That every effort should be directed in the meantime to increasing the available tonnage so as to ensure a clearance of the maximum quantity of the Imperial wool by that date."

3. "That negotiations be entered into with the Imperial Government so as to regulate the marketing of Imperial wool in competition with the Dominion new clip, whether sold in London or the Dominion."

These were adopted by the conference.

The following resolution regarding the High Commissioner's Office in London was also passed :—

"That this conference recommends that the High Commissioner's Office be strengthened by the appointment of two additional officers—

"(1.) A gentleman from New Zealand possessed of the highest business qualifications and experience in connection with all kinds of settlers' produce; and

"(2.) A similar selection in Great Britain with like experience and qualifications."

With reference to the suggested committee representative of freezing companies, producers, bankers, and of the Government, the Board understands that the matter is one that now rests entirely with the Government, and that, as no convener of a meeting of the committee has been named, the meeting will be called by the Government whenever it considers it necessary to do so.

Copies of the resolutions passed were duly conveyed to the Right Hon. the Prime Minister and to yourself.

JAMES G. WILSON,  
President of the Board.

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