

rest with the country concerned, but it is no good our discussing at all unless we are to consider what will be of benefit to us and what will be of benefit to you.

Mr. Bruce : That spirit is the very one that we wish to come here in, and our only fear was that we might be in some way misunderstood, but as you have taken that attitude there is certainly nothing to prevent our saying anything we have to say. The only point really that has given us considerable anxiety in Australia with regard to wine—while we appreciate that the preference we have at the moment is a very valuable one and a very large one—is that depreciated currencies are rather embarrassing our position. That was the only side of the question that we wanted to raise—whether anything can be done to help the competition we are faced with from countries with depreciated currencies. You naturally want time to give it consideration, and I shall say no more about it, except to raise the point and to give you the information that it does cause us very considerable difficulty.

The Chairman : We had framed these proposals with a view to helping Empire trade, particularly with a view to helping those settlement schemes which you have referred to, and we wanted to know whether they would do that and to have any criticism upon them, and, of course, to get the list as complete as possible. Possibly after you have had a chance of seeing the specific proposals on the transcript you may return to the charge.

Mr. Bruce : If there is anything I wish to say after reading the transcript no doubt the Conference will let me do so to-morrow.

Mr. Graham : After we have looked at the effect which the different proposals will have on our different countries we shall be free to discuss them to-morrow.

The Chairman : Certainly.

New Zealand's Attitude.

Mr. Massey : Just a word, Mr. Chairman, about the depreciated currency. The position that we take up, the position of the Government to which I belong, and of the New Zealand Parliament, with regard to depreciated currency is just this: we cannot allow manufactured goods or products coming from a country with a depreciated currency to come into unfair competition, because that is exactly what it would mean, with manufacturers or producers in our own country. We take steps to prevent that sort of thing. However, I am not going to follow that. Referring to the proposals of the British Government with regard to preference on dried fruits and different varieties of preserves, I would just like to say that I am very strongly of opinion that these proposals will be welcomed by fruitgrowers and preservers of fruit in almost every part of the Empire. I am not speaking from a selfish point of view, because up to now I do not think it will benefit my country very much.

Position of New Zealand Fruitgrowing Industry.

We have been trying to establish a fruitgrowing industry in New Zealand, and with a certain amount of success; but there is still a very great deal to be done. The difficulty is the distance from the market. We have been sending over fruit to London, and where it has been landed without damage we have been encouraged to send more; but somehow or other we are in the habit of getting a lot of it damaged, either by freezing or in some other way, and the fruitgrowers are correspondingly discouraged. I am not a fruitgrower personally, but I have given a good deal of attention to the question of fruitgrowing in my country, and have given every possible encouragement to the fruitgrowers. We have given them a low guarantee with regard to price—that is to say, when they export fruit we guarantee that they will get a certain minimum price for it; if they do not get that price we pay the difference. We have had to pay up to £10,000 or £12,000 already. However, we may get over that and probably will. But with regard to duties, we have, as they have in Australia, some country particularly suitable for fruitgrowing. It is a dry climate, the driest climate in New Zealand by a very long way, with a very light rainfall, but it is very good country and grows fruit magnificently. We have taken it in hand recently, and it is going on. We have already one hundred and fifty miles of water-races. We are irrigating probably half a million acres, but in a few years I hope and believe we shall have quite a community of fruitgrowers there. I am very optimistic about it; and when that time comes, and I hope it will come, what is being done now by the British Government will be of some advantage to them.

A point that I want to raise here is that there was no reference made to duty on condensed and sweetened milk. There is a pretty large export of condensed milk from some of the overseas countries, my own among them, and if it were possible to give them a preference it would be just as welcome as what is proposed with regard to the fruitgrowers themselves.

Appeal on behalf of New Zealand Meat Trade.

Reference was made this morning by the Prime Minister of Australia to the difficulties of Australia with regard to the export of meat. I am not going to raise the whole question. We are concerned as much as Australia, perhaps more, with the exception of beef. I think Australia is far more concerned with the export of beef than we are; but it may surprise the members of the Conference when I tell them that we send more mutton and lamb into Britain than all the other countries in the world put together. It is one of our principal exports, as a matter of fact. Now, this is a point to which I want to call attention: The difficulty that we have—and it applies to Australia just as well as to New Zealand—is in competing with the South American States. Take New Zealand again. There are other meat-producing countries in South America besides the Argentine, because the war gave a tremendous impetus to the production of meat in South America—all outside the Empire. The distance to the Argentine is just as nearly as possible half the distance to New Zealand. They have the advantage of freights. As a matter of fact, they do not need to freeze all their meat;