

farmers have not given this trade, which is so vital to our interests, the consideration or attention that we should have done. This position, I consider, has been to some extent brought about by the very fact which we perhaps are slow to realize: that the companies who have built up this industry have done it so very thoroughly and satisfactorily that we have been lulled to sleep. We have been satisfied, and therefore have not taken sufficient interest to get to the bottom of the trade ourselves. I think that really is the position. It is our ignorance, in fact, that has caused us to suddenly spring into a state somewhat of excitement over our reverses which took place last year. If we appoint a committee, it should be a committee which will act not only as collecting information, but as an educative body to the farmers throughout the Dominion. We should have a Conference much more wide than a permanent committee set up to watch these matters. We should have a permanent Conference, an annual Conference; and from that Conference appoint the committee to go into the minor details, and report—report to the different associations that sent delegates; and in that way, to my mind, the country will gain vastly in educative points in this trade—such points as are mostly required amongst the farmers. It is such a very large question that it is utterly impossible to really get to the bottom of the matter unless one gives one's life to it. It is an always-changing trade. It is impossible for the farmer to attend to his own business and attend to the trade as well. At the same time, I think, if we increase our knowledge, we shall find that we are being looked after fairly and satisfactorily. I do not say there are not very many points that cannot be improved—there are; but I think such improvements will be brought about by the farmer taking an intelligent interest in the business, and pointing out what seem to him to be errors, and being educated as to what they really are, and seeing whether these errors are simply due to misunderstanding on his part. The methods were mentioned of the American organizations, and I think we do not want those methods; but at the same time I feel that there may be—it may be due to my imperfect knowledge of the trade—some light gained here, some improvements to be brought about by more co-operation in dealing with the position. We should watch the possibilities of such organizations, and it is for us farmers to do that, and to encourage the companies who are doing the business to organize. Of course, this is what we are doing now; but we are very apt to let it remain at that, and say, "Oh, well! we have passed that resolution, asking the companies to meet." I think we should certainly keep an eye on them as far as we can, to see that they are carrying out what our wishes are. But, as to a trust, or anything in that line, as it is understood by the American methods, we certainly do not want that. Still, I think there is that point, and I think it is a very great point: that we are a little apt to go on in confidence. Things are fairly good, and we see threatenings from various points, but we do not wake up to what is necessary to be done. Britons are usually like that—they wake up after the battle is done; and I think we should aim at waking up a little before, and keeping a sharp eye on what aggression there may be. The whole crux of what I have been getting at is the suggestion that we should alter this second proposition from a "permanent committee" to make the Conference an annual one, with the power to appoint a committee.

*Mr. Roberts.*—I second that.

*Mr. J. McQueen.*—A committee set up is usually set up by a body or association that continues in existence. We should first form an association, I think, and then form a committee. We have met here on this occasion, but there is no provision for meeting again, and yet we propose to appoint a permanent committee. Well, a permanent committee is always objectionable. I think the committee should be appointed temporarily, and asked to report at some date. I think it would be a good idea if we arranged to have the committee appointed once a year.

*Mr. C. H. Ensor.*—Could the committee appointed last night give some idea of what they expect this committee to do, as proposed to be set up? Are they supposed to watch the interests of any certain part of the community? It seems to me that it is a pretty strong federation that we are setting up with these freezing companies.

*The Chairman.*—I may mention, gentlemen, that I have been asked by several representatives of freezing companies to state that in the event of clause 1 being carried it should be suggested that the representatives present here should meet at the luncheon adjournment in the little room adjoining this, and discuss the question of the advisability of holding a Conference, the place where it should be held, and who should be the convener. I think, if they discuss those questions now, it might save months of correspondence. It wants some one to take the initiative, and they can decide among themselves who shall be the convener of the meeting.

*Mr. Wilson.*—They would be able to report to the Conference before leaving this town.

*The Chairman.*—Of course they *could* do so, but it is in their hands entirely whether they do so or not.

(On the motion of Mr. J. C. N. Grigg, it was agreed that the time-limit for the remainder of the proceedings should be five minutes.)

*Mr. Makgill.*—My suggestion is, That an annual Conference of representatives from any farmers' organizations throughout New Zealand be held, from which the committee be elected, to consider the replies of the freezing companies.

*Mr. John Talbot* (South Canterbury Farmers' Union).—This is a committee that could be set up for, say, one year—that we should carry on this Conference, and then possibly elect a committee again. I think that is a much better plan than setting up a permanent committee. It would give more life to the discussion. A permanent committee would probably shelve the whole thing, and there would be the end of it. Let the committee in the meantime take all the steps it considers necessary, but do not let us have it a permanent committee.

*Mr. F. de C. Malet.*—I suggest that the committee should be appointed by the Conference, and that will meet the objections raised to a permanent one; the committee to stand for a year.

*Mr. N. Kettle.*—Would it meet the case if the word "permanent" were taken out?

*Mr. Makgill.*—I do not feel inclined to accept that. I should prefer to put my amendment.