

that quite recently, acting on the experience of the results obtained from my company's own business (as my chairman, Mr. Malet, mentioned, we handle something like, 1,300,000—no small percentage of New Zealand's staple output)—I say, acting on the experience we have gained in connection with this business, only some few weeks ago my board decided after full consideration to carry a very appreciable portion of the damage risk ourselves. Now, gentlemen, I only mention that: I do not go into particulars. Is it likely, if we had been face to face with such a great problem as Mr. Lysnar has indicated, that we should not have found some solution long ago? Mr. Hall has stated, in speaking to the motion, that in framing this minority report and placing it in front of us he never for a moment contemplated, and it was not contemplated at all, that fresh capital should be sought to form a fresh company in order to carry out the objects of the resolutions as they come forward. Well, if some fresh organization is not formed to bring about all these marvellous reforms, might I ask Mr. Hall if he thinks it right, and proper, and a fitting thing that this Conference should be asked to put its *imprimatur* on any particular institution conducting freezing business at present?

*Mr. Hall.*—Certainly not; I merely say that any company doing business on those lines should be supported by the farmers.

*Mr. C. H. Ensor.*—Mr. Murray said something about marvellous reforms. Well, he was speaking very strongly on the damaged-meat question, and I hold here an account sale for lamb sold last October in which out of 566 carcasses there were eighty damaged carcasses. Now, that seems to me, as a grower of lamb, a most extraordinary thing, that that amount of damage should take place with the carcasses landed at the other end. I give the freezing companies here the best credit they can deserve for handling the farmers' produce in a most systematic and careful manner. I think the organizers of those companies, the people who run those companies and have made those companies, deserve every credit for forming and carrying them out in the way they should be done. Our meat is handled perfectly, I think; we hear no complaints at this end; the only complaints are those which come from the other end, such as damage claims for eighty out of 566. That seems to me a great loss to the men who produced those lambs. After they take the trouble to rear and land them in London, and then have them rejected! They were stored, in this instance, by the Union Cold-storage Company for one month, which is a very large storage company, holding storage in a great many parts of the world. While talking about storage, I might say that the cost of storage at the other end is very nearly double what it is here, and I cannot see any reason why it should be practically double. It should cost no more to erect stores at the other end than it does here. We store our stuff here on the railway-line. We can send stuff from Belfast to Pareora if we like, and meat may be sent from the freezing-works to Hornby, and stored there until it is wanted. If the meat can be moved about and stored in this country, why not at the other end? Why should stores be built on expensive ground at the other end, and a double amount be charged? I am certain it can be stored here and there practically at the same price.

*Mr. H. D. Vavasour.*—I quite agree with the last speaker and with the minority report, and with the sentiments of it. As I have stated before, there is very much to be looked into in the conducting of the meat trade in England. I was corroborated by the Hon. Mr. Mackenzie, and every word that he said in the matter he put far more emphatically than I did, and I am not going over the ground; but I may say that when I was Home in 1880 I went fully into the matter, and I was asked to give my opinions on the matter by the Press Association. I said then that the insurance companies complained that certain firms were in the habit of making a good thing out of those claims, consequently the rates had to be high. Some companies had threatened to refuse to insure frozen meat, thus raising the rate. The average rate was 42s. 6d., running up to 60s.: if the meat was properly looked after all the time the rate should not exceed 25s. The trouble is that the meat is not properly looked after. The Americans do it. I am perfectly in friendly relations with the companies in New Zealand, especially with the Christchurch Meat Company; but I can only say that my experience is this, and it is corroborated by the Hon. Mr. Mackenzie: that we have a grievance as sheepowners that the meat is not properly looked after at the other end. It is for the benefit of the freezing companies and every one else if some steps are taken to have the trade properly supervised in the Old Country.

*Mr. Kinross White* (North British and Hawke's Bay Freezing Company).—I think, sir, that a good number of the claims for damage that have taken place during the last season have arisen through the enormous amount of meat thrown on the London market at the one time, and that the facilities were not sufficient to cope with it. We have clean bills of lading so far as our works are concerned; but this year the claims for damage have exceeded the premiums by a few pounds, and I have had intimation from London that the premiums for this year will be required to be raised on that account; but I believe that this year claims for damage will not be so excessive as they have been in the past. I have only been running a freezing company for twenty-five years now, and I know the difficulties there are in building up a freezing company, and I have seen a great number of freezing companies go down in New Zealand. I think it is wrong altogether for any gentleman to say here that freezing companies have been making excessive profits. So far as we are concerned, I think about 2½ per cent. would be our average in that long term of years; and how many freezing companies in New Zealand are there who have gone right through without getting into pretty tight pinches from time to time?

*Mr. A. H. Turnbull* (Canterbury Chamber of Commerce).—Mr. President, I am not shipping as many lambs as Mr. Lysnar, but I claim that I know a good deal about the subject. The fact that you can insure for 2½ per cent. for two months, as I explained before, surely shows that the rates are fair enough. However, I quote the report issued by the Department of Agriculture, which has an important bearing on the subject. The grading in Canterbury and Wellington leaves nothing to be desired, and the farmers and the freezing companies in Canterbury, and the carrying companies, are all working in the very best interests of the trade, and the producer is fully