

response to requisitions made to us, we wrote to our London house, and put the position clearly before them, and pointed out the statements made with regard to better covers alleged to be used elsewhere, and asked them to furnish us with advices as to whether we should take steps to expend the large sum necessary in providing stronger covers. After some months—some considerable time, at any rate—our people replied, and they forwarded a large batch of private letters addressed to our London house by the heads and managers of various meat firms with whom we had business dealings. Without one single exception we were told that we should be ill-advised to spend any serious sum in improving the cover we were using at the present time. As one man put it, "We want your meat; we don't want your shirts."

*Mr. G. Jameson.*—When I was in England a few months ago I saw in many country butchers' shops carcasses that were dirty and unsightly, and the butchers all unanimously said the damage was caused by want of proper covers, and that the thin covers used nowadays are not sufficient to protect the meat during carriage from London to the country places.

*Mr. E. R. Webb.*—I have here one of the covers used for the Argentine carcasses—the quality of material which Belfast is going to use about March. Every one remarks on the excellent condition in which the Argentine meat arrives in London. This cloth is not more costly to buy than the cheesecloth now used here, but it may be more costly to put on, because it rolls up. I have had experience of special lots of meat sent Home for exhibition, in which the carcasses were covered with this cloth, and with sacking as well, and the shipments earned the highest encomiums.

*Mr. W. Murray.*—The cover which Mr. Webb is recommending has been used by my company for four or five years, and by another company with which I was connected for four years.

*Mr. Borthwick.*—And we have used it also for many years.

*Mr. J. D. Hall.*—Oh, come! this is not an advertising medium for the companies.

*The Chairman.*—It has been moved and seconded that it be a recommendation to the freezing companies to use stronger covers.

Carried.

*Mr. W. G. Lysnar (Gisborne Farmers' Union).*—I now move remit No. 14, "That legislation be obtained compelling all freezing-works to grade up to a uniform Government standard, and to have the meat valued at Home by the High Commissioner's staff, in the same manner that butter and cheese are now graded and valued." I do not propose to say much in regard to this remit. There is no suggestion in it except in regard to grading. There is a distinction between classification and grading. There is at present dissatisfaction, and it is necessary that something should be done to regulate the uniform classing of meat throughout the Dominion. I do not say it is possible to classify it throughout the whole Dominion, but it is possible to classify between each Island. I do not propose to suggest that; that is entirely a matter for experts. To start with, it should be classified North Island and South Island, perhaps; but, as I say, that is a matter for experts. What is wanted is something to protect the producer at this end. It is not unfair to ask the freezing companies to do this; from the freezing companies' point of view it need not make one iota of difference to them. They have as many as forty classes in one shipment at times; but the Government grader should come along and put his stamp on, and say, irrespective of the classification, what grade of meat it is, exactly the same as is done with butter and cheese in this Dominion. There is no question that those associated with these three articles of product in this country will realize the strength and advantage of the classification of those articles by the Government. It not only protects them here against their own workmen and their own factories, but it protects them at the other end, which is the most essential thing of all. It assists in having a uniform value. There has been a suggestion of pooling; but how could you pool without some system of grading for that person who is not connected in any way with the interests concerned. I am not at the moment prepared to say whether I think pooling is right or wrong; I am inclined to think it right, but I have no matured mind on that point. The producer wants something to check the factories: I do not say they are doing anything wrong, but I do say that each factory has a distinct grade of its own, and its grade is not known by others; and the grades should be on a uniform basis. The object of the remit is to protect our agent at Home. In butter the system of grading, and the High Commissioner valuing, is appreciated at Home, and the contracts are made to sell upon the High Commissioner's prices; and if we can do that with our butter, why not with our meat? You will be told that butter is a different sort of article, that it does not vary: I tell you that it does, it varies very much; it is got up differently, and it is of different colours. But that makes no difference; it can be graded all the same. It is a protection to the person at Home to have it graded by the Government and valued by the High Commissioner. If your representatives get the High Commissioner's value at, say, 4d., and you get a return for 3½d., you can at once have a check. I can tell you this: that I am associated with both the butter and the cheese trade, and I am aware that twice within the last five years the agency of the butter-factory has been changed, for the simple reason that the agent at Home did not realize the High Commissioner's values. Now, I realize that I am talking to the freezing people. I notice the chairs are practically empty of a great number of members, and I can only tally up about six or seven farmers in this room; and I think therefore it would be better to withdraw this motion. But let me just mention it on broad principles, and suggest that the recommendation to the Government for grading should be made. I therefore ask leave to withdraw this motion, Mr. Chairman.

*The Chairman.*—Very well.

*Mr. A. H. Turnbull (Canterbury Chamber of Commerce).*—I think that meetings of this sort have an influence for good between the organized bodies attending them, and they should not be allowed to lapse of themselves. I should like to see this meeting adjourned to, say, June, July, or August, when the delegates or others appointed could attend. However much we may differ from each other, the results of meeting must be good, and it would be a mistake to allow this meeting