

Order Paper: "That frozen meat should be consigned through an organization of producers, or a Farmers' Co-operative Distributing Association, in order to bring the producer and the consumer into closer touch, and that a company should be formed for that purpose, if necessary." You will see that the motion is very wide, that we are prepared to accept any system that will be for the betterment of the producer, and, I believe, also for those who are buying our products on our markets here and shipping them into the Old Country.

*Mr. H. D. Vavasour* (Marlborough Farmers' Union).—I understand, Mr. Chairman, that these remits are only for discussion, and that you have asked for notices of motion to be given on these remits?

*The Chairman*.—We take these as notices of motion, and if there is any other subject that any member of the Conference wishes to bring up, he can give notice then, and put it in writing before 1 p.m.

*Mr. H. Acton Adams* (Scargill Farmers' Union).—I have much pleasure in seconding this motion proposed by Mr. Sheat. The farmers really do not know what is being done at Smithfield. We are sending Home great quantities of meat, and those to whom it goes just casually handle the stuff in an indiscriminate way. People do not know who sells the stuff, and the competition is such that we do not get a fair price. It has therefore been suggested that some sort of organization in the way of an association or a company is necessary to meet this difficulty. It should be an absolutely co-operative company, leaving the company to do what is necessary. There is no question of cold-storage for mutton, as Mr. Sheat suggested, because we quite understand that you cannot stock the mutton and prevent it getting bad. I say the sales must be fixed from day to day, as is done by the Argentine, and fixed by some association. One man, as it is, might send two consignments, and have them in competition on the open market. They do not know what stocks are in the stores. I believe, from the *Pastoralists' Review*, that they never get at it, and they do not seem particularly to want to know, although the Argentine people all want to know, and they fix their prices and do not have any great ups and downs. But we do our selling indiscriminately, and without any satisfaction whatever. Such regulation is possible. Take the silver people: they meet every morning on an open common, as it were, and fix the price there, and then they fear no sudden rise and fall of silver during the day. They do know what they are doing, but we do not. The Milk Trust in New York is another case where prices are fixed. They take everything out of it, and put back the necessary 12 per cent. of casein, and then they are able to deal with the supplies and control them. They know what they are getting. If people go and keep cows they simply put the Process Trust or the Beef Trust on them, and they find themselves cut off from supplies. There is no mistake that the trust in Chicago knows what it is about and what stocks there are. Swift knows what stocks Armour has, and so on; but here we are not working together at all, and until we have some company to take our meat and handle it for us we shall not be in a satisfactory position, as far as the producers are concerned. I am not speaking of the other people who are represented here to-day, because I think they are very comfortably off. If there is a rise in their expenses, well, they just pass it on to us. There are several questions not in the remit, about insurance rates going up, and so on, but those are details open to discussion; we had best keep clear of all the finer points until we get more into the matter. Of course, the producers, of which I am one, are anxious to give some of their suggestions in regard to grading, &c. It is quite time we had something of that sort; everything else is getting graded nowadays.

*A Voice*.—The Minister is here.

*Mr. Acton Adams*.—Well, I am glad he is here. Butter and cheese, and so on, are graded, and we have then one solid basis on which to work; and I think some of the other producers and delegates to-day will have something to say on that point. I do not think that the shipping companies and freezing companies will help us very much, because, after all, it is for the producers to handle the matter as far as they can, with the help of the Government.

*Mr. T. E. L. Roberts* (Scargill Farmers' Union).—In speaking to this remit, of course, we look at the matter from different points of view. We could not possibly go into all the details, and I, as a producer, had an idea that is not made clear by the remit. For one thing, I would like to see the stuff handled in a much better manner than at the present time. I have walked through Smithfield, and in the little time I was there I saw a good deal I did not expect to see, in the way of meat exposed for sale that should not have been exposed for sale. I suppose it was necessary that the meat should be sold, but meat of an inferior quality, or damaged meat, should not be exposed along with first-class meat. I saw on one occasion thirty or forty carcasses in front of me, and among them legs of mutton broken in the fleshy part, in places where one would think they could not be broken even by an axe. I do not think it should have been exposed along with sound mutton. It was objectionable to the eyes. The conditions under which Smithfield was conducted would not in New Zealand be tolerated for twenty-four hours. It is open, as far as I could see, for any one to walk through, and the litter (possibly I was there at an unfortunate time) seemed to me to have been lying there for months. Carcasses were there cut through the kidneys and damaged in all sorts of ways. If a man were inclined to spit and chew, he could spit around as he liked. If consumers saw this they would have an objection to imported meat. I have been told also by consumers that from some shops they have got absolutely clean meat, and then on removing from that part of the country and trying to get the frozen article, they found it was so dirty that they could not eat it, and they would not have it again. The conditions at Smithfield are not nearly so clean as they might be, and if we try to establish some kind of a distributing depot we might at least sell on clean lines, and that was my little idea when this remit was being proposed at our meeting. It covers a wide range, and my point would be to go for cleanliness. If we had a mart where our meat could be handled cleanly, it would be a great thing for us. There are many other points, and they will be discussed later, so I shall not say any more at present.