

*Mr. John Talbot* (South Canterbury Farmers' Union).—As the seconder, I would ask Mr. Ensor to withdraw his amendment, in view of the way in which it has been taken up, as rather a slur. I should be very pleased if he would withdraw it.

*Mr. Ensor* (Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association).—Very well; I will withdraw it if it is understood as a slur, although it was not meant as such. I am exceedingly sorry it should have been taken up so. In reply to Mr. Grigg I might say that the commercial men might hold the brains of the meeting, possibly, but not all of them. We really wanted a report from the producer to the people who are handling his produce.

*Mr. N. Kettle* (Hawke's Bay Chamber of Commerce).—Representing the mercantile community, I should prefer not to be on the committee. The business men of this country are all part and parcel with the producer. Our business, everything we do, rests with the producer, and what we can get for his products. Every bank and mercantile institution doing business is bound up with the producer.

*Mr. J. D. Hall* (Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association).—I rise to a point of order: Is there anything before the meeting, Mr. Chairman?

*The Chairman*.—Mr. Ensor's motion is withdrawn, and I think we had therefore better proceed with the nomination of the committee.

The following names were then proposed: For the North Island—R. D. D. McLean, Kinross White, W. G. Lysnar, E. Campbell, A. Borthwick, J. G. Wilson, J. Barugh. For the South Island—G. Jameson, D. D. Macfarlane, C. Teschemacher, Sir George Clifford, F. Waymouth, H. Acton Adams, H. D. Vavasour, J. C. N. Grigg, L. C. Gardiner, J. D. Hall, John Talbot.

*The Chairman*.—While the ballot-papers are being prepared, we will proceed with remit No. 1 (carried). As carried, this would read, "That it be a recommendation to the Committee that frozen meat should be consigned and sold as far as possible 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." I take it that No. 2 remit need not be put, seeing that No. 1 has been carried. No. 2 remit reads, "That a New Zealand Farmers' Trust be formed to check any foreign combination inimical to the farmers' interests by controlling a sufficient number of retail outlets in Home and Continental markets, run by New-Zealanders, and insuring to the consumer demanding New Zealand produce a reliable and regular supply of the genuine article." We shall now proceed to deal with remit No. 4, Storage accommodation in New Zealand.

*Mr. H. D. Vavasour* (Marlborough Farmers' Union).—I represent the Marlborough Agricultural and Pastoral Association and the Chamber of Commerce too, and I therefore desire to put the whole matter concerned in the form of one motion. The motion I shall put is, "That, in the opinion of this meeting, it is advisable that an Advisory Board should be formed in London, and a Board of Control in New Zealand." When at Home in 1888 for eight months I spent nearly one day a week in the markets. I saw that the American meat trade was regulated in every possible way. Sometimes the difference in appearance of the meats was most marked. Now, if we had an Advisory Board in London and a Board of Control at this end, trade would be in a better position. The control should be in such a manner that the meat should be put on the market in regular supplies. Sometimes, it was pointed out to me by butchers, you can get unlimited supplies of New Zealand mutton, and at other times they had difficulty in filling their requirements, and they had to go to the Argentine meat. One butcher used to purchase over 40,000 pounds' worth a year, and at one time there was a dearth of New Zealand mutton, and he had to go for his supplies to the Argentine mutton. I am satisfied that to put the trade in a good and satisfactory position—I am talking now in the interests of the freezing companies as well as the growers—the supply must be properly regulated and controlled by practical business men, who would see that it was properly handled and put on the market. I am perfectly satisfied that would be of immense benefit to all of us. Reference has been made to insurance. The real reason that the insurance rates are so high is the amount of damaged New Zealand stuff that goes into the English market. The amounts of the claims are getting greater every year, and the consequence is that the rate of insurance is going up. There must be some means of finding out where the fault lies. At present there is none. The barges come alongside the ships, give no clean receipt to the ships; they take the stuff for sometimes two or three days on uninsulated barges before they get rid of it at the stores; the storekeepers will not give the barges a clean sheet; consequently there are three chances of the stuff getting damaged—on board ship, in the barges, and in the stores—and there is not the slightest possibility of sheeting home where the damage took place. An Advisory Board in London advising a Board of Control in this country, working together backwards and forwards, would enable the producers to put their finger on where the damage occurred.

*The Hon. Mr. T. Mackenzie* (Minister of Agriculture).—Did you see any of the damaged meat in the stores?

*Mr. H. D. Vavasour* (Marlborough).—Oh, yes! plenty of it; and I was perfectly disgusted with the arrangements, with the exception of those of one company, the C.C.P. Company, who held their stuff properly. There was not another store in London which handled the meat properly.

*Mr. A. Borthwick* (Borthwick and Co.).—Did you see all the stores in London?

*Mr. H. D. Vavasour* (Marlborough).—Almost every store—all but one, I think. Of course, in order to regulate the supplies here, it would mean the freezing companies putting up more storage here, but at the same time the storage here would be about half what you had to pay in London. Then, again, in London the stuff perhaps is semi-damaged in transit, and then refrozen, and then it is stale; but if stored here, and only put through in the proper proportion throughout the year, there could be no hardship about it. I do not agree with Mr. Kettle when he says it is