

as to whether it will not be possible for all parties to get together upon a common platform, and, by means of Advisory Boards in New Zealand and in London, practically control the trade.

*Mr. William Murray.*—I did not gather from Mr. Vavasour's motion quite the powers which he proposed to give to the Board of Control in New Zealand.

*Mr. H. D. Vavasour.*—The idea is simply that it would be a Board of Control.

*Mr. Murray* (Christchurch Meat Company).—I take it that the idea is that this Board of Control should practically exercise all the powers of proprietorship, acting as a board of trustees over the whole of New Zealand. I think, before passing such a resolution as this, it would be well to consider for a moment how such a scheme could be carried out. Is it practicable? Is it really possible? Can you imagine the whole of the growers in New Zealand, from Auckland to the Bluff, in the first place, in the second place those who are engaged in the trade and who buy at our public auctions here, those who export, possibly with other connections at Home, the representatives of London firms buying sheep and lambs to fill requirements at Home—is it reasonable to expect that all these varied interests are going to place their property in the hands of a Board of Control, to deal with their own property in such a manner as that Board thinks fit, without reference to their particular wishes in the matter? It is suggested that certain percentages should be shipped; that this Board of Control should regulate the shipments. Now, I would also further ask, are the interests (I do not wish to make invidious comparisons) of the North Island and of Canterbury likely to be identical? Is it likely that what would suit Canterbury growers would suit the growers in Masterton, and Auckland, and Wanganui? This Board of Control would be faced with a herculean task, with a most thankless task, of dealing with everybody else's shipments in a fair way. That seems to be a point that it is hopeless to get over. Is it reasonable that you, as growers, and the purchasers, are going to hand the trade over to a Board of Control elected by the freezing companies and by the producers? Have you the right to take away the right of free property in that way? If you are going to have open markets, you cannot have such a Board of Control taking actual proprietorship in your markets. If you wish to pass over the control to a new body, you will expect it in a year to do better than has been done in the last twenty years. But such a Board of Control would be little short of a revolution, which would entirely upset the conditions in the meat trade. Those conditions, I grant, may not be perfect—few things are in this world; but I think it would be well to consider what you are going to put up in the place of the present methods before you knock them down.

*Mr. J. G. Wilson* (Wellington Farmers' Union).—The gentleman who has just sat down has said that we cannot expect to alter the whole of our trade by this means, and to set up a Board of Control to take possession of the whole of the exports of New Zealand. That every one must agree with. I do not think any one ever anticipated such a course. It is quite obvious that it might have been done twenty years ago, but it is absolutely impossible to do anything of the kind now. It would break down of its weight directly if we attempted it. But we must admit that we have a combination of various kinds to meet elsewhere. There is only one possible way to meet combination, and that is by further combination of ourselves. How are we going to come to some conclusion in the way of combination here? The only possible way, to my mind, is that we should ask the freezing companies to make some sort of combination, not to take over their works, nor to interfere with their system of working or grading (that question of grading will come up later, by the way), but to ask them to combine among themselves, and meet and have some control as to when the lots are to be exported. I am firmly convinced that if they will only take up this subject they can do it, and they are the only people who can do it, if they enter into the matter in a proper spirit. We are their partners. We are always talking about the freezing companies, and the difficulties we have in London; but we farmers are very much to blame for our present position. If we had been wise, and retained the controlling interest in the freezing companies, we should be in a very much better position. But that is a thing of the past, and we unfortunately have allowed that to slip by. But we can make the best of a bad job, and the best is to ask our partners, the freezing companies, if they cannot combine in some way, as Mr. Hampson suggested. Notwithstanding their having that sense of rivalry, which they must have as far as buying and selling is concerned, they should see that it is to their own interests that they should combine, and have some means of controlling the exports of this country. We have a storage of only 1,800,000, and we have in London 2,700,000, and we found the stores the other day so full that the people could not tranship into them. That should never occur with proper management. It is absurd to ship Home large quantities of mutton (and we do not know when it goes, for some time afterwards, unfortunately), and find the stores full. Such a condition is absurd. I have no doubt there was plenty of storage-room in New Zealand. If we have not enough, we ought to have; we ought to build more. If we lose the bloom of the meat we shall lose it just as quickly in the dearest stores in London. The freezing companies should be asked, I think, to meet together and see if they cannot set up some form of management or control, delaying an output if necessary when finding that there was too much in London. There are many other things the Board might do, checking combinations against the freezing companies, which always reflect against the farmer in the end. There are many ways in which the freezing companies are often attacked. Well, of course, they are doing the best they can for themselves, and we do not object to that; but I do think a little more strong combination than they have shown in the past would be of great service to themselves and to the country. We saw the need of that a few days ago: combination might have insured our getting better terms. There are also the questions of freight, &c. The farmers do not enter into that at all—the freezing companies arrange that for us without our say; but I think a strong association of companies might have a very much greater weight than otherwise would be the case, and I do hope that the freezing companies will see their way to do this. It is very gratifying to see them so greatly represented here as they are to-day. Many of the people here have actually started the freezing companies of which New Zealand is very proud; but I think the step they