

*Mr. J. G. Wilson.*—I should like to say that if the resolution drafted implied any antagonism between the producers and the freezing companies, I am sorry it was the impression gathered; it was not the impression in my mind.

*Sir George Clifford.*—I was referring more to the tone of your whole remarks. With regard to your resolution, if I may make one remark, I think it puts the freezing companies in a somewhat invidious position. I have already said that, in my opinion, a Board of Control is not a judicious body to set up, and if many producers thought that way, it might be considered that we were trying to check some reform in the trade; whereas all we should do would be to report that that was not a judicious method of attempting any reform.

*Mr. J. C. N. Grigg.*—I think the greatest stumbling-block to anything like reform is that this is not the first time the same questions have come up. Originally there was a cry for storage when Fairfield was put up, and there was a store for 90,000 carcasses put up. I think that even in the year when we were killing very, very fast it was not called upon. We built that store to hold 90,000, and the interest had to be paid on that, and no sheep were put into it. Our company have generally had space to store stock to a certain extent. There is a great difference between summer and winter requirements, of course, but we have always been able to cope with the requirements of the time. Free competition is, to my mind, the life of the trade to-day, because the lambs are killed and frozen, and are in condition for anybody at all to speculate in them. A cable may come to buy twenty, thirty, or forty thousand, and they must be shipped in equal quantities every month, or by certain boats even, now. Well, if this Board of Control is going to try and regulate the shipments, they will upset all those contracts, which are the greatest source of competition which the farmers have got to-day. Look at the number of firms buying to-day; I think you can, as Sir George Clifford says, look round the globe, and find no country where there is such open competition. I have had the benefit of listening to much "freezing talk" from the time I was twenty-one upwards, and I remember very distinctly that those three years of great drop were the only three bad years. I would like to hear from the people who propose this Board of Control how they get over the various difficulties. If that is the life of the trade to-day, how is the Board of Control going to hold back supplies. And, if so, whose supplies? Holding up a market is a bad game now, as it has always been; and if we hold off the market, then we let somebody else get in. Let us come to the real practical issue: The Board of Control (I should not like to be one of them) would have to hold up the meat for a certain period, and then they have to decide whose meat has to be held up, and whose contract has to be broken, and then we should have claims for damages straight away. We are only touching on the fringe of the difficulties, and it is the practical work that is so hard. One more point: When you come to hold up other people's stuff, it is a big financial business; we have had experience of this before. If we try to interfere in any shape or form with the farmer's stuff, we find the farmer's stuff does not belong to himself, there may be a financial firm behind, and there comes in a difficulty again. They all want to do the best they can for themselves and for the farmer, and each firm wants to know what the farmer is going to do with the stuff. The farmers, to a great extent, as long as they have one loophole to get out of, are satisfied. Farmers have, as you know, refused 14s. and 15s. here, and had to sell at Home for 9s., and 10s., and less. I know this happens at times, by experience, for I do both. As a farmer fattening largely, I thought I could have a better market with the competition going on than thirteen thousand miles away. Of course, if there was a real ring here, and the freezing-works would not take the stuff, I should be in a hole; but we have an opening to a certain extent, and there are several channels in which you can act on self-defence. The competition from London is coming out here, like the wool-buying. There was a time when there was a quotation for "overall" or "anyway," as it were. One firm only came out here to buy when I sold my first wool. There are now many buyers who come out here, and the farmer does not want to become too much of a speculator. This Board of Control does not look to me practical on the face of it, and it has come before us in other shapes at different times in the past.

*Mr. H. D. Vavasour.*—I do not agree with Mr. Murray in saying that it is absolutely impossible to regulate the supply in London. I think we could very easily do it. How is it the brokers in London regulate the supply of the wool-market? I should say it would be just as easy with meat as with wool. I am satisfied that the first part of the suggestion is of immense importance not only to the freezing companies, but to the whole of the people interested in freezing. It is absolutely disgraceful the way in which the stuff is handled in London now. There is no supervision at all. I am not exaggerating at all. It is absolutely disgraceful, I repeat, the way the stuff is handled in London. I know how stuff ought to be handled, and nobody who has been Home can deny that things want remedying in London. It is all very well for the freezing companies to say that they handle the stuff properly: they may do so here, but in London they do not handle it in the same way at all.

*Sir George Clifford.*—Do you mean in the stores?

*Mr. H. D. Vavasour.*—I mean all through, from the ship's side to the stores and to the markets. We cannot dictate to the shipping companies how much they shall send out, but at the same time it is put before them as a suggestion that they should see to the proper handling of the stuff in London, and if possible control the amount put on the market.

*Mr. R. H. Rhodes* (Timaru Agricultural and Pastoral Association).—I want to ask a question, Mr. Chairman. I happen to be a director of a freezing company, and we are put there to conserve the interests of that freezing company, and how can we expect to have a Board of Control put over that?

*The Chairman.*—But the resolution is that you yourself shall form the Board of Control. I shall now put Mr. Wilson's motion, "That the representatives of the various freezing companies present be asked to meet together during the sitting of the Conference, with a view of association for the purpose of, as far as possible, controlling the export of frozen meat, and acting on the