

defensive when necessary, and generally protecting the joint interests of the producers and themselves."

Motion lost—14 for, 16 against.

*The Chairman.*—I have now to announce that the ballot-papers have been counted, and that the voting for the committee was as follows: Members elected for the North Island—J. G. Wilson, R. D. D. McLean, E. A. Campbell, A. Borthwick, J. Barugh, W. G. Lysnar; members elected for the South Island—D. D. Macfarlane, J. D. Hall, Sir George Clifford, J. C. N. Grigg, F. Waymouth, George Jameson. I therefore declare these gentlemen to have been duly elected. We will now proceed to the next business on the Order Paper.

*Mr. F. Waymouth.*—I have been asked by the Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association to move remit No. 5, with regard to storage-accommodation in London for New Zealand exporters of meat. I propose this remit in the following form: "That it be a recommendation to the committee to provide cool-storage in London for the use of New Zealand exporters of meat." The question of storage comes up not only in London, but here, as frequently mentioned. I am afraid that many of the farmers have missed the real points in this discussion. I recently visited England, and have had twenty-seven years' experience of the trade, and have paid great attention to it. The result of this experience is that I have come to a few conclusions, whether right or wrong I do not know. The first was that I could not help appreciating the manner in which our carriers handled the meat, so far as they were concerned, in London. They did all it was possible to do, to guard by careful handling, protection against weather, heat, cold, wet, everything possible, in fact, to guard against damage. But there, from that point, the chaos began; and the chaos is the farmers' fault. I say "the farmers' fault," because it is a matter that they have taken out of the freezing companies' control. As you are all aware now, I have ceased connection with the company I represented for so many years, so I speak as an independent person, and probably what I say will therefore be taken more in the spirit in which I give it than if I was still representing a company, and might be looked upon as having an axe to grind. I think the main point is their sticking so closely to their individual interests in the meat. If they would put trust in their freezing companies, and allow them to formulate a system—and it could be easily done—by which all interests could be served and conserved, and allow the freezing companies to pool their meat to a great extent—it is not necessary it should all be done—and do away with a vast number of the submarks carried in the vessels, then the trade could be put on a much better footing. There is no doubt about the grievances by which the meat is burdened in London; but it is, as I say, not the fault of our carriers nor the fault of the freezing companies, it is the want of combination among the farmers themselves, to see that their product is made the best of and the most of by a judicious system of pool. I went for the best part of a week down in the heat, and wet, and cold, and saw no less than ten different steamers discharging. I watched the transhipment from one end to the other. Here we take every care to have the shortest time between the freezing-works and the ships; and you take in London one ship discharging, and in repeated instances there would be half a dozen barges on one side and half a dozen on the other—the ship being moored from the quay by a short pontoon—and in addition there would be half a dozen railway-trucks. They each had two or three men in them, all of them paid, of course—and what for? Paid to sling two or three lots of meat, and then sit down and light their pipes and loaf. They are all paid by the hour, and do not do a quarter of an hour's work in an hour sometimes. And that is not all. The meat is getting soft while they are sitting about there. Then, perhaps the barge misses that tide, and has to wait for another tide, and then her meat is thoroughly thawed, and damage takes place. But before it comes to that, the trouble commences in the ship's hold. I, myself, have indorsed hundreds of bills of lading where we have been shipping perhaps thirty to fifty thousand carcasses, and there have been several different grades and submarkings. Grading is right and proper, but combination is necessary to avoid trouble. Then, the sorting that has to take place in the ship's hold before the meat is given to the barges and trucks causes the meat to be tumbled about in all sorts of ways. They have to get a sling together somehow, containing thirty or forty carcasses, and sometimes that is landed on the ship's deck and sorted, and that means broken shanks and crushed and mis-shapen carcasses. That would all be avoided if the farmers would pool their meat. Sooner or later the ships, in self-defence, will have to increase their rate of freight on small parcels, unless the farmers themselves will voluntarily combine. There would be further advantages in connection with pooling. The main thing would be that the farmers, by allowing their meat to be pooled, could have it sold any way they liked, by any agent they liked; it could be sold by cable, c.i.f., or in any other way, instead of having to wait until it gets on to the market, and takes its chance. But all these considerations about pooling have nothing to do with storage, it is contended. It has a great deal to do with storage. One principal cause of the shortage of storage was the vast multitude of small marks. The meat had to be kept separate, so that the owner could get it any day he called for it. Take our local works here: I frequently, when I had not to keep the marks separate, had 90,000 carcasses in Fairfield; now Fairfield is full with 50,000, because the lots have to be kept separate, and have to be tallied out for their portion of the shipment. A store that would carry comfortably 100,000 carcasses is full with 50,000 kept separately; it is the multiplicity of the lots that causes the trouble. I have spoken with the idea that the Conference should give this matter serious consideration—that is, the pooling of the shipments. We can apply all sorts of nostrums to the trade, but the first good you will get will be by adopting the system I have referred to. I now beg to move formally remit No. 5.

*Mr. J. C. N. Grigg.*—I second the motion *pro forma*. I do not know what is the exact amount of storage, but if New Zealand is going to produce as much more as some of our friends have told us, there will be need for more storage. I understand that the Government have a section where storage can be put up.