

work, and we have found the office exceedingly useful. Of course, it is the most satisfactory—far and away the most satisfactory—way of doing our business. I am not reflecting on the agents now, but I think ours is the best system to stick to. We have over a million of stock (about 1,300,000) passing through our hands, and in dealing with that we are a buying company, and therefore conduct our own business, and the business of our clients as well. Of course, we do not own the 1,300,000; we merely deal in it. I am sure that the establishment of a London office has led to the most satisfactory results. I leave the Conference to draw its own conclusions. Other companies might do the same thing if they chose to go to the expense. We have had no difficulty in handling our produce, and a very large amount of it, in a most satisfactory way in our own London office.

*Mr. C. A. De Lautour* (Gisborne Sheep-farmers' Frozen Meat Company).—The information given us by Mr. Malet is of great interest, but, of course, what is possible in the case of a great company is not possible in the case of other and smaller companies. At the same time, I have felt for a long time that combination to the extent that it was possible is eminently desirable; and I see no difficulty whatever (I think I may say so) in a complete organization of the freezing companies of the North. But whether our common interests can be sufficiently identified as to make that a colonial organization of freezing companies can only be found out by our meeting on a common platform and discussing among ourselves.

*Mr. J. G. Wilson*.—Hear, hear.

*Mr. De Lautour*.—I agree with Mr. Wilson that the resolution so far as it goes may be of great advantage to the producers of New Zealand. We all might fancy the addition of this matter or that, but if the foundation is firmly established, under the influence of this Conference, of a complete understanding between the freezing companies of New Zealand, and of the definition at least of common ground on which there can be union, this Conference will have obtained very valuable results. I should not like it to go forth even as a suspicion that the freezing companies are unwilling to organize and meet together. Certainly that is not so of the freezing companies with which I have any connection or have had the pleasure of meeting. We have found quite recently that all the companies of New Zealand have been able to meet, with exceptions which probably were quite justified in the case of your Canterbury companies, on common ground; and, although we had not much time to consider other matters of grave importance to the farmers, I have not the least doubt myself that in all matters indicated in this resolution, and in many other matters that might be added, we can attain very valuable results for ourselves as companies and for the farmers of New Zealand. Take our own instance, standing isolated at Gisborne, with such a question of insurance, convinced that the farmers are not getting value for what they are paying at the present time, and that they are not sufficiently protected for the money they are paying, what can we do as an isolated company? We have put out overtures, so far as we have ventured in our humility to do so, to all other districts, and gradually a feeling has grown up that an organization is a necessity not only on insurance, but on other matters. It was with great reluctance that I had to vote against the resolution yesterday, proposed in a modified form by Mr. Vavasour; but I had to do so simply because it affirmed the principle of control by holding over at this end—a principle that, so far, I am not converted to. I listened with great interest to everything that was said yesterday, but nothing fell from any speaker that convinced me that holding over in New Zealand, creating a vacuum which would be immediately filled by our competitors, and educating those who at present deal in New Zealand goods quite permanently, to go elsewhere, could be of advantage to the farmer. Still, I am open to be convinced, and perhaps something of weight may be said later on. I rose to say that, so far as the company I represent is concerned, I welcome organization, and we will do everything in our power to advance it; and if we are able to define common ground, that is the great object of this Conference. It is clear from yesterday's proceedings that you are not on common ground, but all climbing on your own platforms. As I might say, there was no queen-bee of sufficient potency to draw you all together after her.

*The Chairman*.—I shall now put again clause 1 [Carried unanimously], and formally move the adoption of clause 2 of the report, which really follows on clause 1.

*Mr. R. D. D. McLean*.—I second that.

*Mr. W. Murray* (Christchurch Meat Company).—I do not purpose to detain you long by speaking to this motion. I think it only right that I should voice for my company, the Christchurch Meat Company, our glad willingness to meet the wishes of the Conference, and, if possible, to find common ground. I may say that, in common with Mr. De Lautour, we probably realize more fully than it is possible for an outsider to do the great difficulties of finding common ground. The interests of the various companies and the interests of the various districts are very complex; probably only those who are in close touch with the work can understand how difficult and complex many of the problems are. At the same time it would be wise, I am quite convinced, to meet, in order that we may endeavour to find out where and how far we can work combined for the benefit of both companies and producers. I merely rise to say on behalf of my company that we shall do everything we can to facilitate such a Conference.

*Mr. J. E. Makgill* (Auckland Farmers' Freezing Company).—In rising to speak to this second recommendation of our committee, I do so from the position of representing a freezing company, but entirely a farmers' freezing company. From that position I can speak freely as a producer entirely. I think, in this matter of the permanent committee which is suggested to be set up, it was an exceedingly good suggestion; only I think it would be better if we put it in this way: that we made the meeting of the delegates from the various farmers' associations, agricultural associations, farmers' clubs, and so on, an annual matter, and from that Conference have our committee annually elected. To my mind the position is this—speaking entirely as a producer—and I think it explains to a large extent the position taken up by many of our delegates: We as