

Freight on Frozen Meat.

	60 lb. Sheep.		35 lb. Lamb.		800 lb. Bullock.	
	Rate per Pound.	Amount per Carcase.	Rate per Pound.	Amount per Carcase.	Rate per Pound.	Amount per Carcase.
Pre-war ..	$1\frac{1}{8}$ d. less 5%	s. d. 3 3	$\frac{3}{4}$ d. less 5%	s. d. 2 1	$\frac{9}{16}$ d. less 5%	s. d. 35 7 $\frac{1}{2}$
War ..	$1\frac{13}{16}$ d. plus 5%	9 6	$1\frac{15}{16}$ d. plus 5%	5 11	$1\frac{11}{16}$ d. plus 5%	118 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Post-war ..	$1\frac{3}{4}$ d. plus 10%	10 3 $\frac{3}{4}$	2d. plus 10%	6 5	$1\frac{3}{4}$ d. plus 10%	128 4

Post-war Rates as compared with Pre-war Rates.—Sheep, approximately $3\frac{1}{10}$ times as much; lamb, approximately $3\frac{1}{10}$ times as much; bullocks, approximately $3\frac{3}{8}$ times as much.

FREIGHT CONTRACT AND BILL OF LADING.

In conference with the Producers' Committee we discussed the proposed draft freight contract and bill of lading to be entered into between the freezing and shipping companies.

It was reported that this freight contract had been submitted by the committee to the shipping companies, and, after certain minor alterations had been made, had been placed before the various freezing companies. It had been arranged that the matter regarding meat could be proceeded with quite apart from the dairy companies' negotiations in connection with dairy-produce.

At the conference of representatives of the producers and freezing companies convened by the Board in Wellington on the 31st March, 1921, the matter of freight contracts and shipping rates was again carefully considered. It was pointed out to the gathering, which was a thoroughly representative one, that the Board of Agriculture had looked upon the different sections of the agricultural community as one, but it felt there had sometimes been a cleavage between different sections, and it had endeavoured to bring them together, particularly those who used refrigerated steamers to send their produce out of New Zealand. It was thought that the only possible way whereby the position with the shipping companies could be met was by all sections of the agricultural community combining together and presenting a united front. In the past they had all lost ground for the want of a common plan of action. Although there might be great differences of opinion, it behoved the conference to look upon the situation in a sensible way and come to some terms if they found the circumstances warranted such a course. It was impressed upon delegates that unity was their best weapon in the effort to secure improved terms for the shipment and marketing of their produce.

The chairman of the standing Producers' Committee presented a report of the committee's work since its inception. This report stated that the committee had dealt with various matters affecting the interests of the producers, these being almost entirely in connection with frozen meat, wool, and shipping freights, representations having been made by the committee to the Government from time to time concerning these matters.

In connection with frozen meat, the committee had passed a resolution to the effect that failing decontrol of meat-prices in Great Britain the control price should be raised 2d. per pound on lamb and 1d. per pound on mutton, and that representations should be made to the British Government accordingly. This resolution was conveyed to the Right Hon. the Prime Minister, who in turn made representations to the Imperial authorities, but was unable to get them to agree to this being done.

The committee at its first meeting also dealt with a proposal under which provision was made for affording some financial assistance to producers, in the event of market conditions rendering such action necessary. The course of the market for some months afterwards was such that no need for assistance arose. At a recent meeting of the committee, however, a resolution was passed to the effect that, in the event of banks discontinuing advances against store warrants for meat, the committee suggested that the Government give consideration to the resolution forwarded to it previously, and take such action as circumstances permit on the lines of those proposals, with such modifications as are necessitated by the changed conditions existing at present.

With regard to shipping and freight rates, a sub-committee had been appointed to draw up a form of freight contract and bill of lading for use after the Imperial Government control of refrigerated shipping ceases. The sub-committee had several discussions with the shipping companies' representatives, and a special agreement was come to regarding the details of the freight contract, with two important exceptions, one of these being the period for which the contract should be operative, and the other the rates of freight to be charged. The shipping companies were informed that the Producers' Committee were limited in their scope of inquiries to a one-year contract. The companies nevertheless indicated rates for a five-years contract, but, after further negotiations, came forward with a three-years contract on better terms than those quoted in the five-years contract. They also quoted for a two-years contract—that is, for the balance of this year and for next season's output. The companies definitely declined to enter into contract obligations extending over only the balance of this season, stating that the shortest possible period for which a contract could be made would be for the balance of this season and the whole of next; in other words, a one-and-a-quarter-years contract.

The committee asked for the decision of the conference on the following points: (1) as to whether a freight contract should be entertained or not; (2) as to whether, if the decision was in the affirmative, a one-and-a-half-years contract or a two-and-a-half-years contract was approved of; (3) as to whether the committee would be authorized to instruct freezing companies that they may proceed to negotiate contracts accordingly.