

A letter was received from the secretary of the Bootmakers' Union, expressing a desire for their representatives, Messrs. W. A. Morris and J. P. Joyce, to be allowed to give evidence.

The Secretary was instructed to inform them that the Commissioners would hear them to-morrow.

The Chairman read a letter which he had received from Messrs. Henry Feldwick and Mark Cohen, respectfully asking that the Commissioners should reconsider their decision to exclude the Press from their proceedings.

The Chairman spoke at length on the matter, and requested members to give their views.

After a lengthy discussion,

Mr. Luke moved, That, in view of the difficulties of giving a satisfactory *précis* of the evidence brought before the Commission, the previous resolution with reference to admitting the Press be rescinded, and that the Press be admitted to the proceedings of the Commission.

A division was called for, and the names were taken down as follows:—

Ayes.—Mr. Beauchamp, Mr. Bowen, Mr. Leys, Mr. Luke, Colonel Pitt, Major Steward.

Noes.—Mr. Millar, Mr. Reid, Mr. Roberts, Captain Russell.

The motion was therefore carried.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr. Beauchamp, That the Chairman should have a deliberative and a casting vote.

Resolved, on the motion of Captain Russell, That five members of the Commission form a quorum.

It was decided that the hours of the Commission should be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Mr. Millar suggested that the Commission should pay a visit to the Orepuki Shale-works before leaving Southland.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr. Beauchamp, That the Commission visit Orepuki on Thursday, provided business will permit.

The Chairman read the following telegram from the Hon. J. G. Ward: "I have received following telegram from H. B. Kirk, Timaru: 'Will Federation Commission sit in Timaru? If so, about when?' I have replied that the telegram has been referred to you to answer."

Resolved, on the motion of Mr. Millar, That a reply be sent that the Commission will only be able to sit in the large centres, but that it will be prepared to receive his evidence in Christchurch or Dunedin, whichever place will suit him best.

The Commission adjourned at 6 p.m. until next day at 10 a.m.

WEDNESDAY, 6TH FEBRUARY, 1901.

The Commission met at 10 a.m.

Present: Hon. Colonel Pitt, M.L.C. (in the chair), Mr. H. Beauchamp, Hon. C. C. Bowen, M.L.C., Mr. T. W. Leys, Mr. C. M. Luke, Mr. J. A. Millar, M.H.R., Mr. W. S. Reid, Mr. J. Roberts, C.M.G., Captain Russell, M.H.R., and Hon. Major Steward, M.H.R.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

H. A. Massey, who had been asked to give evidence, wrote to say he was neither an exporter to, nor an importer from, Australia, and had no evidence to give which would justify taking up the time of the Commission.

The Secretary was instructed to acknowledge the receipt of the letter, and to intimate that Mr. Massey's attendance would not be required.

J. E. Watson (Tothill, Watson, and Co., grain merchants, and chairman of the Invercargill Chamber of Commerce) attended and gave evidence.

J. E. Callender (New Zealand Loan and Mercantile) attended, and, after explaining that local officers were not free to give their opinions, and begging to refer the Commission to his manager in Wellington, was relieved from further attendance.

W. D. Hunt (Wright, Stephenson, and Co., stock and station agents and grain-buyers) attended and gave evidence.

W. A. Morris (bootmaker), who claimed to be the representative of unions of bootmakers, butchers, and railway servants, numbering upwards of four hundred, attended and gave evidence.

P. L. Gilkison (Fleming, Gilkison, and Co., grain-millers), C. J. Broad (Broad, Small, and Co., ironmongers and timber merchants), R. A. Anderson (J. G. Ward and Co., grain merchants), J. Johnston (Johnston and Co., engineers and dredge-builders), and W. Ross (Ross and Co., woollen-manufacturers) attended and gave evidence.

It was decided to proceed to Dunedin on Friday next, sitting there for the purpose of taking evidence on Saturday, 9th February.

A list of witnesses whose evidence it would be desirable to obtain in Dunedin was handed to the Chairman by Mr. Millar, and the Secretary was instructed to have subpoenas forwarded.

The Commission adjourned at 4.30 p.m. until 10 a.m. to-morrow.

THURSDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY, 1901.

The Commission met at 10 a.m.

Present: Hon. Colonel Pitt, M.L.C. (in the chair), Mr. H. Beauchamp, Hon. C. C. Bowen, M.L.C., Mr. T. W. Leys, Mr. C. M. Luke, Mr. J. A. Millar, M.H.R., Mr. W. S. Reid, Mr. J. Roberts, C.M.G., Captain Russell, M.H.R., and Hon. Major Steward, M.H.R.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed