

butter industry of Victoria, they were paying, in Melbourne, 2s. 6d. for butter-boxes which to-day they are paying 1s. 4d. for. I do not think there is any fear of their crushing the white-pine out. At that time I think the lowest price by the hundred or dozen was 2s. 3d.; to-day, even with their import duty, boxes are considerably cheaper. Mr. Young, the manager of one of the large factories over there, told me that they were selling butter-boxes in Melbourne for 1s. 3d. The manager of the Fresh Food and Ice Company also said that some of the Melbourne box-factories last year were offering to land butter-box shooks in Dunedin as cheaply as they could put them together in Dunedin. I should like to see an export duty on the first-class white-pine, all sizes, and give them all they could take of the second-class stuff free. I think it is a pity, in the interests of our own butter industry, to see the very best of the white-pine going over to them in Australia; and in a few years prices here are bound to advance, owing to sawmills having to go further back for supplies. I do not think there is any danger of their starting to use Baltic or Canadian pine, as from their resinous nature they are unsuitable for butter-boxes. I do not think there need be any fear of any timber coming in to put out white-pine in Melbourne or Sydney. I have seen the Richmond River pine. It is represented that the Richmond River pine is as good as the New Zealand white-pine timber for butter-boxes, but it is not. It is used by some of the meat companies for meat-cases; for cask-staves it is not as suitable as clean New Zealand white-pine. I may state that, so favourably is white-pine looked upon in being inodorous, I have had inquiries from Ceylon for timber for ice-chests and boxes, where at present they are importing from Japan.

Mr. Brown's motion was then seconded by Mr. W. J. Parker, and carried.

*Mr. Bailey:* I will now move, "That, in view of the present tariff, a recommendation be made to the Government that the railway freight on white-pine for export to Australia shall in no case exceed 1s. per 100 ft. to the nearest port." I think we have a very good case. It is nonsense to say that if you hold on to your white-pine you can cut it in ten or fifteen years time. If the timber is not cut at once the bush is felled and the timber destroyed. When the Ministry themselves talk about conserving their timber, they are rather too late in the day. Any one who has travelled over the main trunk route knows that they have destroyed thousands of feet of the finest timber we have in New Zealand, and they are continuing to do it to this day. It is no use talking of putting a duty on our pine when they are destroying the timber as they are going along. If we put a duty on it we shall certainly lose some of our trade, and I think the least we can do is to ask them to meet us with a reduction in our railrage freights.

*Mr. Bartholomew:* I will second Mr. Bailey's motion. We have heard about the Auckland people fostering this business for a number of years. About twenty-one years ago Messrs. Bailey Brothers and myself, I think, were about the first that shipped white-pine to Australia. At that time there was very little done in the shipping of white-pine, and we applied to Sir John Hall to get the railrages reduced on pine to Australia. We had to pay something like 8s. per 100 ft. from Wanganui to Melbourne or Sydney for pine, while on the top of that we paid something like 2s. 3d. for our railrage, so we thought by getting a reduction we would be able to make a market. We interviewed Sir John Hall and the Hon. Mr. Bryce, and got a reduction to this 1s. 6d. Well, of course, we got a good bit of timber sent away, but, unfortunately, bad times came along, and the bottom dropped out of the white-pine trade. Since then there have been hundreds of millions of feet of timber destroyed by fire. At the present time the mills on the line are certainly at a disadvantage compared to the people on the coast. I say the people on the line have a right to demand a reduction on the railway freight, and as we all pay rates towards the railway-lines, and they are supposed to be for the general public, consequently I think the Government would do no wrong in giving us a concession on that point. I think the people on the coast could not say we were getting any advantage. We look upon white-pine as being for outside use principally. It is only within the last five or six years that white-pine has been put to any use whatever. It was absolutely valueless before they began to make it into butter-boxes—previous to that the white-pine was absolutely valueless.

*Mr. Goldie:* Whilst you are bringing it down fifty miles from Levin for 1s. 6d., we are paying in Auckland 1s. 9d. for forty miles and 9d. for seven miles.

*Mr. Bartholomew:* You have got the world for a market with your kauri; you send it to London, France, Germany, and wherever you can.

*Mr. Goldie:* There is not a demand in those places for kauri like the demand there is in Australia for white-pine.

*Mr. H. D. Knight:* I would like to explain to the Conference that our railway freight from Dannevirke is 1s. 10d.

*The Chairman:* The matter of conserving forests has been mentioned. I hope the Conference will give no countenance to that, on the part of the Government or any one else where settlement is taking place. The sooner you can cut timber surrounded by settlers the better. I have been connected with the timber business for twenty-seven years. I was advised to keep my forests, but I sold them for as good a price as I could get, because they would have been burnt otherwise.

*Mr. Goldie:* Near the gumfields in the North you cannot conserve the forests at all. The Austrians and those in search of the gum travel right through the forests, burning and destroying the undergrowth as they go, which sometimes causes fires to get into the forests, causing serious loss to the owners thereof.

The Chairman then put Mr. Bailey's motion, which was carried.

*Mr. Goldie:* Some of the millowners have bought their timber from the Government and have a certain time to get that timber out. This time ought to be extended, because of the restriction placed upon our sales by the tariff suggested.

*Mr. White:* I will move, "That, not anticipating any adverse legislation from the Australian Commonwealth, the northern companies have committed themselves to large contracts for log supplies for the purpose of keeping their mills running full time; and, as the Federal tariff is likely