

our frozen produce. In September, 1910, a Congress will be held in Vienna, and it was thought desirable that a representative should be appointed from this meeting to represent New Zealand's frozen-meat produce. At the last Conference, in Paris, there were two thousand delegates, and the President of the French Republic was the President of the Conference; so that you will see that a large amount of interest was taken in that Conference. At that Conference the Argentine producers made themselves very conspicuous by issuing in great numbers a smartly got-up pamphlet descriptive of their products, and this was issued by the Argentine Government. All those delegates in this way became interested in the frozen produce of the Argentine. For this Vienna Conference I should suggest that this Conference asks our Government to also issue pamphlets, and possibly send a very influential representative to the Conference as well. I therefore beg to move remit No. 11, and add a suggestion that a recommendation be sent to the Government to send, if possible, the Minister who attends this Conference to-day (the Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Mr. T. Mackenzie).

Mr. R. D. D. McLean (Hawke's Bay Agricultural and Pastoral Association).—I second that. We should certainly not be behind the Argentine in being represented at the Vienna Conference.

The Chairman.—I should like to support the motion. If New Zealand sends a thoroughly competent representative, he should not only advertise in the way of pamphlets, &c., but the Government should also have a model freezing-chamber with frozen mutton in it. I might just mention that as soon as the Conference was over the French Government raised the tariff by 2d. per pound.

Mr. Malet.—I understand that all the proceedings of the Paris Conference were conducted in French, and about 95 per cent. of the people did not understand a word of French. I hope, if the Government sends a representative to the Vienna Conference, we shall see that he understands German. I think it is perfectly certain the proceedings will be conducted in German.

The Chairman.—Still, there are thirteen languages spoken in Austria now.

Mr. Malet.—But one language will be selected, and our representative should know that.

Mr. Ensor.—I think there were interpreters at the French Conference, and the reports were reported in English, French, and other Continental languages.

Mr. Malet.—Still, I do not think the translated views of Mr. Jones would carry much weight; it would be the same old sausage-machine grinding out all the speeches.

The Chairman.—I shall now put the motion.

Carried.

Mr. J. D. Hall (Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association).—In moving remit No. 12, "That it be a recommendation to the Conference to inquire into the rates and conditions of insurance against damage," I have to say that I think the question of insurance, and the consequent cost to the shipper, is of so much importance that I have written out my remarks, and I propose to read them as far as possible in the time-limit, and then hand them in to the reporter.

Mr. Hall then read the following:—

The position under which the producers in New Zealand have to make arrangements to insure their produce is such as to satisfy any one who has considered the matter that they are made apparently for the purpose of benefiting the purchasers of the produce, and those connected with the trade in England, and are at the expense of the producers in New Zealand. If this is not the case, it is impossible to understand why the producer here should submit to a continual rise in the premium on the insurance, which is due to circumstances which occur at the other end of the world, over which he has no control, and which benefit him not at all. I think it must be admitted that the remit with reference to insurance is one which appropriately comes from those representing the farming community, and that those representing the freezing and shipping companies are not in any way interested, while the only interest of the buyers is to receive from the insurers in the event of their being able to substantiate a claim for damages. In this connection it must be understood that the local c.i.f. buyers represent persons whose interests are to a certain extent identical with our own, with the exception that the prices quoted by them here are the result of sales effected in London under such conditions as preclude a fair price being obtained for our meat. Otherwise, when they insure here, they have apparently to pay the same rate of premium as is paid by the ordinary producer, unless indeed they are businesslike enough to make special arrangements with regard to their insurances. From the farmers alone must we look for support in removing the defects which exist and in improving the methods that are at present adopted. A brief glance is perhaps advisable at the value of the produce shipped and the amount paid annually in the form of insurance premiums, which is shown by the following table. Mutton, and lamb, and beef shipped during 1909: 1,835,647 carcasses mutton, 3,163,977 carcasses lamb, 310,834 quarters beef. Value for insurance, say, £3,600,000.

	£
This year's current insurance rate, 65s., less 10 and 5 per cent.	100,000
Rate (Lloyd's) for 1909, 45s., less 10 per cent.	72,900
Difference	27,100
Add survey fees for insurance damage, which companies do not pay now—say, half quantity shipped is surveyed, at £2 2s. per 1,000 carcasses	10,500
Difference in insurance for 1910 against 1909....	£37,600

It is impossible to accurately estimate the amount paid, as the rate of premium varies in accordance with the risk estimated from the position of the insured—e.g., the C.C. and D. Com-