

before. However, if we are to see a repetition of last year's prices, farmers will have to put their land to other and more profitable uses. To the larger profits obtainable is due the rapid increase of the dairy industry. During the ten years ending 1908 the exports of dairy-produce increased from £534,743 to £1,911,409—nearly three and a half times the amount; while frozen produce increased from £1,501,468 to £2,910,784—not quite double. Wheat also is engaging more attention from farmers, and it is expected the export of this cereal this year will be a record. While it is satisfactory to know there are other uses to which a farmer may turn his land, I, for one, should be very sorry to see the freezing industry displaced from its present high position. Continual cropping and dairying will exhaust the soil, and without the sheep and the freezing-works we shall find it difficult to maintain its fertility. It is perhaps desirable to point out that this Conference has been called by the association which I represent, and which consists of farmers and sheep-owners; and therefore it is only reasonable to conclude that the point from which they will view the matter will be from that of persons personally financially interested in the result. I do not overlook the fact that there are also present representatives of companies who kill and freeze for us, and also of those companies who carry our meat to the English market, and for whose presence, as indicating that they are willing to co-operate with us in the matter, we are grateful; but, notwithstanding this, I think that the meeting must be really considered as one of farmers, and as having been called for the purpose of ascertaining whether some combination cannot be arranged amongst them which will enable them to dispose of their produce in the future under some more businesslike methods than have been adopted in the past." The Chairman then read various apologies for absence from delegates, and proceeded: "The Agricultural and Pastoral Association will be very pleased if you gentlemen will all have lunch with the association at 1 p.m. to-day. Notices of motion may be handed in at any time up to the end of the luncheon adjournment. We wish to go into these matters as fully as possible, and no notice in any way bearing upon the business will be refused. I hope those of you who have notices will write them out and hand them to me. It is necessary, I think, to impose a time-limit on speakers, and I would suggest that fifteen minutes be allowed to those opening the matter and moving the motion, and ten minutes to those seconding and speaking to resolutions."—[Carried.]—"We propose to sit now till 12.30, when photographs will be taken, and then we have luncheon at 1 p.m., and resume at 2 p.m. and sit till 5 p.m. It will depend altogether upon how we get on to-day what hours we sit to-morrow. As you may be aware, the Hon. Mr. Mackenzie has consented to give an address, but he has asked that that be postponed till later in the Conference. He has also promised to give us something towards the printing and reporting of the proceedings of this Conference, for which I wish to thank him. We shall now go on to the first remit on the Order Paper. The first and second remits are practically the same thing, and unless there is any objection from those who have given notice of these remits I propose to take these two together. They are worded a little differently, but they are practically the same thing. The Scargill Farmers' Union and the Nelson Farmers' Union will please move their motions."

*Mr. George Sheat* (representative of the North Canterbury Farmers' Union).—I do not know whether I am in order, but I think that the lot will fall upon me to move this remit, seeing that my colleagues, Mr. Evans and Mr. Leadley, are not yet in their places. I am a representative of the North Canterbury Branch of the Farmers' Union, in which district Scargill is situated. I want to say that the North Canterbury Branch of the Farmers' Union fully indorses the action of the association in calling this Conference. We represent the small growers in one of the most important districts of Canterbury. Perhaps the main reason why we felt some action was necessary is because a number of us this last year have shipped—and have sorrowed. We have gained experience, but not cash, and we felt that it was necessary that some action should be taken whereby that should be obviated which the Chairman has called our attention to in his report, when he tells us that over 1,203,000 carcasses were dumped on the London market within the short period of two months. We feel that it is necessary that some scheme should be devised, and we think it practicable a scheme could be devised, whereby a company could be floated that should keep back and store either here—probably better here than the other side—the meat that we have to consign until it was wanted on the London market. You said, sir, in your opening address, that the shippers were filled with consternation last year. I can quite understand that. The huge quantity of frozen meat going on to the market in such a short space of time would naturally demoralize that market. My union felt that in sending this remit it would open to discussion the question whether it would not be practicable to form a company, or to devise means of establishing cool-stores, probably at this end, so that the shipments to the Home markets could be in such a manner put upon that market that there would not be that glut that has been spoken of. I see that the Nelson Farmers' Union, as you have remarked, sir, are practically in line with us. I am glad of that. I am glad that the Nelson people, who are dubbed the inhabitants of Sleepy Hollow (I was born there myself), have wakened up to the fact that it is necessary to have combination in this matter. I am glad to see a representative gathering from all parts of the Dominion, showing that we have all awakened to the necessity of seeing that our stuff is not sacrificed at the other end. I trust in moving this remit that something practicable may come of it. I believe, myself, it is possible that we could form a distributing association, but that would first of all entail that we have cool-stores wherein the stuff could be kept in good order and condition until the price warranted it being put upon the London market. I shall not take further time in moving this remit, because I recognize that "silence is golden," and that "a man's wisdom is shown by the fewness of his words." There are other gentlemen identified with the frozen-meat trade, and we, as producers, cry out to them to help us all they can. We have paid high prices for our land, and if the frozen-meat industry is to retain the place that it has attained it must in some manner be conserved differently from what has been the case during the past year. We all feel that both the larger producers and those of smaller calibre should combine, and we hope that out of this meeting something practicable will be evolved. I move, formally, the first remit on the