

industries, and the opportunity was then taken to discuss the question of wheat-production. With that object the conference obtained from you the facts as regards the present position.

"The conference decided that it is in the best interests of the Dominion that as early as possible, and certainly not later than November, the Government should announce its policy in clear and concise terms, stating whether it is prepared to guarantee wheat-farmers in the production of wheat, and if so to declare definitely what rate per bushel would be guaranteed, and under what conditions.

"The conference is of the opinion that farmers are justified in requiring that a continuous policy should be adopted, as it is essential for the growing of wheat in a systematic and economical manner that the farmer should be able to make arrangements for a long period ahead. Grass lands may have to be broken up in order to produce the necessary acreage, and it is especially essential that the small farmer should carry out the growth of wheat as a portion of a proper rotation of crops. This has been recognized in Great Britain, where a guarantee has been given for a period of three years, and it is also recognized in the United States of America as well as in other countries.

"When the Government have determined what terms and conditions they are prepared to offer, and have announced same, then a census should be taken of owners and occupiers of lands suitable for the growth of wheat, and it should be ascertained how far the offer made will produce the cultivation of a sufficient area to give effect to the national policy.

"The conference is of opinion that it is essential that the country should grow a sufficiency of wheat for its own requirements, and that such terms and conditions must be fixed as will ensure this. For that purpose it is necessary that suitable arrangements be made to achieve this result. In the opinion of the conference the uncertainty of the position in the last few years has resulted in an increasing disinclination on the part of farmers to grow wheat.

"Should the Government affirm as its policy that it is a national duty for the people to provide for their own food, then it should also by experiments in the economical working of the land find out and demonstrate to the farmer how far the use of modern mechanical appliances will increase economy of production.

"The conference especially draws your attention to the fact that the experience of the last two or three years has shown the serious danger of any country being dependent upon other countries for its bread-supply, and therefore trusts that such steps may now be taken as will in this respect render New Zealand independent.

"JAS. G. WILSON,

"President, Board of Agriculture.

"WM. FERGUSON,

"Chairman, National Efficiency Board.

"The Hon. W. D. S. MacDonald, Minister of Agriculture, Wellington."

STORAGE-SPACE AND SHIPPING OF WOOL, MEAT, AND DAIRY-PRODUCE.

This very important question in one phase or another has come before us at every meeting, and we have given it fullest consideration in the interests of all concerned.

The position as disclosed to us regarding the shortage of shipping, and the necessity there would be for providing winter feed for carrying over stock that could not be slaughtered, was deemed of such importance that after the matter had been fully discussed it was decided to send you the following resolutions, and to urge that such important matters receive immediate and special attention in view of the fact that the position was a much more serious one than the public was aware of:—

(a.) "That, having regard to the serious shipping question and the possible necessity of carrying over sheep which would usually go into the freezing-chambers, it will be necessary for farmers to prepare for such contingency by providing large areas of winter crops. This Board would therefore ask the Government to immediately point out to the Military Service Appeal Boards the necessity of adjourning *sine die* the calling-up of any ploughman or farmer who does his own ploughing; also that the Government take whatever steps may be deemed necessary to make this at once known throughout the Dominion."

(b.) "For the same reason the Board think that, as it is announced that the number of men to be sent away is to be curtailed in the meantime, steps should be at once taken to ascertain the name of any ploughman or trained harvest hand already in camp. If they have not been sent when the time arrives either for spring ploughing or harvest they might be released from camp to assist in this most essential work for, say, three months."

You again met us in September, 1918, in conference with the National Efficiency Board, and supplied us with figures relating to the frozen-meat and dairying industries, having regard especially to the cold-storage problem as affected by the shortage of shipping. We thoroughly discussed the following matters with you, Dr. Reakes, and Mr. Cuddie, and Mr. Taylor (of the Department of Imperial Government Supplies), viz.: The canning of second-quality meat, and the purchase of the resultant product by the Imperial Government; financial assistance by the Government to increase the existing canning plant; placing restrictions on the disposal of available supplies of tinplate for other than meat-canning purposes; warning farmers to provide additional