

(2.) The subjoined resolution, submitted by the Board,—

“That the shipping companies trading to New Zealand be requested to give such information they have available at the present time on the following points:—

“(1.) The extent of the service of refrigerated shipping which will be regularly in the New Zealand trade after the 1st July next; and

“(2.) The freight rates likely to rule for farmers’ produce after it ceases to be sold to the Imperial Government,”—

was first considered by the conference, but after a long discussion was replaced by the under-mentioned:—

“That the Government be asked to negotiate with the shipping companies usually trading to New Zealand for one contract for the carriage of all exports for twelve months, and to submit the terms of such proposed contract to the freezing companies, all other industries, and the producers, for consideration and ratification.”

(3.) The next resolution which was placed before the conference read as follows:—

“The Board of Agriculture is of opinion that producers should take steps to secure their interests in the matter of shipping, and that in order to do this a levy should be made on all produce exported, the amount accruing therefrom to be used as a fighting fund for the purpose of obtaining an assured and reliable shipping service at reasonable rates of freight, or for establishing an independent shipping line should such become necessary. Further, that the Government be asked to give such assistance as is necessary in order to carry out this project.”

Following, however, on the lines of the previous resolution passed by the conference, the following was substituted for it:—

“Failing to secure fair and reasonable arrangements with the shipping companies, the Board of Agriculture, with the consent of the Government, be asked to call at the earliest convenient date a meeting of delegates from freezing and dairy companies, agricultural and pastoral associations, and other producers’ organizations to discuss the position and to formulate proposals for the establishment of an independent shipping line, or some other effective method of dealing with the position.”

(4.) The next matter dealt with was the question of the extension of the meat commandeer, and the following resolution from the Board came before the conference:—

“After due consideration of the present-day position of the meat question in all its bearings, the Board of Agriculture considers that it would be in the interests of the Dominion that a further effort should be made to induce the British Government to extend the commandeer.”

This was confirmed, but added to and passed by the meeting in the following way:—

“That this conference confirms the following motion passed by the Board of Agriculture—viz., ‘After due consideration of the present-day position of the meat question in all its bearings, the Board of Agriculture considers that it would be in the interests of the Dominion that a further effort should be made to induce the British Government to extend the commandeer’—and recommends that the commandeer of meat be extended for twelve months on the condition that the Imperial Government undertakes to clear the stores of commandeered meat in New Zealand by the 30th December following.”

(5.) The conference then dealt with the unsatisfactory conditions brought about by the British Board of Trade’s disposal of New Zealand meat in Great Britain, and the Board placed before the meeting the following resolution:—

“That the present system of disposing of New Zealand meat in Great Britain is most unsatisfactory, and has resulted in such a congestion in the stores as to be a serious menace to our produce for the coming season. This, and the delay of unloading the cargoes of our produce in London must, if possible, be remedied, and the Board of Agriculture is of opinion that it is necessary for a further reduction in the retail price of frozen meat to take place, so as to encourage consumption and make room for the produce still shut out. Also, that the Government should make a further protest of the most emphatic nature against the present condition of affairs at Home in connection with our meat, and state that unless remedial measures are immediately taken the producer at this end will be placed at the mercy of speculators.”

When the matter was discussed, however, the following resolution was substituted for the one submitted:—

“This conference expresses its strongest disapprobation of New Zealand’s treatment by the British Board of Trade in permitting the existing congestion of the stores in Great Britain, while frozen and chilled meat is being brought to England from other countries and sold in a free market, the effect being the dislocation of insulated shipping and great delay in clearing the stores in New Zealand. It would request the Prime Minister to supplement his previous efforts by cabling the opinion of this conference of the imperative necessity for the immediate reduction of the controlled price of New Zealand meat now held, in order to stimulate consumption and relieve the position. If this is not done immediately the producers and holders of meat in New Zealand (who have done their best to assist the Imperial Government to feed and clothe the Army and the people of Great Britain) will suffer such difficulties as to cause a financial crisis in New Zealand.”