

be placed before the conference in due course. It is a draft contract which will probably be acceptable to the freezing companies, and would safeguard them in every reasonable way. The general idea was that it would be inadvisable to enter into any contract which included the payment of specified freight rates for more than one year.

8. *Mr. Hawken.*] That contract is to be submitted to the conference when it sits again?—Yes. I have personally seen the secretary of the National Dairy Association, and also Mr. Morton, chairman of the Butter Committee, and they were entirely in accordance with the suggestion that with regard to any contract that was entered into between the shipping companies and the dairy and meat people, the dairy and meat people should come together and decide upon the terms of the contract.

9. *The Chairman.*] Would it be possible to get these gentlemen you mention, who are on the committee, here to give us some information on these points?—That particular committee will, I believe, be in Wellington next week. I am hoping that by then the freezing companies' representatives will have their ideas formulated into some sort of a form of contract. It might be possible to get them here.

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Mr. A. W. JAMIESON, Assistant General Manager, New Zealand Farmers' Co-operative Society, examined. (No. 5.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Your full name, Mr. Jamieson?—Arthur William Jamieson. I am the assistant general manager of the New Zealand Farmers' Co-operative Society. I would like to say that I am rather at a disadvantage in regard to the particular matters you are inquiring into this morning. Mr. Relph is really the man who should have been here, but he was away in the north on urgent business when your telegram arrived, and I have come in his place. (Mr. Bushell, who accompanies me, is the general manager of our federation for New Zealand). What I wish to say is that Mr. Relph has had the problem you are inquiring into under consideration for the last four or five years. For some time past we have been endeavouring to get the Government to co-operate with the producers to see that proper shipping facilities are available. We feel that until this is done you will not get over the difficulty. In our particular federation we have a membership of something like seventy thousand, and we have been trying to get the different associations, the dairy companies, and other producers' companies to co-operate with the Government in an endeavour to establish satisfactory shipping facilities for the producers. I remember that when the Prime Minister and Sir Joseph Ward went away on their first trip Home a meeting was called in New Zealand to consider this problem. We thought if we could get a subscription of three millions we would be able to handle the position. We communicated with the Prime Minister and Sir Joseph Ward, but they said that nothing could be done until after their return to New Zealand. Mr. Relph got in touch with them in London and endeavoured to get them to act, but nothing has been done, and practically the position to-day is worse than it was five years ago. With regard to freight-rate statistics I can give no information at present. All I can say is that I can promise that Mr. Relph will supply some figures which will be of some help to the Committee. He will return later on from the north, where he is at present—probably within the next two or three days—and he will then be available for the Committee and will be of considerable help. I am sorry that I personally am not a shipping expert. Our people feel that freights are exceedingly high, both with regard to exports and also imports. It is not only a question of exports—it is also a question of imports: the ships have to carry cargoes both ways. That is all the more reason why the Government should co-operate with the producers. Of course, at the present time it might be difficult to make satisfactory arrangements, but I believe in a few months' time the shipping position will be much easier. I would just like to say, with regard to freights, that we have been approached by one or two representatives of the shipping interests during the last six months, and in conferences they have applied to get cargo from New York and from London. From the general tenor of their remarks I believe honestly that the freight question will be adjusted before very long, and that we will be able to get back to the position we were in some years ago. I believe that this will be brought about by competition before many months are over. There is going to be heavy competition from America and Japan. I noticed the quotation read out by Captain Hull this morning. That also shows that there appears to be a weakness arising. When you find the shipping representatives showing any signs of weakness regarding the position it is indicative of the future. From the information we have received we believe that there is likely to be a decline in freights during the next six months. Of course they are all trying now to get their contracts made at the highest possible rate.

2. *Hon. Mr. Nosworthy.*] They want to fix up their contracts for some years ahead?—Yes. It is something like a land agent who is trying to sell a farm: "If you don't buy by 5 o'clock this afternoon there will be another buyer." I believe that the same position exists to some extent in regard to shipping. I regret that I cannot give you any definite information in regard to freights, but Mr. Relph will be able to submit figures to you which should be of some help.

3. *The Chairman.*] Could Mr. Relph supply us with some figures in regard to the different rates of freight on imports—that is to say, the pre-war period, the war period, and the present rates?—Yes, I believe he could let you have some information in connection with those rates.

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FRIDAY, 20TH AUGUST, 1920.

Mr. E. W. RELPH, General Manager, New Zealand Farmers' Co-operative Society, examined. (No. 6.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Your full name, Mr. Relph?—Edward William Relph.

2. You are the general manager of the New Zealand Farmers' Co-operative Society?—Yes, sir.

3. We have requested you to come here this morning to give the Committee some information in regard to the question of the increased freight rates, and in regard to shipping matters generally?—I am very much interested, of course, in shipping matters. I have spent the greater portion of my life in the interests of the producers, and, as you know, the society of which I am the general manager has succeeded in various developments for the advancement of the producers' interests in many ways;