

WEDNESDAY, 30TH OCTOBER, 1929.

Present: Mr. Bitchener, Rev. Mr. Carr, Hon. Mr. Cobbe, Hon. Mr. Forbes, Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Jones, Mr. McCombs, Mr. Macpherson, Mr. Waite, Mr. Wilkinson (Chairman).

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

Correspondence: (1) A letter was read from J. Heaton Barker, secretary New Zealand Master Bakers' Association, asking that the expenses of the association's witnesses before the Committee be paid.

Resolved, That the Clerk inform Mr. Barker that the Committee cannot recommend the payment of these expenses.

(2) Mr. R. McPherson, manager of the New Zealand Wheatgrowers' Association, forwarded, on behalf of Mr. W. W. Mulholland, a schedule showing the cost of growing wheat.

Evidence: It was agreed that confidential evidence relating to balance-sheets, &c., should not be printed, and the Clerk was instructed to communicate with the witness in each case, where necessary, to ascertain whether publication was objected to or not.

Resolved, That the Chairman move in the House that the evidence be printed.

Deliberating report: A general discussion took place as to the basis of a report.

Mr. Macpherson moved, That in the opinion of this Committee the present sliding scale has given reasonable satisfaction, and that it should be adhered to so far as flour and wheat are concerned.

Dr. Craig, Comptroller of Customs, attended in relation to the effectiveness of the tariff on wheat and flour.

Mr. Macpherson's motion was held over, and the Committee adjourned until 10 a.m. on Thursday, 31st October.

THURSDAY, 31ST OCTOBER, 1929.

Present: Mr. Bitchener, Rev. Mr. Carr, Hon. Mr. Cobbe, Hon. Mr. Forbes, Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Jones, Mr. McCombs, Mr. Macpherson, Mr. Waite, Mr. Wilkinson (Chairman).

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

Deliberating report: The Committee resumed deliberation with the object of agreeing upon a report. After some discussion Mr. Macpherson, with the leave of the Committee, altered the motion which he had made at the previous meeting to read, "That the Committee recommend that the present sliding scale of duties affecting wheat and flour, as provided by the Customs Amendment Act, 1927, be continued; but that bran and pollard be admitted free of duty."

Amendments: Notice of amendments were given as follows:—

(1) By Mr. McCombs: "The present sliding-scale duty, together with favourable seasons and bountiful harvests, has resulted in a surplus production of wheat. Part of this surplus, which should have been retained to meet possible shortage in the near future, is being exported, and the result may be that New Zealand will have to import wheat at a very much higher price than was received for the wheat exported. Lack of combination between the wheat-pool interests and the milling interests is largely responsible for the economic loss to the Dominion which will result from the export of wheat at a low price and the importation of wheat at a higher price, together with the freight losses each way. In the circumstances, the wheat-growers require to be financed and protected against combinations within New Zealand working to depress the prices of milling-wheat. We are convinced that the only satisfactory way to ensure that the farmer shall receive a payable price is for the State to acquire a sufficient number of mills to meet the Dominion's requirements. The protection required by the wheat industry could best be obtained by means of a subsidy. Consumers of wheat and flour and bran and pollard would thus be enabled to get supplies at a reasonable price. The subsidy should be sufficient to enable the 4 lb. loaf of bread to be sold at 9d."

(2) By the Hon. Mr. Cobbe: "That the present sliding scale of duties be continued, but that bran and pollard and fowl-wheat be admitted free of duty."

(3) By Mr. Wilkinson: "That the present sliding scale of duties on wheat and flour be amended in the following directions: (a) By reducing the basis, in the case of wheat, from 1s. 3d. to 9d. per bushel; (b) that the basis of duty on flour be reduced to the parity of the duty on wheat; (c) that all animal-foods, including bran and pollard, be admitted free of duty."

The amendment (No. 1) moved by Mr. McCombs was submitted to the Committee first and was negatived on the voices.

Amendment No. 3, moved by Mr. Wilkinson, was then taken; and on the question being put the Committee divided, and the names were taken down as follow: Ayes, 2—Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Wilkinson; Noes, 8—Mr. Bitchener, Rev. Mr. Carr, Hon. Mr. Cobbe, Hon. Mr. Forbes, Mr. Jones, Mr. McCombs, Mr. Macpherson, Mr. Waite. So it passed in the negative.

By leave of the Committee, the original motion was divided into two portions, and the Hon. Mr. Cobbe's amendment withdrawn to enable it to be moved as an amendment to the second portion of the original motion.

The first portion of the original motion being then put—"That the Committee recommend that the present sliding scale of duties affecting wheat and flour, as provided by the Customs Amendment Act, 1927, be continued"—the Committee divided, and the names were taken down as follow: Ayes, 8—Mr. Bitchener, Rev. Mr. Carr, Hon. Mr. Cobbe, Hon. Mr. Forbes, Mr. Jones, Mr. McCombs, Mr. Macpherson, Mr. Waite; Noes, 2—Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Wilkinson. So it was resolved in the affirmative.