



NOTES OF STATEMENT WHICH MR. W. B. BRAY HAD WITH THE HON. G. LES MARTIN AT WELLINGTON, ON 15th JUNE, 1937.

Mr. BRAY read the following letter:-

"At a meeting of honey producers, convened by advertisement by myself to consider Honey Control Board affairs and marketing control, and held this afternoon (12th June) in Christchurch, the following resolutions were passed unanimously:

1. That this meeting of producers protests against the action of the Honey Control Board in handling Australian honey and demands a Commission of Inquiry into the whole proceedings of the Board in order to prevent a recurrence of the trouble.
2. That in view of our lack of confidence in the present Board we ask the Government for an assurance that legislation will not be brought down to legalise the past unconstitutional acts of the Board.
3. That this meeting of producers is opposed to any form of marketing which does not protect the interests of consumers as well as producers by a price discount subsidy which does not come out of taxation.
4. That this meeting of producers asks the Government to amend the Honey Control Board Act, 1924, to extend the franchise for the election of Board members to include all owners of registered apiaries who sell honey.
5. That the producers at this meeting are opposed to any form of registration of apiaries coupled with taxation.

Minister-General of Agriculture  
REFERRED.  
16 JUN 1937  
*W/B*

The production represented by those at the meeting amounted to over one hundred tons. The meeting appointed me to convey the resolutions to you personally.

At Timaru on Friday, 11th, a similar meeting of producers passed resolutions similar to 1, 2, and 3. In the second resolution the reference to lack of confidence in the Board was an addition suggested in order to emphasise our protest."

*See  
5/4  
7.6.37*

In reply to the Minister's question what was meant by the "unconstitutional acts of the Board", Mr. Bray said that they thought there was a possibility of the Government legalising what the Board had done by an amendment to the Act. He thought there was that possibility and so he moved that resolution.

MINISTER:- "It is largely assumption. You have nothing to go on."  
MR. BRAY said there was so much in it that they desired a Commission of Inquiry.

MINISTER:- "I think it would be better to wait until after your meeting, and if anything develops then you can make further representations. I cannot see a single reason for setting up a Commission."

MR. BRAY said Johnson, Kerr and Johnson had 600 cases consigned to them and their telephone was connected with Mr. Butland's telephone. That was sufficient to warrant the inference that they were dummy for Mr. Butland privately.

MINISTER:- "I think your proper step is to go to the meeting and if anything arises from the meeting that you are not satisfied with you can come to me again. I am not going to sit here and give you information, even though I have the information."

MR. BRAY said it was a matter of marketing that they were concerned in and it was the Government's duty to protect them.

MINISTER:- "How do you know we have not protected you?"

MR. BRAY:- "Mr. Watson said the matter was to be finalised today. If the 34 tons are already shipped it must be finalised. The Board has no power under the Act to handle Australian honey. Mr. Rentoul, Manager of the Board, <sup>said they</sup> purchased 100 tons, and Mr. Watson said they bought 100 tons; but this was denied. That makes it suspicious. If they all agreed we could possess ourselves in patience. After the meeting it may be too late. We do not want the Government to commit itself to any course of action in this respect."

MINISTER:- "I can assure you that the Government will do what they think is right irrespective of any opinion you have in regard to the matter."

MR. BRAY wanted to be satisfied that the Minister knew all the facts. If Johnson, Kerr and Johnson's consignment went to the Board's London Agents it would be detrimental to their interests.

MINISTER:- "I will say this much, as far as the Board is concerned nothing has been done in regard to a consignment to London."

MR. BRAY:- "Will you go further and find out what Mr. Butland is doing independently of the Board, as Johnson, Kerr and Johnson?"

MINISTER:- "I do not know that I should do that. I do not know that it interests us. You have an opportunity of dealing with these things at your conference."

MR. BRAY:- "Supposing Mr. Butland gives us no intimation at the meeting, what will you do?"

MINISTER:- "We will wait and see. Mr. Butland replied to the letter, which was absolutely full of inaccuracies. You were just on a kite-flying expedition to find out things."

MR. BRAY:- "The Manager's letter and Mr. Watson's contradicted Mr. Butland's. Those letters have been published in the 'Christchurch Press'. You cannot maintain that my letter was full of inaccuracies."

MINISTER: "I do. You have a line of action that you can take at the Conference."

MR. BRAY said it remained to be seen whether they would be allowed at the Conference as they were not members of the National Association. They knew Mr. Butland was doing it for some time.

MINISTER:- "Not for the Board: for Honey Limited."

MR. BRAY said the Board's powers were confined to honey to be exported from New Zealand.

MINISTER:- "You cannot export without the Board. I think you should make your protest at the Conference and if you do not get satisfaction you can then come to me."

Mr. Cockayne entered the room and the Minister said to him:- "Mr. Bray wants me to disclose to him the different things that he is not sure about himself so that he can go to the meeting and say he has been to the Minister and had the information from him."

MR. BRAY said he wanted an assurance from the Minister that he was acquainted with the facts, and especially the fact that the firm Mr. Butland was connected with was on its own account importing.

MINISTER:- "I do not know anything about Johnson, Kerr and Johnson."

MR. BRAY wanted the Minister's assurance that he would make it his business to find out what was being done.

MINISTER:- "I will give you my assurance that I know all that has transpired with regard to the honey in Australia, - the dealings of Honey Limited and the Board in connection with it."

MR. BRAY said it was the assurance about Johnson, Kerr and Johnson that he wanted, and that was where the need for a public inquiry came in. He would have to report to his people in Christchurch that the Minister would not extend his assurance to cover that point.

MINISTER:- "I will not give you any assurance that there will be a public inquiry into the business. Come back after the meeting and make your representations."

MR. BRAY said the other resolutions were not so important. They wanted all producers included in the franchise. It was a franchise of exporters only.

MINISTER:- "I take it all these producers would be willing to link up with the organisation?"

MR. BRAY:- "We would get them to register."

"As producers of New Zealand we have a proprietary interest in the London market."

MINISTER:- "You would like to work independently of the Board?"

MR. BRAY:- "Suppose the Board spoilt the market at Home by putting Australian honey on it so that they lose our goodwill."

MINISTER:- "You would not have any confidence in the Board unless you had the members on the Board whom you really wanted?"

MR. COCKAYNE:- "The present position is that the exporters are represented, and you would like the whole of the beekeepers to be represented."

MINISTER:- "We will give that consideration."

MR. FAWCETT:- "It has been brought forward from a large number of interests at different times."

MINISTER:- "It is democratic and is worth consideration. I will undertake to look into it."

"I do not think you have helped the position by the meetings you have held and the announcements you have made to the Press. I think it would have been infinitely better to have reserved your remarks for your own conference instead of publishing it as you did, and largely on assumption."

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