

that of the occupier's family. It is therefore what are called "the minor industries" that should be encouraged. By minor industries I mean such as dairying, fruit, fibre, and fowl farming. I do not for a moment advocate the exclusive cultivation of any one of the above-named industries—at least, to commence with. As time goes on each will take its proper position if judiciously fostered.

(4.) The question as to whether New Zealand farmers can for any lengthened period continue to grow wheat with profit is year by year forcing itself upon those most interested in that business. Wheat ere long will be poured into the Home markets from the vast plains of India at such a price that it is predicted it will tax to the utmost the endurance of New Zealand farmers. This is a matter that may seem irrelevant to the subject under debate, but a little consideration will, I think, show that such possibilities are a further reason why New Zealand farmers and others should be induced to turn their attention to such industries as that of fruit-growing and others referred to. We know that as wheat-growing became less profitable to the British farmer Mr. Gladstone saw a panacea in fruit-growing.

(5.) We also have the example of the farmers of New York State as an instance of wise forethought. Before wheat-growing had extended to the boundless prairies that industry was profitably conducted by the farmers of New York; but the cheaper lands on the prairies and the advent of labour-saving machinery completely revolutionised the business. The farmers of the older States, finding that they could no longer compete, determined to devote themselves to fruit-growing (principally apples). Thousands of acres that were once growing wheat are now covered with profitable orchards. Of course the American orchardist has the advantage of a teeming population at his door, who consume large quantities of his fruit. If this is true of the Americans, it is also true that the New Zealand fruit-grower has the advantage of the difference of the seasons already alluded to. With quick transit, the cool-chamber, and low freights, his position will not compare so unfavourably as might at first sight appear.

(6.) And now as to the best means of promoting the growth of fruit on an extended scale: It appears to me that no better system could be followed in this colony than that which has been adopted by the Department of Agriculture in Victoria. A convention of fruit-growers, invited by the Minister of Agriculture, has met in Melbourne. Delegates from twenty-five societies attended. Papers were read, and fully discussed, on important matters relating to the growing of fruit, its packing and export. Indeed, it may be said that every subject of importance was fully ventilated. These papers, and the discussions thereon, have been printed in pamphlet form, and distributed gratis to those requiring information on the subject. The pamphlet contains 169 pages.

(7.) I am not prepared to recommend that a convention of fruit-growers should be held in New Zealand. Such a step would perhaps be premature. I think, however, that much good would result from the publication of a pamphlet containing a series of papers bearing on fruit-growing in the various parts of New Zealand, which must differ materially owing to our wide range of latitude. The papers might be furnished by the various horticultural and fruit-growers' associations throughout the colony. Full and practical directions should be given as to the soils best adapted for orchards, and the varieties best suited for each district, but more especially with a view to the export trade.

(8.) Information is required on the life-history and the most efficient means of dealing with fruit-pests. This is a most important point, and one which is little understood by the great majority of fruit-growers. It is to be hoped that, sooner or later, our Government will follow the example of Victoria and of New South Wales by appointing an entomologist. There are one or two in the colony, whose services might be engaged intermittently at first and permanently if found desirable after a time.

(9.) Another and perhaps the most potent way of all to encourage the industry would be for the Government to offer a bonus of 2s. per case for parcels of not less than fifty cases which left a fair margin for profit when sold in the Home market. The Victorian Government pay a bonus of 2s. per case for all apples and oranges, &c., exported. And not only so, but they pay a bonus for every acre of trees planted (I believe the sum is £2 per acre for apples).

(10.) A bonus might also be offered for the first five tons of dried fruits, and for canned and bottled fruits as well.

(11.) Producers of fruit must look to the outside world for a market for their goods. It is quite possible that markets may be opened up in quarters of the world nearer than Britain, such as the Islands, India, and San Francisco. The manager of the Styx Apple Company sent a small trial-shipment to Rio de Janeiro a couple of years ago, which proved successful. Potatoes were also sent, which left a profit as well.

(12.) A point for consideration is as to whether an agency in London might not with advantage be established, having cool-chamber accommodation for the reception of perishable goods, such as butter and fruit, &c.

(13.) The question as to whether apples can be shipped to the English market from New Zealand has now passed the experimental stage. Several small shipments have been made, which have resulted most satisfactorily to the growers. The Styx Apple Company have during the past three years sent several small lots, which have always left a satisfactory profit, selling at from 14s. 6d. to £1 per case of 40lb. The following varieties of apples were amongst those shipped: Ribston Pippin, Cox's Orange Pippin, Emperor Alexander, Fearn's Pippin, Golden Rennet, Royal Hereford, Pearmain, Prince Bismarck. These varieties all carried well.

The following are the charges for shipment: Cases, 8d. each; paper, 6d. (apples will carry without paper, but they sell better with it); railway charges to Lyttelton, 2½d.; freight to England, 4s. 2d. (equal to 1d. per pound gross); cartage, commission, &c., in England, 1s. 6d.: total, 7s. 2½d. per case. The charges would be somewhat less for large parcels—say, 7s. per case: all over that amount is clear profit.

Mr. York, of Woolston, shipped twenty-five cases in the s.s. "Tainui," consisting of Norfolk