

Beefin, Newtown Pippin, Five Crown Pippin, and Lemon Pippin. These apples were picked, and packed direct from the tree—it is a mistake to suppose that they must be allowed to go through the sweating process before packing—and sent by the s.s. "Tainui," in April last. The apples realised £15 13s., and the expenses were £9 9s. 6d., leaving a net profit of £6 3s. 6d., or 5s. per case of 40lb., or 1½d. per pound. The expenses on small lots of fruit are proportionately greater than on larger lines, nor are the prices received so good, as buyers do not care to attend small sales. To produce the best results large parcels—say, five or six hundred cases—should be shipped.

The following returns are taken from a catalogue of a sale of Tasmanian apples sold in London on the 21st April last: Scarlet Pearmain, £1 2s. per case; Beauty of Kent, £1; Newtown Pippin, £1 3s.; Ribston Pippin, £1 1s.; Crow's Egg, £1 2s.; Cox's Orange Pippin, £1 3s.; King of the Pippins, 15s. to 16s.; Gravenstein, 18s.; Golden Russet, 16s. 6d.; Prince Bismarck, 16s. 6d.; Jonathan, 16s.; Alfriston, 15s. to 16s.; Roach Pippin, 14s. Apples sold on the 28th and 29th April: Ribston Pippin, £1 1s. to £1 2s.; King of the Pippins, 18s. 6d. to 15s. 6d.; Cox's Orange Pippin, 18s. to 14s.; Scarlet Nonpareil, 16s. 6d.; English Russett, 15s. 6d.; Roach Pippin, 15s. 6d.; Pearson's Plate, 15s. 6d. to 14s.; Golden Rennets, 16s. A comparison of the prices realised in the beginning of April and the end of that month shows that the prices fall rapidly as the season advances, and that therefore the earliest shipments pay the best.

It will be well for fruit-growers to bear in mind that only the very best fruit should be packed for shipment. The question then arises how best to dispose of the residue. This problem has been solved in Canterbury. The Styx Apple Company have erected a cider plant, and have succeeded in manufacturing an excellent article, which is highly spoken of by competent judges. There can be little doubt but that this beverage will find a ready market in this colony, and will supply a wholesome and a much-needed beverage. It is anticipated that a considerable trade will also be done in Australia.

The following information has been kindly furnished by the manager of the company referred to:—

*Cider.*—"The very best cider can be made from a judicious blending of different varieties of apples. The great secret is to crush the fruit when thoroughly mellow—i.e., it should be allowed to remain exposed to the sun for at least one month after it has ripened on the tree. A far longer period is necessary to mature late fruit. All well-coloured and well-flavoured apples will make good cider; but large green and pale-yellow varieties must be avoided. It is absolutely incorrect to suppose that good cider can only be produced from apples of no value for any other purpose. The quantity of juice obtainable from a given weight of apples varies with the kind, and, of course, with the amount of pressure. With our machinery we get about one gallon of juice from 16lb. of apples. With the steam-power which we hope to have in use next season we shall largely increase the yield. To produce really good cider great care is necessary after crushing, to check fermentation before the drink becomes too acid for any but a Somersetshire man. Cool cellaring is, I think, almost indispensable. In an ordinary year cider could be produced at from 2s. to 2s. 6d. per gallon—i.e., for first-class, bright, fairly-sweet cider, racked several times. In a plentiful year and with a large demand it could be profitably manufactured and sold at from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per gallon. I should estimate bottling at 3s. 6d. per dozen, including corks, wire, and bottles. Allowing a reasonable profit to the bottler, and for a little waste, 9s. per dozen quarts would be a fair price."

*Soft Fruits (small).*—(1.) A great impetus would be given to the production of small fruits for the manufacture of light wines if the manufacturers were allowed to sell it in less quantities than 2 gallons. (2.) While sulphurised fruit-pulp is admitted from Tasmania at ½d. per pound, instead of at 1½d. as formerly, there is little encouragement to the growers of small fruits. Public markets in all the large centres of population, for the sale of fruit and all other perishable goods, would be a boon to the producer as well as to the consumer. I notice that a movement is on foot for the establishment of such a market in Wellington.

According to recent statistics there are fifteen thousand seven hundred and seventy-one acres of orchard in New Zealand, of which, say, ten thousand are under apples, which, at 120 trees per acre yielding 2 bushels each, at 1d. per pound net on 80lb. = 6s. 8d. per tree = £40 per acre. Thus we may form some idea of the value of this industry if properly carried out.

FRIDAY, 29TH AUGUST, 1890.

Mr. T. KIRK, F.L.S., late Chief Conservator of Forests, examined.

11. *The Chairman.*] The Committee has been appointed for the purpose of investigating the possibilities of the fruit industry, and would be glad of such information from you as would enable us to indicate the best fruit to grow in different parts of New Zealand?—The climate offers so many advantages for fruit-growing that all the fruits of temperate climates may be readily cultivated; and there is this peculiarity, that the fruits of warm and temperate climates will come to maturity side by side, such as the apple, pear, plum, and cherry. There is another advantage which we owe chiefly to our climate, and that is, that the poorer soils of the North are available for the cultivation of apples and pears. Should this industry be undertaken on an extensive scale a large export would speedily ensue. Owing to the difference in seasons allowing us to send the choicest ripe fruits to the wealthy markets of the chief cities of Europe and America at a time when these markets are exhausted, it would not be easy to overstate the demand that would arise. The feasibility of this has been proved to a certain extent by small shipments, which, when carefully packed and properly selected, have invariably secured good prices. Oranges will ripen freely from the North Cape to the Lower Waikato. Lemons have a somewhat wider range. Limes will also ripen freely. The demand for this fruit is increasing all over the world, and the supply is not