

36. Has not the low price obtained been due to the fact that inferior fruit was sent?—Yes, to a considerable extent. Some fruit went from the North last season and sold for 2s. a case; but the apples had been previously bored by the codlin-moth grub. Mr. Shoebridge, to whom I have referred, proposes that the Governments of Tasmania, Victoria, and New South Wales should charter a vessel and have a portion of the hold fitted up in her as suggested; the fruitgrowers to guarantee 20,000 cases. If the fruit went Home safe, the shippers to pay the freight on them. According to this proposal, the Government of each colony is to bear the first cost, for, as a rule, fruitgrowers are not in a position to run any great risk.

37. According to Mr. Shoebridge, the remedy is to send the fruit in a wind chamber as against a cool air chamber?—Yes, that is it. Seeing that the fruit industry is likely to become of great value to New Zealand, I do not think it would be too much to ask our Government to undertake an experiment of the same kind. I have no doubt but that 5,000 cases would be sent from Canterbury on the same conditions. If the Government will interest themselves in the industry to the extent of paying for the first experiment on the same conditions as that proposed by the other colonies—which, if successful, would reduce the freight by at least 1s. 6d. to 2s. a case—this would be a great boon.

38. *The Chairman.*] How many pounds' weight of apples in a case?—There are 40lbs. It costs more in freight to send them Home than frozen meat, because the shipping companies say it is not a regular trade. If the Government would undertake the experiment as indicated, I do not know of anything that would lead so materially to the success of this fruit trade. I do not know of anything that would encourage the industry so much as a reduction of freight.

39. Can you give us any information as to the success of the Agricultural Department in Victoria? How it has operated; whether the results have helped the industry?—The Victorian Government gave considerable encouragement to the planting of orchards in the way of bonuses, &c; this remark applies also to vineyards. Of course, you know what they have done there in regard to the dairy industry; but I think they have been too lavish in their monetary contributions towards developing it by bonus and subsidy, and which have been much abused. We do not want anything of that kind in New Zealand. What we want is protection against false trading; we also want some further expert information.

40. We have an Agricultural Department here; if information is to be beneficially circulated, should there be a journal issued, say, once a month?—Yes, all the other colonies have their Bulletins and Gazettes issued at regular intervals. I do not know of any better way of disseminating information.

41. How would such a publication reach the public?—Through the public reading-rooms and libraries throughout the colony.

42. Let me ask you, has the California market been tried?—I saw a statement last night to the effect that something could be done there.

43. Is it nearer?—Yes, it is nearer. The small shipments have been made with some success—at least I have been informed so. It is said that all the best fruit there is sent on to the eastern coast, and that at seasons there would be a fairly good demand. The matter, however, is one worth investigating.

44. Has the cultivation of olives been tried in New Zealand?—Yes, in the North Island the olive flourishes and produces abundance of fruit.

45. *Mr. Wright.*] Have you any experience of distilleries established to distil the essential oils from flowers for perfumes? It appears to me that the climate of New Zealand is good enough to grow any flowers that might be wanted for that purpose?—Such an industry might be made to pay under very favourable circumstances—that is, if the people would gather flowers and prepare them themselves; but under ordinary circumstances it would not pay. Britishers do not take kindly to those kind of industries.

46. But it is a business that scarcely entails any labour; and such labour as it does require is of a pleasing kind; it should be specially attractive to females and children. Have you any knowledge of the cost of plant that would be required?—No; I know that an expert in that business came to Christchurch some few years ago. He tried to interest people in the matter, but he could not succeed. He was a man who had worked in France in the business, and knew all about it, but he could not get anyone to take him up. With reference to fruit for the local market, one thing is troubling us very much. I refer to the importation of apples from Tasmania. There are large quantities of locally-grown apples lying in Christchurch for which the growers cannot get a sale.

47. *The Chairman.*] At this time of year?—Yes; the Tasmanian apples come in by thousands of cases, completely swamping the local markets, which after all is but limited.

48. *Mr. Lawry.*] Are the Tasmanian apples better than yours?—The Tasmanians grow larger quantities of the finer kinds than are as yet produced by ourselves; but there are no finer apples in the world than those grown in Canterbury.

49. *The Chairman.*] What price is given for Tasmanian apples?—They vary in price—from 6s. to 7s. a case; Canterbury apples average from 5s. to 6s. per case.

50. How do you account for that?—The Tasmanian cases contain from 45lb. to 50lb., while the Canterbury cases do not contain more than 38lb. to 40lb.

51. *Mr. Wright.*] What remedy would you suggest?—The only remedy I can see is a further import duty. The whole of our industry is languishing. People are not planting, as they see no prospect before them. Just a day before I left Christchurch a fruit grower told me that he had received a telegram from his agent in Wellington advising him not to ship any more apples, as the market there was glutted with Tasmanian fruit, and likely to be so for a considerable time.

52. *Mr. Lawry.*] What is the charge for the case?—We have to pay 10d. for our cases. The price in Tasmania is, I understand, about 6d.

53. *The Chairman.*] What is the duty now?—A halfpenny. It appears to be a question whether the trade is to be cramped or protected.