

54. *Mr. Wright.*] It seems to me that, with the advantage of a halfpenny duty, that fact should greatly encourage the local grower?—Tasmania has made the cases bigger, and the shipping companies have reduced the freight, so that the Tasmanian people are almost in the same position now that they were when they were sending their apples free of duty. If you were to put on an extra duty it would not increase the price of fruit to the public; on the contrary, it would tend to reduce prices all round, and it would enable us to sell our fruit, which we cannot do at present in any quantity.

55. *The Chairman.*] Suppose a fruit grower calling on a fruit seller with ten cases, say, at 5s. a case, would not the shopkeeper rather pay that to the local grower than for the imported article?—That is not so; it is stated as a reason that the shopkeeper gets more accommodation in some way from the dealer than the local producer is prepared to accept. There is another matter to which I would ask the attention of the Committee as being connected with the fruit industry—that is the manufacture of jam; tons of pulp are imported into Dunedin every year; it kills the jam trade with us completely. The growers of plums in Canterbury had to rail them to Dunedin because they could not manufacture them and compete with the pulp-jam. I know of one grower of plums in Canterbury who paid £17 railage on his plums last season to Dunedin. If pulp were shut out we could get capital at once to establish canning, preserving, and bottling fruit in connection with a jam factory. This would encourage the growth of large areas of small fruits, which is a very important point, as employment would be provided for scores of young and old people. Then again, there is another point—namely, the manufacture of fruit-wines and cider. If the manufacturer were allowed to sell it in small quantities, that would also give an impetus to the growth of small fruits. It would tend to make men temperate. On the Continent it is shown that the light wine drinker is less given to intemperance than the people of other countries where light wines are not in general use. Fruit wines should be sold by the single bottle, or in smaller quantities by confectioners and others. Scores of acres of small fruit would be planted for making jam and fruit wine if the present restrictions upon the manufacture and sale were removed. The subject opens up the all-important question—namely, that of finding employment for the people.

56. *The Chairman.*] Do you think it would be possible to modify the regulations and at the same time remove the risk of distilling wines and whiskeys?—That is a question, I take it, for the Customhouse authorities to see to. But it would supply a wholesome and cheap beverage for the people, and it would, as I have before stated, employ hundreds of people. People in Christchurch are waiting to see what the Government may do in respect of this foreign pulp before investing their money in a factory.

57. *Mr. Wright.*] Is the jam made from this pulp as wholesome and good as that which would be made from fresh fruit?—I do not see how it can be. According to newspaper reports rotten apples are utilised for jam, and doubtless for making pulp for New Zealand.

Codlin-moth Bill.

58. *Mr. Wright.*] You know that in the North some of the orchards are almost useless for fruit growing owing to the ravages of this pest?—I saw a letter from Wairarapa in which a protest was made against this Bill not being passed. I believe that three-fourths of the fruit growers of New Zealand are in favour of this Bill. That is one reason why it should be passed. In Tasmania, when they found their fruit was unsaleable, they brought the Act into force, so that they are now able to control the moth. They find they have a market for their fruit, so that it was well worth their while to bring the Act into operation.

59. *The Chairman.*] You have not got it in Canterbury yet?—No, we have not; but I believe that if we had that Act in operation every intelligent fruit grower in New Zealand would be able to cope with the foreign market.

60. *Mr. Wright.*] If that Bill were passed it would give a decided impetus to jam making?—Yes; undoubtedly, with some restriction to be put on this unwholesome pulp. I would impress upon the Committee this: that in questions of this kind relating to the encouragement of industries you must keep in mind the employment such encouragement would be likely to give to young people. It is a question of some importance whether you should allow foreign-manufactured pulp to hinder the development of your fruit industries.

Mr. Ritchie informed the Committee that *Mr. Hanlon*, the Government fruit expert, has already entered on this subject, and has made inquiries as to shipping facilities. There will be this season a thoroughly practical attempt made to procure all the information that can be had on the subjects connected with agricultural and pastoral industries. Something will be done.

Mr. JAMES R. SCOTT in attendance and examined.

Dairy Industry Bill.

61. *The Chairman.*] You have had considerable experience in connection with the dairy industry?—Yes, it is my business. I have read this Bill. The most important thing in the Bill is the question of branding. There are some alterations which, I think, are needful. I think some of the descriptions and definitions require to be altered. I am of opinion that all this inspectorship provided for in the Bill must lead to friction and unpleasantness. I think there should be a sort of dairy Board or association, something on the lines of acclimatisation societies, but not to represent any commercial element or concern. I should have no official inspectors. There would be plenty of inspection without that.

62. What are the clauses which you think objectionable?—What I said in my letter to the Minister was this: That the great importance of the matter lay wholly in the branding clauses. If that were satisfactorily provided for it would be a good thing for the dairy industry. As to the rest, I consider it is a matter for law makers and lawyers. At the present moment factories are going in for buying their milk on the productive value. Every factory manager, when milk is