

19. Do you not think our best apples and pears could beat out the Tasmanian fruit?—No, the market is flooded with this stuff, and if you got into the auction-rooms you could only get very little more for your good fruit when the place was flooded with the ordinary cheap stuff.

20. At present Parliament gives you protection to the extent of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a pound during five and a half months in the year. Under the proposed treaty we propose to give you 1d. during four and a half months and $\frac{1}{2}$ d. during seven and a half months, and during the months of January and February pears and apples are fairly plentiful in New Zealand?—Yes; but would it not come hard on the Auckland people? I have a little stuff coming in in February, and it would affect me to a certain extent, but the Auckland people would be affected very much. The two ends of the colony are differently situated.

21. Would not the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. duty and the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in charges be sufficient protection for our people during the months when our supplies are plentiful?—I do not think so, because they grow such large quantities of fruit over in Tasmania.

22. *Mr. Hogg.*] I understand you to say the average price of apples during the fruit season here is 2d. to 3d. a pound?—No. I generally get 6s. a case for cooking-apples up to 7s. 6d. for good apples; but I have sold apples at 2s. 6d. a case early in the season.

23. What amount is there in a case?—Thirty-six pounds.

24. At the present time have you any apples?—I have a few.

25. Are the fruit-growers in a position to supply orders for immediate consumption?—Yes, when New Zealand has a decent season.

26. Have you noticed what kind of apples are sold in the shops of Wellington at present?—They are principally Tasmanian. I think I have seen some Nelson apples.

27. I suppose you have given us your opinions simply from a fruit-grower's point of view?—Well, from a general point of view.

28. Assuming you were an artisan living in the city with a wife and family to maintain, do you think your opinions would be the same as they are at the present time?—No; they would not be, because I should look at the question from the other point of view then.

29. *Mr. Hanan.*] What is your yield per season?—Four thousand cases this year, I suppose, and from five to six thousand cases in good years. I have had as many as seven thousand.

30. Where do you place that fruit in the market?—All over New Zealand, from Invercargill to Auckland, and sometimes on the coast up to Napier; in fact, wherever there is a market.

31. How do you find your fruit stand against the competition of Tasmania—down south, say?—They beat me properly down there.

32. What is the difference in price?—Two shillings a case; but there is a difference in the weight. There would be about $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per pound. For the same quality of stuff they get a higher price.

33. What is the quantity of apples grown in New Zealand per annum?—I cannot tell you. I think you would have some difficulty in finding that out.

34. Where are the leading centres for apples?—Auckland, Christchurch, Timaru, the Teviot, Invercargill, Nelson, Hawke's Bay, and Hastings.

35. Can you give us any information as to the amount imported into New Zealand?—No. It is variable. Last year it amounted to thousands and thousands of cases, but this year there were not nearly so many.

36. What is that due to?—This year on account of the poor crop, and last year it was owing to them not sending enough to England. They had a very large crop.

37. *Mr. Seddon.*] Then you think we cannot grow apples to compete with Australia or Tasmania?—Not yet; we have not got the quantity. But if we continue growing, I take it that in a few years time we shall be able to grow sufficient to enable us to compete with them without any duty at all.

38. At present you ask for no more duty?—We want the tariff extended to September, so that we can get the late apple.

39. In what way do Tasmanian apples compete with New Zealand apples—is it just in the quantity or the quality?—They seem to be able to grow better fruit over there.

40. How do the apples grown in Tasmania compare with your own?—They knock mine clean out. They have got good stuff this year—better than it was last year.

41. You always have a good market for your crop, have you not?—No; two years ago it was not.

42. You spoke about pears having been given in Australia to the pigs?—Those were grapes. People who came from Australia told me that it did not pay to pack them and send them to the market.

43. How it is that Australian apples, bearing freight charges and a duty, can be brought here and sold at a profit as against those grown in New Zealand?—Because they have larger quantities to deal with over there. If I had ten thousand cases instead of five thousand I could grow them cheaper and yet have the same profit. In a few years I shall be able to get more profit and sell at 5s. a case.

44. There is a demand, then, for the produce of New Zealand?—Yes, there is just now.

45. But two years ago there was not?—No, because we had a big crop. The chances are that it will not take long before we shall be able to hold our own.

46. Then you will not fear competition at all?—No.

47. *Mr. Aitken.*] You say you have 45 acres under cultivation?—Yes, but that it not all fruit.

48. What labour do you employ?—Eight hands all the year round.

49. Will you explain what they are—men or women?—All men.

50. What wages do you pay?—Six shillings a day, and give them constant work; but on account of the action of the unions I expect I shall have to pay 7s., because I have been cited to appear before the Arbitration Court.