

an immediate effort to secure necessary shipping-space for 1920 at a reasonable rate. We are told that the direct shipping companies have cut out the South American ports in favour of the Panama route. This is a very serious setback, for the reason that South America was before the war our best and most stable market. While trade to the Old Country was on a consignment basis, that with South America was on a purely cash basis, the South American merchants paying cash f.o.b. Wellington, and they paid a satisfactory price. The export of apples from New Zealand was—in 1910, 5,647 cases; in 1911, 6,031 cases; in 1912, 14,869 cases; in 1913, 33,000 cases; and in 1914, 67,964 cases. You will notice that there was a considerable increase in our export, and that was at a time when we had nothing like the organization for packing our fruit as we have now. Of the total quantity of fruit exported, Nelson contributed probably about three-fourths. I believe that some of the early shipments were sent to London, but latterly the trade went to South America. At this time we had virtually captured the South American market from Tasmania, and there were bright prospects of a growing and remunerative market for many years to come. It is a heavy blow to lose a sure cash trade built up on the merit of our goods in competition with other countries, especially at a time like the present when everything is "in the air." So again we solicit the help of the Government to endeavour to induce the shipping companies not to entirely abandon the old route, but to give us at least a boat once a month in, say, March, April, and May. In view of the fact that the quantity of apples available for export will increase very rapidly from now on, it would be encouraging the fruitgrowers to have a positive assurance that provision is being made in connection with the building of new ships for the carriage of apples under the best conditions. It would be a good thing, perhaps, in connection with a publicity campaign, if a representative display of New Zealand apples were made in the windows of the High Commissioner's office in London and elsewhere. Incidentally, perhaps, a similar display of other New Zealand products and industries would be an inexpensive and an effective form of advertising. There are some thousands of acres of land here awaiting development especially suitable for fruitgrowing. Many returned soldiers wish to take up fruitgrowing. Some have already done so; some have taken vocational training in respect to it, but so far the Government have not published any scheme of settlement. Personally, I think it would be impracticable for inexperienced men to take up unimproved land here and there individually. What is needed is a community settlement. Briefly, the men would be paid wages for work done, and charges would be debited to each allotment. The holdings might be balloted for in, say, two or three years' time, so that only tried-out men would be able to take up areas. Strawberry, tomato, and tobacco growing, and to some extent poultry-farming, could be carried on as side lines until the trees came to the bearing-age. This province is handicapped for want of better railway facilities. There is probably no other part of the Dominion where intensive farming is carried on in such an extensive scale. The first and pressing need is perhaps for an outlet through the South Island by connecting up Glenhope to the Reefton end. This would enable us to supply the South Island with cheap fruit, because the railway carriage would cost only one-third or one-fourth of the coastal freight. There should be a remission of Customs duty on plant used in fruit-preserving and on by-products plants, and also on wrapping-paper, provided the wrapping-paper is cut down to sizes required. Many of us think the Fruit Industries Preserving Act might be made more elastic in its operations. It might perhaps be termed the "Fruit Industries Assistance Act," so as to cover wider scope. Under that Act the Government advance up to a maximum of £9,000 for the establishment of cool stores and so forth; but it makes no provision for an advance for the establishment of, say, vinegar-factories. It is a matter of great importance to us to take inferior fruit off the market; and if such fruit could be converted into vinegar and perhaps cider, as well as being evaporated, it would have the effect of increasing the quality of all fruit marketed. £9,000 is not sufficient help to enable us to establish fruit-preserving works. We are sending out of the country a considerable sum of money for canned goods, and I have no hesitation in saying that the greater part of these goods could be produced in the Dominion. While £9,000 is perhaps sufficient to enable a body of fruitgrowers to put up a cool store, it is quite inadequate to help them to establish a modern preserving-works. The total amount of capital required for modern works such as we find in Tasmania and Australia would probably run into £30,000 or £40,000.

*To Mr. Hudson:* Regarding wrapping-papers for apples, it is not so much a matter of quality as a question of cost; we are going to be handicapped unless we can buy in the cheapest market. I have known the packers to prefer the local paper.

*To Mr. Sidey:* I think the local paper comes from the Dunedin mills. The freights are high on the Coast.

*To Mr. Craigie:* In regard to canning fruit. I have not the slightest doubt that we have enough experience in New Zealand to compete with the imported article. A considerable sum of money is sent out of this country every year for canned fruit. It would be advisable to engage an expert from America so that no mistakes would be made. I think Nelson would be the most suitable place in New Zealand at which to establish such a plant.

*To Mr. Forbes:* I visited the Frimley plant once; there seemed to be an enormous amount of plant, and they seemed to be using about one-third of it. I understand that the works have closed down. As to the reason for that, one does not like to say very much about it. We have a good factory here, and it is a prosperous business. Quite a lot of apples could be canned, but they are not canning at present. There is a scarcity of tin. We hope in our organization to have control of these things ourselves. There is at Motueka a by-products factory which I believe is going to do. The Motueka cool store has been extremely successful. I do not know what we would have done if that store had not been established three years ago; we would have had a heavy knock indeed. In the early and mid season there was a glut in the market, and we were