

61. With respect to the Tasmanian fruit, is Tasmania a big competitor on the English market so far as fruit is concerned?—Yes. Of course, Australia and Tasmania export larger quantities of fruit than we do, and consequently the quantity of fruit that we export would not affect the position very much.

62. What is their experience over a number of years?—Not having first-hand knowledge about Tasmania we have to go by what we hear, but we are aware that the growers in Tasmania are tied up with London brokers on account of their finance. The fruitgrowers in Tasmania are in a pretty bad way.

63. They have been shipping for a number of years, have they not?—Yes.

64. How does their fruit arrive on the market?—Possibly much the same as ours, as far as condition is concerned. One year—I think it was the year 1922—they had a disastrous experience, and practically shipment after shipment arrived in a rotten condition.

65. The experience with the South American market was the last one you had?—Yes, that is so.

66. What was the condition of the fruit when it arrived there?—Our fruit arrived there in bad condition, due almost entirely, if not entirely, to the conditions on the boat. I may say that practically the same class of fruit that was sent to America was sent to England on two particular boats that carried fruit for each, and while the fruit that was sent to South America by the boats referred to arrived in bad condition, the fruit that was sent to England, notwithstanding that it took four weeks longer, arrived in good condition.

67. If you can land the fruit on to the South American market in good order and condition it is a good market?—Yes, with limitations, and provided we can land the fruit in good order. I may say that on one occasion an officer of the Department went across there in order to watch the sales and gather all the information he could, and the information we have is that there is a market there for sixty thousand or eighty thousand cases of fruit, provided, of course, it can be landed in good order. As a matter of fact I feel that we can land our fruit on the South American market in good order if shipped in cool storage. Canadian fruit comes from British Columbia to Auckland in perfect condition and at a temperature of 40°.

68. And you say it arrives here in first-class order?—Yes, that is so.

69. Does it arrive in as bruised a condition as the fruit we export?—No, I do not think it does. One reason is that we have a different class of case from theirs. We have not introduced their style of case here owing to our timber not being sufficiently flexible. However, some 100,000 Canadian cases are being imported out to determine the advantages of this class of case or otherwise. Every possible care has been exercised in bringing our export up to a very high standard, and very considerable progress has been made.

70. Are you going to try them for export?—Yes. We would not try them for the local market until such time as we ascertain whether they are satisfactory for the export trade, and if they are satisfactory we will try them for the local market. I may say that there is a good deal to be done in the matter of improving the handling of fruit by all and sundry. In Tasmania they went so far as to get an Act passed making it a penalty for anybody handling cases of fruit in a careless manner, and that was brought about with a view to improving the method of handling the fruit there.

71. I take it that your experience has been largely in connection with the marketing of the Nelson fruit?—We come in contact with the Wellington market more than with other markets, due to the fact that Wellington is close to headquarters, and consequently we understand more about the Wellington market than other markets.

72. You are aware, are you not, that there is strong opposition from Canterbury and Otago against any interference with respect to the local market?—Yes, I am aware that there is strong opposition from Canterbury, and from what I can understand they are taking a very exaggerated view of the position. What we want Canterbury to do is not to block the Bill. So far as the export position is concerned, Canterbury is not affected.

73. I notice in connection with the objections from Canterbury with respect to the Bill that the voting is very unequal, and the large growers have the fear that they may be swamped up by the smaller growers?—There is always that possibility, but I do not think it would apply, because I think the smaller growers would average out equal for and against the Bill, the same as with the larger growers.

74. You think that the smaller growers would have more objection than the larger growers?—I do not think they would have more objection; but I believe they would oppose it more than the moderate-size grower.

75. What I mean to say is this: would not the grower who would have the bigger chance of disposing of his fruit privately be more concerned?—The man who disposes of his fruit privately will, in all probability, be a blessing to the Board rather than anything else; but the average small grower is the trouble on the open market, and he takes a fair amount of looking after.

76. In connection with standardization, why cannot you bring it about for local control? I quite agree as to the value of standardized fruit, but how are you going to bring it about for the local markets, where the orchards are scattered everywhere?—As a matter of fact, it is quite a simple matter, because standardization is a straight-out proposition, and the whole details are given in writing, and any intelligent man can see what is required of him. We have expert packers employed, and they give demonstrations to show how it should be done.

77. How are you going to check false packing?—That, of course, is one of the greatest difficulties. There was an agitation at one time or another for compulsory standardization throughout New Zealand, but I have been opposed to that for the reason that we cannot enforce it. We have to have some control over standardization. At the present time if you had standardization