

189. What would it cost you per acre to plant vines and arrange the frames?—It would be impossible to tell you exactly now. I have got tons and tons of wire in the 2½ acres.

190. What wire do you use?—Galvanised fencing-wire is the best.

191. Do you find the wines strong enough without fortifying?—Yes, if allowed time to mature. I have to wait seven years before I introduce the wines to the public. It requires age to create a body. There is considerable loss from evaporation when in the casks. I have often wine nine years old, and have to pay property-tax every year upon it. The wine industry is not encouraged in this country—it is too heavily taxed.

192. If you wanted to sell your wine within two years from production you would have to fortify it?—Yes, because a sufficient body of alcohol is not naturally created in that time.

193. Were the wines for which you took prizes kept eight years?—Yes, of course. I keep the wine to create the alcohol naturally.

194. *Mr. Walker.*] What class of wines do you find pays best?—Port, Constantia, Moselle, sherry, Verdillo, and Muscat. I have discontinued making sparkling wines for the present, as it takes all my time to make the still wines.

195. If the Distillation Act Amendment Bill were passed you would fortify the wines by the spirits you produce from your own wines to put them in the market so much earlier?—Yes; that is the position.

196. You would save in that way the six years' property-tax?—Yes.

197. *The Chairman.*] You have examined this Bill?—Yes. I agree with the Bill, except, I think, 40 per cent. alcohol is too high.

198. You think that 40 per cent. is a large proportion of alcohol to put in the wine?—Yes, it is too large a proportion.

199. What would be the percentage of alcohol in the wines you sent to the Exhibition?—Between 18 and 20 per cent. The alcohol was created by age.

200. Do you put sugar in the wines?—I use no sugar except in sparkling wines, because for them I have to pick the grapes when half-ripe; but sugar is not used in the still wines. The alcohol varies according to the dryness and warmth of the summer. Last year and the year before were the two worst years I have experienced since I have been in New Zealand. The weather was too cold, and there was not much sun.

201. What was the lowest percentage you had of alcohol?—The year before last there was about 8 per cent., and last year 11 per cent. Some years it ranges from 18 to 20 per cent.

202. Have you turned your attention to growing raisins from your crops?—Yes. I can make very good raisins in dry seasons. As good raisins can be made in New Zealand as in any other country, but the season must be dry to do so.

203. Have you made any quantity?—I have tried the experiment, but never grew raisins specially for the market in New Zealand; I made large quantities in Spain.

204. How many gallons of wine would 20 tons of grapes produce?—Every 500lb. of grapes produces about 30 gallons of wine.

205. You have travelled over New Zealand and have seen different vineries?—Yes: I have been to Nelson, I have travelled from Wanganui to Auckland, up the Wanganui River to Jerusalem, and other places. Along the Wanganui River is the best part of New Zealand for growing vines. It is exactly the climate we require for this industry. Some years ago I bought seven canoe-loads of grapes from the Maoris. They came from Jerusalem, where vines had been planted by the French missionaries. These were as good grapes as are grown in any part of the world for wine-making. They cost me 2d. a pound. The Auckland climate is also very good.

206. You consider that if this Bill is passed you can make wine-producing at Wanganui a profitable industry?—Yes; if we are allowed to fortify the wine the industry will extend. The Government will lose nothing by it.

207. If stills were allowed would there not be some illicit distillation?—They would have to be very strict; there is a hundred-pound fine provided for. It would not pay any one to do anything wrong.

208. I suppose it would be a great advantage to settlers in the districts you mention if there was one large factory for manufacturing wine?—Yes. Several gentlemen have spoken to me, and I believe if this Bill were passed a company would be formed which will buy all the grapes produced in the country. We cannot put the industry into a company until this Bill is passed.

209. Would not vines grown in different soils and different climates make a difference in the flavour of the wines produced?—Yes; it is the soil that makes the quality of the grape.

210. In making a certain class of wine you would buy grapes only from a certain district?—If the soil and grapes are of the same quality you can buy from any district.

211. *Mr. Walker.*] Do you know anything about olive-cultivation?—Yes; there are millions of acres of olives at home (Spain).

212. Have you ever tried growing olives in New Zealand?—My father sent me two hundred trees three years ago, and they are now about 3ft. high. They should bear in about two or three years from now.

213. Do you know anything of the locust-tree?—The locust-tree is a great thing in Spain, where we call it a "garob" or "garoba," and use the fruit for horse- and cattle-food. They would be a great thing in this country.

214. How old are the olives before they bear?—It is according to their quality. Some about six years, some eight years old.

215. *Mr. Mackenzie.*] Are you in favour of growing prunes?—Yes; this is the best country in the world for growing prunes. I never saw better prunes in Spain, France, or Italy than I have grown myself in New Zealand for the market. I rented an orchard from Mr. W. Paterson, and there are tons of prunes growing there now.