

to do or not to do certain things under the control of Inspectors. And the chief argument used is that they consider legislation undesirable until the Government have demonstrated some effective remedial treatment of fruit trees as against the codlin-moth. There is Mr. Morrison, of Kaukapakapa. He is, however, one rather in favour of legislation. He has a very fine orchard and makes considerable profit out of it. He does nothing else. He sprays his trees and he informed me he found it beneficial. With an arsenical mixture he had used lime-water, and, in his opinion, the sediment remaining on the fruit was beneficial in keeping the moth from laying its egg on the fruit. I cannot give any expression of approval so far as arsenical spraying is concerned. But with the exception of the Mr. Morrison I have mentioned, all the principal fruit-growers that I know are opposed to spraying with arsenical mixtures. I have been advised by Mr. Morrison, Warkworth, who is one of the most successful fruit-growers in the colony, as he is growing all kinds of fruit, that legislation is undesirable as no definite instructions can yet be given to fruit-growers by the Government.

*A Member of the Committee (to the Chairman):* It is the same Mr. Morrison sent to the Queensland Conference by the Government last year.

*Mr. Monk:* Then, Mr. Matthews, who has perhaps the oldest and best pear orchard in the colony, is not inclined for legislation. Passing round to Port Albert, which has a name for fruit-growing, the orchards managed by the Beecrofts are not sprayed with arsenic, and two of the brothers are eminently successful as fruit-growers, and their orchard, as witnessed last autumn, was a marvel of beauty, the trees were so heavily laden with fruit of very fine quality. I have examined their orchard the last two seasons, and have found a difficulty in finding a codlin-moth in their place. Their process is bandaging, and they are very assiduous in this. They employ all the children they can get to come round and bandage and take off the bandages, and they pay the youngsters so much a dozen for the grubs. One of the Beecrofts thought that legislation should prevent their neighbours keeping orchards without exercising any control over them. Mr. John Beecroft, another one of the family, is unfortunately crippled, and not able to give the same attention to his orchard. He has made an experiment that I am very anxious to know the result of. He had all the fruit pulled off his trees last spring, and the Committee can imagine what the cost was. The result of that experiment I am looking forward to with great interest. It is an experiment of importance, and I trust will be of some value to the Government. He is not isolated, and that is the unfortunate part of it. But he will be able to tell one thing, and that is whether it has afforded him a remedy against the pest. I do not know whether the neighbour adjoins. There are many orchards in the district where no attention is given. I merely mentioned the above experiment by way of showing that experiments of various kinds are now taking place amongst those who conduct fruit-growing as a livelihood, and until some of them can determinately instruct the Government as to what is the best legislation in the interest of the whole, I think it is right for me to express myself averse to the Bill before the Committee. No doubt if this Bill is introduced a large number of trees will be cut down. I shall cut down a few hundred myself, and keep only the particularly valuable fruits, in the hope that Providence will furnish a natural antidote. I am not sceptical but that it may come, and such destruction will no doubt enhance the price, especially in favour of those who do nothing else. It is demonstrated that those who devote their attention to fruit-growing manage to make it pay, but that it is one requiring assiduous attention. The grazing and fruit-growing industries will not go well together. My own experience in spraying was unfavourable. I sprayed at considerable cost in arsenical mixtures, and did not find myself benefited as some have said. I know those who have told me that there has been an improvement in the trees without any attention being given to them, which led me to suspect that some natural antidote was coming to their aid, but I cannot furnish proof that such is the case. It is a matter I feel very great interest in, and I like to have the opinion of others whose experience has been lengthened.

13. *Hon. the Chairman.]* Does the Committee understand that you are against the measure?—Yes, against the Government interference with the fruit-growers.

14. Your evidence tends to show, at any rate, that the bandage is a service?—There is no doubt that the bandaging is of service, inasmuch as it destroys the insects.

15. Could you tell the Committee if the orchard where the pears were the best in the colony compares favourably with other orchards?—It is isolated. I take the Beecrofts as being the best example that can be given. They are partially isolated. The nearest orchard is within half or quarter of a mile.

16. You speak of the fruit-grower being more successful than the man who has a mixed occupation?—Yes, as it is needful to give his whole attention to his fruit-growing.

17. Does that not show that steps should be taken to have him protected? What chance has the grower got to pursue his occupation with success unless his neighbour is compelled to spray?—As I suggested, it would be to the interest of the professional fruit-grower that others were compelled to practise the same assiduous attention to the reduction of the pest as he does; but I question whether legislation simply in the interest of the person obtaining his livelihood out of fruit would be equivalent to the interest of the great mass of settlers who supply their families with fruit, as in the North, where it is one of the most important articles of food. What I suggested is this: that it would be very hard indeed to compel farmers and graziers, men engaged in general agriculture, to bestow that assiduous attention on their orchards which pays a man, and is beneficial to a man, who does nothing else but grow fruit. I know of a letter from America, the writer of which advises us not to trouble about codlin-moth, as those who pay attention to their fruit, and do nothing else, get all the better prices for it than if produced to drug the market.

18. *Mr. Massey.]* I suppose there are a good many orchards in your district?—A large number.

19. It is a fruit-growing district?—Yes. It is one of our staple resources, and many of the orchardists are experienced men, or have been at it so long that their experience should be valuable.