

*Burning the Fruit.*—To go to the never-ending trouble and expense of spraying, pruning, bandaging, and clean cultivating the soil, and then to have to burn the infected fruit (which might be all the produce of the trees), appears to me, instead of being practical advice to fruit-growers, to be thoughtless irony, with never a word about what is to pay for it all, or how a struggling fruit-grower is to live or carry on these operations. In England we used to sell all marketable fruit; all others used to be thrown with the cider-fruit and made into cider.

The action of the Pomologist some time back, leading a deputation to interview a firm of cider-makers, at Christchurch, was deserving of all censure, inasmuch as it unnecessarily advertised the industry to its detriment.

The Bill as it now stands is calculated rather to enslave and crush the individual, and to encourage malicious, vindictive "cranks," who are ever ready to howl for vengeance on their neighbours, than to assist an honest industry. Such men denounce in no measured terms the intolerance of teetotalers; yet in other directions they are even more arbitrary and dangerous, as is manifest in this matter. Without being able to bring forward a tittle of proof that what they wish would be of any benefit to any one, yet they would invoke the law.

I have before now had to work under an Act (the Sheep Act) for which a specific was known. I then had experience more than enough of how brutal, how arbitrary, how high-handed, and offensive an Inspector could make himself, especially where he had come into the receipt of a big salary suddenly, and had an object in view, and now, after giving a large amount of time during twenty-five years of the best of my life, which it has taken me to grow a decent orchard, besides some hundreds of pounds in money, when I contemplate the prospect of having either to chop down my trees or suffer a repetition of the Sheep Act, by having to carry out the provisions of an Act where no specific is known, and no limit to what is necessary to be done, it fills me with intense bitterness and apprehension.

Very respectfully, &c.,

WILLIAM JOHN CULLEN.

FRIDAY, 12TH AUGUST, 1898.

Mr. E. RABBITS examined.

1. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What are you?—I am a bootmaker.
2. Where do you reside?—At Blenheim.
3. You represent the Blenheim Horticultural Society?—Yes.
4. What experience have you had in fruit-culture?—Some twenty-two years.
5. What experience have you had in dealing with fruit-pests, and especially with the codlin-moth?—I have had considerable experience.
6. You have tried to get rid of it; with what results?—I have gone according to the formula issued by the Government, and I may state from my own experience that if the thing were carried out systematically there is no doubt it would be the means of eradicating the pest or of keeping it down considerably; but to make it thoroughly effective it would be necessary that something should be done which would compel others to do likewise. I believe that nothing more than systematic cleanliness and thorough work is required for keeping down this pest. For example, I, having a little freehold and wishing to derive as much profit as I can from the same, do what I can to keep my trees clean, but I have, perhaps, neighbours on both sides of me. I may be surrounded by dirty neighbours who will do nothing, and that is most injurious to me. They will not do anything with their trees because the properties do not belong to them. They are small weekly tenants, and they say, "I have no interest in the place; it does not belong to me, and therefore I am not going to trouble my head about cleaning it or putting down the pest." That is where the trouble comes in.
7. You think that remedies should be enforced?—I think so.
8. Are you in the habit of using sprays?—I am.
9. And of bandaging?—I am.
10. How do you cultivate your orchard; is it in grass?—Certainly not; my orchard is as clean as a newly ploughed paddock.
11. What is the size of your orchard?—About half an acre.
12. Have you read this Bill?—Yes.
13. Do you approve of it?—Yes. There is one little arrangement which is rather vague. It is in clause 6. It says, "Every occupier of any orchard shall at all times do whatever is necessary in order to eradicate disease." I should like to see the words "be compelled" put in after "shall."
14. *Mr. Massey.*] Are we to understand that you make a living out of fruit-growing?—Certainly not; but I have an object in view, that of doing so in the future.
15. In this half-acre orchard what fruit do you grow?—Apples, pears, peaches, and apricots.
16. Have you the codlin-moth?—I could not say that I have at the present time, as far as I can see; but it is there in the season after the fruit is set. It comes, perhaps, from my neighbours. Of course I battle with it. I bandaged and sprayed last year every ten days religiously.
17. Could you give us any idea of how many apple-trees you have got?—I think at the present time I have got about a dozen. I cut down a good many trees and rearranged the orchard, and I was revived with the idea that if I gave the orchard a rest, and a measure of this kind were passed, I should have a show.
18. Do you represent any association of fruit-growers?—I represent the Blenheim Horticultural Society.