

152. I mean in your personal capacity?—That is in my personal capacity, but naturally, of course, as I am secretary to the association, I have also had the experience of the members of the association.

153. Have you made a commercial success of fruit-growing?—I never carried it on for commercial purposes. In fact, owing to the orchards of people round me I have used my place for experimental purposes, but I have always got plenty of fruit. I sell a little.

154. Perhaps you could tell us what the effect on the Nelson fruit-growers would be if this Bill passed into law in its present form?—Well, we would have to cut down our apple-trees—to destroy them. I am sure that many of the small people would do it at once, and I have no doubt that a great many more would do it afterwards.

155. You are quite sure that the Bill would be disastrous if it went on the statute-book?—That is our opinion.

156. *Mr. Meredith.*] Do you appear here to give evidence on your own part, or have you been deputed by the Fruit-growers Association of Nelson to appear for them?—If I could have got a meeting of the Fruit-growers Association together I would have been the person they would have sent, but the department did not give me time to get them together.

157. I ask that question because in referring to documents which you have put in evidence you refer to them as coming from the fruit-growers of Nelson—now I understand that you appear on behalf of yourself?—There was no time to call a meeting.

158. *Mr. Massey.*] Do you appear in your official position as secretary of the Nelson Fruit-growers' Association?—I have already explained that it was too late to call a meeting. The department sent me a letter on Monday, and I can never call a meeting of the association except for Saturday. It was told me by Mr. Moller that the Committee would meet on Friday, and it would be no use to call a meeting for Saturday. Then the next time the department sent a notification the Committee was to meet on Thursday, and consequently it was not possible to have a meeting.

*Mr. Ritchie* explained that the department had nothing to do with sending out the notices.

*The Clerk* explained that the notices in this case were sent out at the same time as other notices to attend the Committee.

159. *Mr. Meredith.*] I wish it to be distinctly understood that you represent yourself here?—I am secretary of the Nelson Fruit-growers' Association or I would not be here. The president asked me to come.

160. I understand that no meeting has been held of the Fruit-growers' Association to pronounce an opinion upon the merits of this Bill?—The fruit-growers of Nelson came together and pronounced an opinion; it has been sent in to the members of the district and to the Minister of the Agricultural Department. The resolution was to this effect: "Mr. Hingston (Foxhill) moved, That, in the opinion of this meeting of fruit-growers and others interested in the culture of fruit, the Orchard and Garden Pests Bill of 1898 is unworkable, and could not be carried out in practice. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion."

161. I understand that your orchard is free from pests and clean?—No. I have said that I save 75 per cent. of my fruit.

162. That is the quantity that is sound?—Yes.

163. Is the Committee to infer that you have resorted to the necessary means to bring that about?—Yes.

164. Have your neighbours succeeded in obtaining 75 per cent. of fruit?—I have only to ask the owner of one of my neighbours orchards, and he will tell me that he is going to cut the fruit-trees down. The other commenced to do some work two years ago.

165. Then your orchard is comparatively clean, while your neighbours are not?—On one side of me they never do anything.

166. If your neighbours orchards are badly affected, what means should be adopted to compel them to keep their orchards clean?—I do not know that any other means could be taken than to compel them to bandage.

167. That is to say, force them to take some preventive means?—That is all I could suggest. They should be forced to do so. Our experience is that people do look after their orchards generally.

168. If the provisions of the present Bill were brought into operation would it not have a beneficial effect on those who take a little trouble in the suppression of pests and blight?—The fruit-growers in Nelson think that the remedy would be worse than the disease. They do not ask for it at all.

169. You export some of your fruit from Nelson at the present time?—About twelve thousand four hundred and fifty cases come from Motueka, which is a part of our district, every year. I may say, roughly speaking, that there are about twenty thousand cases of 40 lb. each exported every year.

170. If blight-infected fruit is exported from Nelson to clean districts, what effect is that likely to have on the fruit grown in the clean districts?—I do not think that in a general way infected fruit is ever exported from Nelson now. I believe there are some southern people who have agents in Nelson to buy apples affected with codlin-moth, and this fruit is sent south. They are not sent by Nelson fruit-growers, but they are purchased there by agents, who send them away.

171. Could you suggest any other way of preventing that than by legislation?—I do not know any other way. As long as there are people—and that is the question in Nelson—as long as there are people to buy there will be people to sell.

172. *Hon. Mr. Montgomery.*] Has the codlin-moth increased fast during the last year?—It has decreased considerably.

173. Why?—Simply from using remedies, I suppose.