



(continued from previous page)

said last week in Dunedin. It could be true. He could be an accurate man. He could have a method of estimating the number of fruit buds in Coal Creek and Roxburgh. He could have examined, or had someone else examine, every branch of every tree in that five-mile stretch of orchards. He could have established the fact that 58 per cent of the buds have been eaten, ten per cent killed, seven per cent pecked beyond recovery—if he had a million pounds to spend. It would not be an impossible investigation or, branch by branch, very difficult. It would just cost a little more than the fruit farms of Coal Creek are worth.

So I will cling to my hope that the investigation has fallen a shade short of scientific accuracy. I will go on remembering that I have heard total loss stories before, and afterwards eaten the fruit; seen fruit-growers ruined in spring and building expensive houses in

autumn; swallowed thousands of birds and been compelled afterwards to disgorge nine out of ten of them.

If I were a fruit-grower in Roxburgh I might myself use a gun. I would certainly wish to use one until I remembered that shooting at birds in trees is not very good for buds. If a stranger told me to leave the birds alone I might turn the gun on him. I would certainly wish to do it if I could forget the law and the police. But this war has been going on since apples grew in Eden. Birds have been stealing fruit and boys have been stealing eggs since man first walked upright; and peace is still over the horizon. Without birds we might have no fruit. With them we have some and lose some, and while fruit-growers may legitimately rage and murder, the rest of us are not bound to leap to their assistance as often as they cry havoc.

(To be continued)

(C) Punch

NORTH CANTERBURY HOSPITAL BOARD REGISTERED NURSING AID TRAINING SCHOOL BURWOOD HOSPITAL, CHRISTCHURCH

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