

35. Suppose you offered a bonus to any person who produced a certain quantity of sugar from sorghum: I think that is the simplest way of doing it?—The only thing to fight against is the timidity of capital: people are not easily tempted to go into a thing they do not quite understand.

36. *The Chairman.*] To settle this question of sorghum: You have some seed?—A little.

37. You have not any to spare for distribution throughout the colony?—No: I only proposed to try this seed, because it was grown in the colony, and have but a small sample.

38. At Philadelphia or Washington you could get it. Would it be too late to get it for this season?—No, certainly not.

39. There would be time to get some for this season if sent for now?—There might be.

40. If we were to telegraph to Auckland, to the Government Agent, in time for the mail steamer, there to order it, you could do that this afternoon?—It would be in time to get seed.*

41. *Hon. Major Atkinson.*] It would give great confidence if you took the plant and did a little manufacture?—Yes.

FRIDAY, 19TH AUGUST, 1881.

Sir G. GREY, K.C.B., M.H.R., examined.

42. *The Chairman.*] You have stated, Sir George, you have some information with reference to the cultivation of the olive, and the utilization of its products, which you wish to lay before the Committee. The Committee will be glad to hear what you have to say about it?—I was naturally struck by a statement made in the House that it seemed probable in some parts of New Zealand the olive would succeed, while I knew, from several years' experience, that the olive has succeeded remarkably well in New Zealand. Several species of olives bearing fruit abundantly have been growing with marked success. I believe there are portions of New Zealand, now lying comparatively speaking waste, where the olive would be a source of great future wealth. For example, to take the hills along the Wanganui and in the Thames District, which latter hills produce nothing now, and yet are capable of becoming one vast forest of olive-trees. The olive does not require fencing, because sheep will hardly touch it, and it does not injure the pasture; on the contrary, it rather kills the scrub and promotes the growth of grass under it. It appears wrong to see great tracts of country wasted, left in the manner they are now, when they could be made useful at so trifling an expense as planting olives. I believe there are plenty of olive-trees in the country now to afford truncheons and cuttings, from which and their progeny in a few years all the plants required would be produced here. I think the account given by Dr. Hector of the habit of the olive-tree—that is, that it should be grown in open spaces where it would get plenty of air, especially sea-air—as well as his remarks upon the kind of soil in which it should be grown, are entirely accurate, and contain all the information necessary upon the subject. What I particularly wanted to state was that it is not a question now whether the olive will succeed in New Zealand or not, because experience has proved that it does succeed admirably; and the subject of labour to make its produce of the highest value, from the cheapness with which its berries may be collected, is a different question, depending upon the amount of population. But that should not prevent us from preparing in this country a valuable product, which may be extensively and profitably utilized some years hence when the population is much larger than it is now. This seems particularly the case with regard to the olive, which does not here begin to bear fruit under a period of ten or twelve years after the truncheons have been planted; so that it is necessary to make provision beforehand for the coming wants of the country by getting the trees planted now, which get more valuable every year as they grow older until they have attained a great age. That is what I principally wished to say on the subject, and I wished also to place before the Committee a work regarding the olive, which I have already given into the hands of the Chairman.

43. You have grown the olive sometime on your estate at Kawau?—Yes, for a period of fifteen or sixteen years, I suppose.

44. When did they commence bearing?—I think when about twelve years old.

45. In how many years from the time of grafting do you think they would become profitable?—That depends entirely upon the population. I should think the probability would be that the tree itself would take from twenty to twenty-five years before it would be really a source of much profit.

46. At what would you estimate the produce per tree in New Zealand?—I cannot state that, but the yield is large. I have seen olives in other countries, and for young trees the yield here is large now.

47. From what you have seen, do you think the average yield here would be equal to other countries or superior?—I think the yield would be equal to that in an ordinary olive-country. But it is a difficult question for me to answer, because I have not grown olives on the soil I think the best. I think Kawau is a good climate for olives, but not generally the best soil. I have always stated my impression is that the Upper Wanganui would be the finest country in New Zealand for the olive.

48. Do you think the Napier District would suit?—I think so, very well.

49. Would any part of the Middle Island be available?—I am inclined to think it would. I think the country at the foot of the hills facing the north and east would be particularly good. I have always thought the Oamaru District a peculiarly good country for the olive.

50. Would the winter frosts hurt it?—The olive does not mind some frost if it has a hot sun in summer. That struck me as peculiar to Oamaru. The olive-fruit ripens in the autumn after a long summer.

51. I believe summer frosts are very prejudicial to the olive?—Well, I am not able to say that.

52. You have distributed some plants of the olive, I understand?—Yes.

53. To what places have you sent them?—I have given them to different people inhabiting different places. They are now trying them at the Thames. I am sending a good many truncheons there. I believe they are well suited to a mining district. They would not interfere with mining at all, but turn land otherwise waste into profitable ground.

* An order for sorghum-seed was sent to America on the 19th June. A further order has been telegraphed to catch the outgoing mail at Auckland.