

55. You have not tried in any way to spare expense in order to show a profit and loss?—Oh, no; our object was to make the thing a success.

56. Well, you consider that the reason why fruit-growing has not been a profitable business in the colony is mainly on account of the climatic conditions encouraging insect pests?—The principal thing is the codlin-moth; I am referring to the North.

57. In what part of the colony is the moth most prevalent?—The codlin-moth is worst in the North, and the scale is worst in the South.

58. *Mr. Bollard.*] You are aware, Mr. Kirk, that the codlin-moth has been much worse in the Auckland District than in any other part of the colony?—Yes.

59. You are aware, also, that the Auckland orchardists are very much concerned seeing that they have a larger area affected than any other part of the colony?—Yes.

60. Are you aware that the Auckland orchardists for some years have, through their representatives in this House, informed the Department that they have used every means in their power to make the orchards a success, but that they have failed. Are you aware the Department has been told that?—I am aware of that.

61. Are you aware that Auckland members have been for some years asking the Department to take up an orchard in the Auckland District and demonstrate to the orchardists there that you could deal with the codlin-moth and make the orchard a commercial success?—No, I am not aware of the commercial-success stipulation. That came in afterwards, as far as I am concerned. I am not aware that that was in the original proposition. If so, we should have refused to take over such a place as the Otahuhu Orchard and work on the lines laid down.

62. You are aware that the Department did take up two orchards to illustrate the fact?—One was really to illustrate the benefits of cultivation on the poor lands.

63. And then, at the suggestion of myself and others, you took up the Otahuhu Orchard?—Yes.

64. You had a free hand?—Oh, no, we had not. The committee asked us to conduct all sorts of experiments.

65. The committee appointed?—Yes.

66. Will you say that the committee's main object in carrying out these experiments was in order to deal with the codlin-moth or to deal with these orchards with the object of making them a commercial success?—All I know is that they were to report on this orchard year by year. The Department carried out the experiments at the request of the committee.

67. The committee have presented reports?—They have.

68. And they can be seen?—Yes; they are published.

69. And evidence was given by the Auckland orchardists?—Yes.

70. Do I understand that the Department did not take up this orchard but for the purpose of showing that they could control the codlin-moth?—As far as I could understand it, it was simply for the Department to demonstrate the control of the codlin-moth—of showing its ability to control the moth. If you can deal with that orchard, then you can take a better-kept orchard and can control that and make it a commercial success.

71. Suppose I am an orchardist with ten or twenty acres, carrying on certain operations with, say, 70 per cent. affected with the moth, then I cannot make the thing a commercial success?—Certainly not, unless you adopt measures to control the pest.

72. Let us definitely understand the position of the Department when they took up the challenge thrown down by the Auckland members to take up these orchards and experiment with them: to minimise the codlin-moth was to make them a commercial success?—As far as I can understand, it was for demonstrating the control of the codlin-moth under most adverse conditions.

73. There was a balance-sheet produced to this Committee last year, was there not?—Yes.

74. I think the orchard was stated to be in a good condition?—So far as the codlin-moth was concerned.

75. You cannot give us the commercial aspect of the question, but I think it is only fair you give us the weight of fruit?—Yes, we can give you the weight.

76. This is a very important matter to Auckland: do you desire to get two of the members of the committee down here to give evidence?—I do not see the necessity myself. You have got their reports for last year and their reports for this year.

77. Do you not think it would be desirable to have them here to cross-question them?—Personally, I do not think it necessary.

78. With regard to Waikumete, you have been there?—Yes.

79. You say the codlin-moth has not been considerably less there during the last two years?—I say with regard to the whole of the Auckland Province.

80. You say there is no reduction in the codlin-moth there?—I say I do not think so.

81. Would you be surprised to hear that every orchardist in Waikumete has told me that the codlin-moth has decidedly decreased?—I would be very pleased indeed to hear that.

82. Are you aware that in Waikato there are orchards that have been entirely neglected, not even the grass cut down, and the codlin-moth has decreased considerably?—The moth varies a great deal according to the season.

83. *Hon. Mr. Baldey.*] Do you think, after applying the various remedies, that the fruit will ever gain the natural quality and flavour?—If the remedies are supplemented by proper pruning, cultivation, and the application of fertilisers—always provided the trees have not been too much neglected.

84. I mean after having been infested with blight, and the various remedies have been applied, do you think the apples on these trees will ever retain their natural quality and flavour?—They may be made to do so.

85. And as regards cultivation and replanting, do you think it clears the ground of codlin-moth?—Oh, yes; undoubtedly.