

43. You think that if things go on as they are at present many of the fruitgrowers will go out of business?—There will be a big drop later on. There are vast areas of apples planted throughout New Zealand. These are gradually coming into bearing year after year, and unless there is a large amount of export and control given to local consumption there is going to be chaos in the fruit industry.

44. You think it refers more to apples than to other fruit?—It refers to apples and pears. It would be impossible to control stone-fruit at the present juncture.

45. *The Acting-Chairman.*] You referred to meetings held that appeared to be in favour of the Control Bill?—I attended these meetings of various local associations, and we had two meetings of the Auckland Council of Fruitgrowers, which was composed of delegates and representatives from each association in the district—some fifteen or sixteen delegates. The matter has been fully discussed, and in no case has there been even an attempt at an adverse attitude.

46. Were the meetings called for the purpose of considering this Bill?—They were called for the specific purpose of considering the Bill.

47. Were they called by advertisement?—Most of them were called by notices sent out by post to each member. There was a meeting called last Saturday night for the special purpose of considering the Bill.

H. E. NAPIER examined. (No. 10.)

1. *The Acting-Chairman.*] What is your full name, Mr. Napier?—Henry Eric Napier.

2. What is your official position?—Secretary of the New Zealand Fruitgrowers' Federation.

3. Do you wish to make a statement?—In opening my remarks I think it would be a benefit if I referred to the Federation—its origin, work, and objects. Away back about 1909 and 1910 a number of growers in New Zealand recognized the necessity for some organization of the industry of a national description. The federation was formed by a small group of members from various associations. They had no finances, and the delegates paid their own expenses when any meetings were held. It was not until 1917, when the orchard-tax came into existence, that the federation really became an active body. At a number of conferences held prior to 1917 the orchard-tax had been discussed, and the Government was asked to bring in the Orchard-tax Act, which provided for a voluntary tax by the fruitgrowers of 1s. an acre, to be paid through the Government to the federation for the furtherance of the fruitgrowing industry. The federation is a federation of associations. There are associations from Auckland down to Otago. They number fifty-six. They have a membership, I think, of something like 2,900. They are associations of *bona fide* fruitgrowers. They do all work in connection with their districts for the furtherance of the industry. In the last two or three years provincial councils have been formed in the Auckland, Nelson, and Otago districts. These councils are really a small federation of the associations for that province; they co-ordinate the work of the province. Once a year provincial conferences are held in all the principal fruitgrowing districts of New Zealand. At these provincial conferences the associations are represented by one delegate for every twenty-five members or fraction thereof. The provincial conference elects delegates to the Dominion Conference in the ratio of one delegate for every hundred members of the associations in the provinces. An order paper, embodying remits from the associations, is sent to the provincial conference for consideration. At the provincial conferences the delegates to the Dominion Conference are instructed regarding the attitude they are to take towards the various resolutions put forward. At the recent Dominion Conference held in Wellington on the 11th June the main subject of discussion was the present Bill. At that time only a synopsis of the Bill was available. This had been issued by the Department in order that fruitgrowers might consider the various suggestions in the Bill. At this conference a resolution was carried "That this conference of fruitgrowers urges upon Parliament the necessity for an Export Fruit Control Act on the lines set out in the synopsis submitted by the Department, but with provisions for fixing a maximum levy and for making it impossible to market the fruit from any district on the pooling system, unless at the expressed desire of that province as indicated by a poll of the exporters." I wish to make it quite clear that when this resolution was put before the conference the Otago delegates refrained from voting. Since that date the Otago associations have held meetings to discuss this question. I have here two letters received from two of the associations in Otago giving their opinion of the proposed Bill. If it is considered desirable I will read these letters to the committee.

From the Co-operative Fruitgrowers of Otago (Limited) dated 15th August, 1924 :—

"I beg to advise that at a meeting of the committee of management of our society held on 15th August, 1924, the following resolution was adopted: 'That this society supports the passing of the Fruit Control Bill now being considered in the House of Representatives, Wellington, with the following reservations: (1) That the maximum levy shall not exceed 3d. per case; (2) that there be no Dominion pooling.'"

From the Central Otago Fruitgrowers' Association, dated 15th August, 1924 :—

"*Re* Control Bill now before the House: During Mr. Allen's visit to Otago and subsequent to his address, my association, in common with Teviot, Taieri, Upper Clutha, Ripponvale, and Ettrick, carried a resolution to support the Bill with the proviso that Dominion-wide pooling was not included, and the maximum levy fixed at 3d. per case. Since then there has been considerable objection to the Bill in Dunedin, and a special meeting of the Otago council was held last week to formulate Otago's official attitude to the Bill. Our director on the council, acting upon instructions from this association, strongly supported the Bill with the proviso as already mentioned. A similar attitude was taken up by directors from Ripponvale and Upper Clutha, while the other five directors supported local control and opposed the Bill. Not having seen the Bill, we are relying on the explanation of Mr. Allen, but I may say the principal objection comes from the council, whose members consider that Dominion control