

fruit industry would not be where it is to-day. The great step was made two years ago in that the whole of the New Zealand fruit was shipped from New Zealand under a universal label, and it was a great step forward that none of the other primary industries have been able to make. Our fruit is marketed as New Zealand apples. Apart from England, it is altogether essential that a label be provided for the South American market, because the people there are used to the labelling of the cases from America, and it is stated by some of the brokers that the label will improve the price of the fruit up to 1s. a case, and at the same time standardize our name. In South America, the more gaudy the label the better they like it. As to the wiring of the cases, one speaker has stated that it was a useless expenditure, or words to that effect. The wiring of cases, in my opinion, is absolutely essential. Before wiring became compulsory it was stated and known that the cases split, with the result that the apples were found lying about the wharves. Recently we have received a letter from London pointing out the fact that in the overseas trade the Australian shippers have lost much money through broken cases, and pointing out the fact that New Zealand cases were wired. I might say here that the federation keeps in close touch with the Agriculture Department in setting the standard. Last season our total shipments to England from New Zealand were 202,000 cases. It was stated by an Otago speaker that New Zealand shipments to the English market were merely as a drop in the bucket; but the speaker might have said that the Otago shipments were as a drop in the bucket compared with the whole of New Zealand. In comparing the prices received for New Zealand fruit with those of Tasmania and Australia, it was remarked yesterday that grading was not required, in which connection it should be pointed out that we hold the premier position over Tasmania to the tune of 2s. to 3s. per case. We ship under two grades, "Fancy" and "Good." I think it was stated yesterday that in some instances the "Good" grade brought better prices than the "Fancy" grade. I might say at once that the statement is by no means correct, because our "Fancy" grade is 2s. per case better than "Good." One of the brokers writing to the federation during the past season stated that although the New Zealand fruit was not arriving in anything like the condition of that of Western Australia, still the writer said that the New Zealand fruit invariably brought the highest price. The writer further added that the buyers knew we were grading under our regulations. Approximately 100,000 cases of Tasmanian apples were shipped during last season as "blemished," the price realized at Liverpool being from 5s. to 7s. per case. It was decided upon by the Advisory Council in Tasmania to allow "black-spot," and the decision was a great mistake on the part of the Tasmanian authorities. The Americans put into England large quantities of low-grade fruit to compete. I have catalogues in the office showing that the fruit did not realize more than from 5s. to 7s. per case; it costs that from the tree to the market, but the cost of production is very much higher. The Tasmanian shippers were faced with very heavy losses. I read in the Tasmanian papers recently a statement to the effect that if the Tasmanian growers came out with the actual cost of marketing they would be lucky. Now, New Zealand has averaged good prices in the English market during the past season. I must say, however, that the condition on arrival has not been of the best; we have a large number of improvements to make. It was stated yesterday by a speaker that the carriage was satisfactory, which is a statement that I do not agree with, because I know that the carriage is not satisfactory. We have a number of years of research before us to discover the cause or causes of the present trouble, in which connection I want to state that every penny per case over the cost of landing is good money in the pocket of the grower. I want to impress upon the Committee that there is no truth in the statement that grading is not essential. I want to mention one difficulty I have experienced as manager of the federation, and that is the lack of proper control over shipments. We had a request from a number of shippers to make the Glasgow trade available, as they wished to open up this market. One shipper had sent a consignment there and received a better average price than he would have got in London. We made space available for eleven thousand cases, but it subsequently looked as if the shippers would not fill that space, and so we had it reduced to seven thousand. Apples must be shipped in a separate chamber. The "Tasmania" came in and we had three thousand cases for that seven thousand chamber. What were we to do if we did not fill the space? We would possibly be faced with dead freight: if we had only three thousand, we would be faced with four thousand dead freight. On behalf of the shippers I took a risk and diverted some fruit. I got only a small quantity from each grower. After we did this we started to get complaints. Naturally, the growers objected to us taking this action. The fruit arrived in due course, and I am very pleased to say that it averaged 2s. 6d. a case more than fruit sent to the London market at the same time. It costs less to send to Glasgow than to London. As to the opening-up of new markets, How can that be done unless the growers are prepared to bear the proportionate cost? It has been suggested that we should endeavour to open up such-and-such a market, and we have asked the growers to supply the fruit, but there are no growers who will put up the fruit unless there is a fair proportion over all. It is clear to me that all shippers should bear a fair proportion of the cost, otherwise it is impossible to open up new markets. We wanted to open up the Hull market, and arranged for a Hull chamber. When the fruit came to hand we did not have sufficient to fill the chamber: we had to put the Hull fruit in the London chamber. The London chamber was opened up, and it was seven days before the fruit got round to Hull, with the result that it had deteriorated. We have approximately 350 shippers consigning their fruit through us to their own markets. Some range from fifty to one hundred cases for the season, divided into three or four shipments. There has been an instance of two cases shipped under one mark, which is an example of handling shipments for small growers—from, say, ten to twenty-five cases. In connection with these small shipments there is the question of accounting. There is a difficulty of growers combining in community packing-sheds owing to the isolation of a number of the small growers—indeed, they cannot combine except at much cost to themselves. They could combine under a Control Board even if their shipments were not large, as a minimum number of cases could be arranged for. There is also another thing that strikes me in going through this season's account sales: I think it would be a very beneficial thing if some control was exercised