

Nelson was unsuitable—the climate was not suitable, and they could not make a profit out of the industry. They did not listen, and the consequence is just what I thought—that is to say, the growers are in an awful position. We are sorry that that should have happened, and think the Government should help them, but we do not see why the Government should help them at the expense of the growers who are in more favourable circumstances.

5. *Mr. Forbes.*] How long have you been in business?—All my life. I am now sixty-two years of age.

6. Do you remember whether the pooling scheme was tried before—did they try it in Canterbury?—I have a case in point. Mr. Longton, through the help of the Government, built cool stores, and he tried to pool the fruit, but he got himself into such a hopeless muddle that he did not know where he was. In the first balance-sheet there was an item of £3,700 overpaid to growers. He did not know where he was. That was an attempt that I know of to organize the pooling system. If we are going to have that experience in every part of New Zealand, then all I can say is that we are going to lose a lot of money.

7. You said something to the effect that your association passed a resolution against the Bill?—Yes.

8. How many members are there in your organization?—I think there are one hundred and forty—perhaps there are nearly one hundred and fifty. As a matter of fact, the secretary of the association will have all the figures in that respect.

9. I understand that Mr. Brash received a letter from the Rangiora fruitgrowers, and they said they supported the Bill?—They supported the Bill at first, but on the 6th September they had another meeting and discussed the Bill. I may say that they did not have the Bill when they sent the first resolution; but at the meeting on the 6th September they passed a resolution against the Bill—that is, almost unanimously they opposed it.

10. Then it is not correct to say that the Rangiora fruitgrowers favour the Bill?—No, that is not correct.

11. I had a letter from them a little while ago saying that they approved the Bill, but evidently they have had another meeting since?—Yes. That letter was sent in August, and this later meeting was held on the 6th September.

12. I understand what you have said refers to North Canterbury: what is the position with respect to South Canterbury?—There are very few growers in South Canterbury; there are only a few down at Timaru and Waimate. I cannot say much about that district. That is a hundred miles away from Christchurch. But there are not many growers down there.

13. Where are the main growers in your association?—All around Christchurch.

14. How far out?—Round the foot of the hills, and right round Riccarton and Papanui. The bulk of them are in Papanui. There are also some at Kaiapoi.

15. That covers the hundred and forty?—There are more growers than that. The one hundred and forty are, I think, members of the association.

16. In regard to the question of voting if the Bill is put into operation: do you think what is proposed would meet your views?—No. I know something about electioneering. I have been at it for twenty-five years in connection with local-body and parliamentary elections, and I do not like it. I do not think you should have anything like that in connection with the fruit industry.

17. As far as the Bill is concerned, you can speak candidly that it has not emanated from Canterbury?—It has not emanated from Canterbury—I can assure you of that. It came from Nelson—that is where it came from.

18. You do not even favour the export clauses?—No; not the export clauses, or anything else. The export clauses would not assist us. We do not ship for export, and have not done so for the last ten years.

19. Would you have any objection if the Bill was confined to Nelson alone?—No, I would have no objection if the Bill was confined to Nelson. If Nelson wants it, let them have it by all means. I should have no objection so long as it did not interfere with me.

20. Has Canterbury had any of the Government money in connection with the export of apples?—No, we do not export a single case.

21. You do not get any of that money?—No, of course we do not. We do not get any of that money; we do not export.

22. *Mr. Hawken.*] Do you think that there is too much fruit grown in New Zealand for local consumption?—No. This year there were 200,000 cases sent away, and I am of opinion that if that 200,000 cases had been left in New Zealand the prices would have been very fair to the growers. That is what I think of New Zealand consumption.

23. But is not the quantity of fruit being grown increasing all the time?—Yes.

24. Out of all proportion to the population?—Oh, I could not say that. I do not know the proportion that is being grown to the population. The year before last the fruit was selling at a fair price. Last year it was not, because that was a slump year, and we only got slump prices. But this year the prices have been good right from the start. We have been able to sell thousands of cases this year at 5s. a case direct from the trees to the consumer. And that pays us admirably. But if we came under this Control Bill we would have to pay something like 12s. in expenses for storing, packing, and other expenses.

25. But if there is overproduction—and that seems likely—do you not think it is absolutely necessary to work up some system of getting rid of the surplus fruit by export?—Well, you see, Canterbury does not export.

26. Yes, that may be so; but I will put it this way to you: you would not like Nelson being forced on to the Christchurch market? You would rather that they exported?—I would, of course, sooner