

this the carrying services—postal, railage, shipping, and cartage—have been induced to co-operate and work under fixed standard rates, with the prospect of an extension of the scheme in the future as soon as circumstances warrant it.

A fresh-fruit supply is becoming a growing need in the households of the people of to-day. Experience has long since proved that there is a very large number of consumers desirous of getting periodical supplies direct from the grower, and so securing the advantages immediately apparent when the perishable nature of the goods concerned is taken into consideration. Whilst this trade has been cultivated by many growers and has assumed considerable dimensions, it has been seriously interfered with (1) by the heavy freight charges and delayed delivery that were unavoidable when small consignments had to be dealt with and such consignments had to be transhipped; (2) by the correspondence and book-keeping, which entailed a heavy drain on the resources of the grower, at a time, too, when these resources are tested to the utmost—the harvest-time. The first disability discouraged the consumers and reduced this form of distribution to a minimum; the second discouraged the growers and thus further hampered this desirable direct trade. These drawbacks have now been entirely removed by the organization above referred to. By consigning fruit on the railway by "Parcels" it is given the utmost despatch, and, with rare exception, a case of fruit can be consigned from any railway-station in the Dominion and delivered *to the house* of the consumer in the largest centres of the same Island for 9d. or 1s., according to the size of the case. If it has to go "oversea," and transhipment is necessary, it can be "booked through" in one consignment-note at standard rates that are but a fraction of those that ruled previously, and, what is as valuable, time in transit has been reduced in equal degree. Correspondence and book-keeping on the part of the grower have been almost obliterated by the "fruit-order coupon" system of the Post Office, or, in other words, the "cash-with-order" method of sending fruit through the Post Office from producer to consumer direct. The freights being assessed by a competent clerk, and the whole order having his supervision, errors in ordering are being reduced to a minimum. Ripe stone-fruits (apricots, peaches, and cherries) have been sent under the above system from the centre of the North Island to Otago, and *vice versa*, and have been delivered within forty-eight hours in excellent condition. Consumers and growers alike have expressed and shown practical appreciation of these facilities, though not, in the case of the grower particularly, to the immediate extent expected. The new regulations, however, were only published in the middle of the stone-fruit season—the busiest period in the growers' calendar, a period that does not permit time to reorganize, and, indeed, when contracts and arrangements have often