

On arrival in England I spent some time at Covent Garden, and came into touch with a number of salesmen there. At their request I furnished them with the names of several leading fruitgrowers in the Nelson District, to whom they intend, they informed me, to communicate, with the object of establishing a business connection. I gathered one or two useful facts at Covent Garden. The most important is that it is useless shipping New Zealand fruit to the Home market to arrive at a time when the English fruit is coming in, such as strawberries, cherries, gooseberries, raspberries, &c. Complaint was made by several brokers of New Zealand apples reaching the market in a shrivelled condition. This suggests the question, Are we shipping the right varieties? Then there is the question of shipping certain varieties at the wrong time. It is useless expecting apples to open up in the pink of condition on the London market if they are shipped before they are properly matured. For instance, I picked a case of well-matured Sturmers from my fruit-garden, with the intention of using them on the voyage. But, with the object of testing this question, I made arrangements, after the fruit had been in cabin a fortnight, to have it carried in the vegetable-room of the steamer. It arrived in England in splendid condition—in fact, appeared a far finer fruit than any of the colonial apples I saw exposed for sale in London. I attribute this solely to the fact that the apples were mature when gathered. Not a single apple out of the case went wrong. Yet I consider that if I had had a shipload of the same fruit on the London market at that time (the end of June) they would not have brought a top price, owing to the competition they would have had to meet from Home-grown fruit.

It is interesting to study the various methods by which fruit is disposed of in England in order to cater to different classes of customers. England is a country of social extremes, and very rich people order their fruit regardless of cost, while the majority of people hardly ever have the opportunity of tasting fruit at all. Apples as a rule are sold at so-much for each one, the average being 1d. for a Sturmer Pippin. The most popular-sized apple with the dealers is 2½ in., and the more uniform the apples the better they like them.

The steamer "Ruahine," which sailed from Wellington to London on the 3rd instant, has on board 12,727 cases of apples for Montevideo and 2,375 cases for Rio de Janeiro, these being transshipments from Tasmania.

PRODUCE IMPORTED.

THE following return, compiled by the Customs Department, shows the total importations into New Zealand during the month of March, 1913, of agricultural and farm products:—

Item.	Quantity.	Value.
Bran	Nil	£
Butter	Nil	..
Cheese	10 cwt.	39
Chaff	Nil	..
Fruits, fresh, all kinds	2,140,902 lb.	10,359
Barley	29 centials	25
Oats	9 centials	49
Wheat	7 centials	26
Onions	575 cwt.	159
Pollard and sharps	Nil	..
Potatoes	Nil	..
Seeds, grass and clover	1,580 cwt.	5,117
Total values imported	£15,774