

were put into the vessels, were heated on the railroad journey, or by lying out in the hot sun on the wharfs, and were put into the ships in such a condition that it was practically impossible for them to arrive in the English ports in a good condition. These are facts which have come out as a result of the investigations we have carried on, and they are of the utmost importance to our producers and shippers in this country, and will tend to improve the facilities for putting our fruit products into the foreign markets in a good condition.

There was another equally important result from this investigation. It is a well known fact that a great many of our apples were bruised and hurt when the barrels were opened on the other side. Various explanations were given, but one evident cause was the rough handling of the fruit in transit, in putting it in to ships and taking it out. One of the chief duties of our officers, both in Montreal and in England, has been to watch the handling of our products in transferring them from the railways to the ships on this side, and from the ships to the warehouses on the other side. We found a very deplorable condition of affairs. As a rule our products were handled very roughly. Many of our barrels were hurt and the fruit consequently was damaged. Our cheese boxes were damaged to such an extent that in many cases a large percentage of them was scarcely able to contain the cheese, and in some instances the cheese was hurt. This has always been one of the complaints against Canadian cheese in the English market, that it was not properly and nicely boxed. The same complaint was made of our butter tubs, that they were not properly and strongly made and covered. My officers in the course of their investigations found that this evil was very glaring and demanded a remedy. In many instances it has been remedied freely by the ship-owners and by the stevedores when their attention was drawn to the fact. My officers made reasonable explanations to them, and as a general rule, the ship-owners have applied a remedy, without any attempted coercion and without need of subsidizing or paying them for it; and consequently, during this last season, there has been a marked improvement in the handling of all our fruit products. I may mention as an instance that formerly our cheese boxes used to be bundled up into a net and hoisted by a crane and swung over into the holds of the ships. Perhaps a dozen or fifteen boxes were put into the net promiscuously and were let down into the hold, knocking against the sides of the hold and against the beams of the ship. To remedy this a simple contrivance was prepared by which, instead of the boxes being let down in a net, the boxes were carefully piled upon a platform five or six feet square, and were

let down in that manner, with the result that during the last season they were transported in far better condition. This improvement was brought about by a simple suggestion of my officers and carried out by the stevedores without the slightest objection. Other improvements have also been suggested by my officers and adopted by the shippers. We have succeeded in inducing them to use a bag of hay or something of the kind laid at the bottom of the chutes down which the butter boxes are slid, with the result that, instead of the boxes striking the bottom with such force as to split or break them, they fall on something soft and are thus preserved intact. These improvements have been brought about at no expense at all to the trade, and very little to the company. I will not say anything now regarding the ventilation of the holds, because I hope in the supplementary estimates to ask for a further vote for that purpose. I expect to make an arrangement with the shippers by which an enormous improvement will be made in the carriage of our cheese and apples in the ordinary holds of vessels, outside of the cold storage chambers.

Mr. ALCORN. I understood the hon. gentleman to say that certain agents were appointed for the purpose of inspecting the apples for shipment. I would like to know what was the result of the inspection. I would also ask the hon. minister if he intends to publish the information that he has gathered.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. With regard to the hon. gentleman's first question, I may say that while I had officers in the port of Montreal they did not undertake to make any inspection of the apples or other things that were going forward. Their business was to watch and see what could be done to improve the condition of shipment. As a matter of fact, they did examine a good many barrels of apples as they went forward, but they did not undertake to inspect them as an inspector would inspect fruit, except with the concurrence of the owner. But in many instances they were able in a friendly way to get the evidence which I have alluded to, by an examination of the fruit as it arrived in the trains, and when it was lying on the wharfs. With regard to the other question, I may say that a great deal of this information was already given to the Committee on Agriculture by Professor Robertson a few days ago, and that evidence will shortly be printed and distributed to members. I may say that as a good deal of this information has been somewhat of a confidential nature, that is to say, that our agents have informed us in regard to particular shipments and particular shippers, we have not consequently felt justified in publishing that information in regard to the