

the Atlantic? It seems to me that the minister has not kept his promise to us in this matter, but that he has been very negligent of the interests of the fruit growers of Ontario, who hoped that he would develop this trade.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I think the hon. gentleman is jumping to a rather hasty conclusion. He says that there are a number of instances in which the fruit was carried in an even temperature and in good condition. I have no doubt that where that was the case, the fruit was put into cold storage in proper condition. There are other cases in which the temperature of the chamber was too high at the beginning of the voyage and continued to be too high for some little time. My information is that it depends very largely on the condition of the fruit. If the fruit is in a heated condition when it is put into the chamber, it is impossible to reduce the temperature immediately. Very frequently the fruit itself, in a certain condition of ripeness, generates heat, and heats the chamber in which it is. The cooling apparatus cannot immediately overcome that. It is very much easier to put fruit into a cold chamber at the orchard, close to where it is picked, and to keep that at an even temperature, than it is to put it into a car and bring it to Montreal, and put it into a cold storage chamber there to be carried over to England. A comparison between the two is unfair. It is much easier to maintain it at the same temperature when put into cold storage and kept in the place where it is packed, than when it is carted from one place to another. I do not profess that this work is perfect, but I think great improvements have been made. These thermographic charts were only begun in 1900 and have contributed to greater regularity and efficiency in the working of their machinery. I find that the temperatures have been published regularly and are improving steadily. Probably in certain instances the temperature has not been what it ought to be, but we immediately report such instances to the ship owners, and the men who are irregular are immediately dismissed, because the ship owners are extremely anxious to make a good showing in their cold storage chambers, as that is the only way they can secure the trade which they are very desirous to get. I think my hon. friend is too pessimistic. I know that a good deal of fruit sent forward last year and the year before, especially the year before, arrived in good order. Last year the fruit was of an inferior quality, so that not so much was exported and the returns were not so satisfactory. But the unsatisfactory returns were not due in any way to the lack of cold storage.

Mr. SMITH (Wentworth). This return shows 31,000 packages, how much of that was Canadian and how much Californian fruit that went forward last year?

Mr. SMITH (Wentworth).

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I have not the details with regard to that.

Mr. SMITH (Wentworth). So far as the shipments from Grimsby district are concerned, they were not many last year. According to this return there were none the year before. The hon. gentleman says that improvements are being made. These are, no doubt, due to urgent representations to his department. Looking at the returns of the 'Maria,' I find that in 1901 the temperature was 32.38 throughout the voyage, which is what it should be, but in 1902 it was 40.52. No. 89, so that instead of being improved it got to be worse. The hon. minister admits that he has no control over these temperatures. Here was a period when the contract had not expired, yet the temperatures were outrageously high, and in some cases far too low.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I do not know whether the contract with regard to that particular vessel had expired. It may not have expired on the first occasion and may have expired on the second occasion.

Mr. SMITH (Wentworth). With regard to the arrival of the fruit in vessels at different temperatures, they all go through the same process and should arrive in the same condition. Take the government plant at Grimsby—

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. That is not managed by the government. The building belongs to the department, but we have had nothing to do with the management. We gave it to the people there some time ago.

Mr. SMITH (Wentworth). At any rate it goes through the same process. It is put into a cold storage chamber and goes in cold storage to Montreal, where it is transferred to the vessels, so that I cannot see why one lot should come in all right and another in bad condition.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. That depends a good deal on the ripeness of the fruit. One lot may come out all right and the other may be all wrong just because the condition of the fruit in each lot was different.

Mr. SMITH (Wentworth). The growers must have learnt by this time the right stage of ripeness in which their fruit should be when put in cold storage, instead of putting their fruit up in worse condition year after year they have been putting it up in better condition each year. Certainly they are not so stupid as not to learn how their fruit should be put up after six years' experience in this line. It therefore should go on the boat in better condition each year and come off in better condition. I would like to ask how many vessels have been fitted up with cool air apparatus. I understand that a large part of this vote is for the