

90. The price of candles is very fluctuating?—Yes: for years past it was 11d. and 10d., and at present it is down to 9d. for imported, 8d. colonial; simply, I suppose, owing to local competition. It has never been so low as at present during the last ten years.

91. Do you not think that the prejudice against the locally-manufactured article is general, and not confined to your trade; and that it results, in a measure, from small things, such as the way in which goods are made up. I have often noticed there is apparently a difficulty in getting the colonial manufacture made up so neatly or nicely as the imported. Half the success of many imports seems to arise from the brand being well known?—That is so. The contents do not matter so very much.

92. They buy for the brand. Is it not very much the same with candles?—Yes. In England and Belgium the making-up is an important point. It is the work of girls and boys who have been trained to do it neatly. Here our boys had to acquire the training at our expense. These boys start at 10s. a week. They can now turn out three times the work they could do at first, and they do it much more neatly. We are now paying them 16s. to 18s. per week on piece-work.

93. That is a thing that will probably right itself in time?—Yes; but it takes time, and that at the very period we want to get the most favourable opinion of people. That is the very time that these difficulties try us most. By-and-by, when you become established, the opinion of people goes with you.

94. If there was no duty put on candles—if you had a fair market, and no prejudice to contend against—could you compete with the imported goods?—I could never have got established without protection, without the duty—call it what you like. I am quite prepared to sell my article at the same price as the imported. The colonial prejudice I have spoken of forces me to sell it so much lower than the imported; therefore I could not possibly stand without the duty.

95. I suppose there is a great deal in the way in which trade runs: for instance, the English manufacturer can give longer credit than you can afford to give?—Yes. Besides, candles are often used on the London market as an article to be consigned in order to finance with. Candles are not perishable, and do not depreciate. A man in want of money has only got to send in a quantity of candles, and he can get the advance on them he requires. This is a fact well known in regard to the candle business.

96. You make stearine and supply the trade?—There is no trade to supply.

97. Are there no other manufactories of candles?—Not in Dunedin.

98. There is no market, in fact, for it?—No, except as candles.

99. I do not understand that you make any definite complaint of the position of your trade at present. I mean that there is nothing which can be done by amendment of the law which would in any way further your trade?—I think not.

100. Your suggestions are mainly confined to the desirability of the establishment of sulphuric-acid works in New Zealand?—Yes; and to the maintenance of other factories. The raw material from one factory finds use by the existence of other factories. The waste from one factory can be used in another.

No. 56.

Evidence of Mr. J. KITCHEN (of Messrs. Kitchen and Sons, Candle and Soap Manufacturers, Wellington), before the Commissioners on Local Industries, at Wellington, 1st June, 1880.

MR. KITCHEN wants the candle duty to remain as it is. He has spent £17,000 on works at Adelaide Road. He wishes the duty of 2s. 6d. per hundredweight on wrapping-paper to be removed.

CEMENT.

No. 57.

Messrs. YOUNG BROS. to Mr. Commissioner A. J. Burns.

SIR,—

Westport, 31st March, 1880.

For some time we have thought it probable that the Greymouth limestones, properly treated, might yield a cement like the Portland, and hydraulic lime, two valuable products for which there is considerable use in the colonies. Good hydraulic lime—that is, a lime that sets hard under water—is largely used for concrete, &c., on harbour-works at Home, and the best is preferred to ordinary Portland cements. The lime produced by ordinary lime-burning at Greymouth is what they term “poor” for plasterers’ purposes, but, we believe, sets well under water. The limestone is very impure, containing much extraneous material; but it is of such impure limestones that the cements and hydraulic limes are made, by subjection to a higher temperature than that used in ordinary lime-burning. We do not know whether the consideration of such a question comes within the scope of the Commission of which you are a member; but, if so, the initiation of so valuable an industry could not fail to be worthy of attention. We wrote to Mr. Masters, suggesting the advisability of having the matter investigated, and mentioned that we would also suggest it to you, knowing that you would take a great interest in any step that might result in the establishment of a valuable industry. Of course, until the actual constitution of the limestones has been tested, it is impossible to say whether a marketable article can be produced; but, if production is possible, it should be the interest of Government to offer every encouragement to an industry that would supply local wants and find employment for local coal and labour. A vote sufficient to cover the expense of the analysis, and, if the analysis be favourable, of trial in small kilns, and of such tests as would be necessary to ascertain the exact facts of the matter, might be of great value to the colony. It is possible that other places in the colony might offer greater natural advantages; but the cheapness of both stone and coal at Greymouth appears to give it an advantage.

We have, &c.,

YOUNG BROS.