

I may point out that a saving, as against the imported cement, could be effected by the use of common sacks instead of wooden barrels to put the cement into for short transport to neighbouring parts of the colony. Each cask is an item in the cost of the cement, and considerably adds to the space in transport as well. The cost per barrel for imported cement ranges from 15s. to 21s.

COACH-BUILDING TRADE.

No. 68.

Mr. J. ROBIN, Carriage-manufacturer, to the Chairman of the Commission on Local Industries.
Dunedin, 7th April, 1880.

SIR,—
A. J. Burns, Esq., one of the Commissioners on Local Industries, has addressed me a circular for the purpose of eliciting information that might be beneficial in promoting or establishing new industries in our midst. Would you, therefore, kindly permit me to say that, in my opinion, the time has gone by when the Government could materially assist in establishing an industrial population in our midst. When the public works scheme and immigration policy were first introduced, and money borrowed to inaugurate public works and provide men to carry out that scheme, the Government introducing it, and each successive Government—Tory and Whig, Liberal and Conservative, squatter and anti-squatter—with terrible consistency, or, rather, persistency, while introducing men to make rolling-stock, &c., have deliberately, to an alarming extent, imported that stock ready-made, and allowed the men, induced to leave their homes by the representations of our authorized agents, to starve or find work with private employers. I am loth to attribute unworthy motives to any one, but can come to no other conclusion than that some one, be he who or what he may, had some axe to grind in the way of commission out of that imported stock that would not have accrued out of the home-made article; and I am now extremely sorry to say that I can offer no suggestions except that, at some far future date, when the Government require more locomotive carriages, &c., they call for tenders in the local market, giving sufficient time and opportunity for tenderers in the first instance to fulfil their engagements; and I have no hesitation in saying that, as far as the manufacture of carriages is concerned, the colonial-made article would bear about the same comparison as Mosgiel does to the Home-made cloth. When the history of New Zealand, and the public works and immigration schemes, comes to be written, shame and ignominy shall rest on the heads of those who have mismanaged our affairs, and have allowed the opportunity to pass of establishing industries that would have for ever benefited the land of our adoption, which they so profess to love.

I have, &c.,

J. ROBIN.

No. 69.

Messrs. SINCLAIR and MORTON, Coach-builders, to the Members of the Royal Commission on Native Industries.

GENTLEMEN,—

Dunedin, 10th May, 1880.

In accordance with an invitation forwarded to our firm by Mr. George Grant, Secretary to the Dunedin National Industrial Association, we now beg to offer for the consideration of the Royal Commission on Native Industries a few suggestions connected with our trade, which we trust will receive their favourable attention.

So far as we are aware, no encouragement or opportunity has been afforded to our trade by the New Zealand Government for the construction and supply within the colony of locally-built railway carriages. We are thoroughly convinced that, had such been given, it would have proved conclusively, not only that all the railway-carriages required in the colony could have been constructed here, but that this could have been done at a price not exceeding that paid for imported carriages, and that, as regards careful construction, finish, and durability, those so manufactured in New Zealand would bear favourable comparison with those imported from Great Britain and America. In proof of this we may be allowed to mention that our firm was recently invited by Mr. David Proudfoot to construct for the Dunedin Tramway Company a car similar to those imported and now running on the line. The contract was accepted by us, and this test-car duly completed and delivered by us. After being fully tested, it has been admitted by Mr. Proudfoot and the public to be in every respect equal, if not superior, to those imported; that, in fact, it was placed upon the line in better condition and at a less cost than they were. We can have, therefore, no reason to doubt that what has been done, and done so successfully, in constructing tram-cars can without difficulty be effected with carriages of all descriptions for our New Zealand railways. What we would now desire very respectfully but very earnestly to urge on the attention of the Royal Commission and the Government is, that when railway carriages, trucks, or wagons of any description are required in the colony, tenders be invited for their construction and supply within the colony; and, in order to afford every facility to local manufacturers, that an approved pattern should be provided and the cost thereof furnished, such cost to include all charges and expenses, such as packing, freight, insurance, refitting, and delivery—in fact, its cost to the Government when placed upon the rails approved and ready for work. This information there could be no difficulty in supplying, and it would prove highly valuable in guiding our colonial builders. Were some such recommendation as we have ventured to give adopted, we are persuaded that in a comparatively short time the necessity to go beyond the colony for railway-carriages and other plant would be entirely avoided, that an important industry would be greatly strengthened and increased, that a very considerable number of intelligent and desirable workmen would be employed, and all this not only without loss or sacrifice to the colony, but to its manifest profit and advantage, seeing that the very large amounts now (we submit most injuriously and unnecessarily) sent out of the country would be retained within it, and employed in the encouragement and employment of large bodies of our fellow-citizens, and in the growth and prosperity of our native industries. We are quite prepared,