

when and if required, to furnish to the Commission full details as to the various points embraced in our present suggestion, but we trust it is sufficiently reasonable and self-evident to induce the Commissioners, after full consideration and inquiry, to embody in their report a recommendation to the Government for its adoption.

We would further take the liberty of submitting to the Commission another recommendation bearing somewhat upon the requirements of our trade—and it is that the Government should adopt some measures, with as little delay as possible, to plant upon some parts of its reserves, and especially along the railway-lines, such trees as hickory, ash, oak, &c., all indispensable in the manufacture of carriages, and in all work where lightness, strength, and durability are required. We do this with the greater confidence, believing that in the course of a few years such a measure, if properly inaugurated and encouraged, would prove one of the most profitable sources of income in the colony—more so as very little expenditure would be necessary, and as the ground so to be employed, or much of it, is at present of no value for other purposes, being barren and stony; which, however, renders it all the more suitable for the growth of the toughest timber, it being an established fact that this is procured from land of that character.

In conclusion, allow us to express the hope that the time is not far distant when the Government of New Zealand will consider it a matter of paramount importance and the foundation of true national prosperity to adopt every means whereby its revenues can, as far as possible, be expended and employed within its own borders, so far as this can be done without the sacrifice of price or quality.

We have, &c.,

SINCLAIR AND MORTON,
Coach-builders, King-street, Dunedin.

No. 70.

Evidence of Messrs. SINCLAIR and MORTON before the Commissioners on Local Industries, at Dunedin, 18th May, 1880.

101. *The Chairman.*] Do you wish to make a statement in addition to your written one?—There is one matter I would allude to. It is in reference to hickory spokes. We should like to have them duty-free. No one in this colony is prepared to manufacture them. It was intended, when the last modification of the tariff took place, that the duty on them should be struck off—in fact, the mover of the motion intended that it should be so; but the Customs authorities have decided differently, and we still pay duty for them.

102. Have you anything further to add? We will give full consideration to anything in your notes which will form part of the evidence?—I thought that if any questions arose on our statement, I should be only too happy to answer them. The principal ground that we take up is that we think that the time has arrived when railway-carriages, and most of the rolling-stock on our railways, should be built in the colony. In our statement I have endeavoured to show that we have successfully completed tram-cars, at even a less cost than the imported ones, and that ours is admitted to be the better article. If we can do that, I maintain that we are in a position to build railway-carriages also. If the carriages were built here, it would be the means of causing a large employment of labour, and of keeping a great deal of money in the colony—money that would be regularly circulated through the hands of various tradespeople. In fact, I am fully prepared to make them, under the conditions stipulated in my memorandum. So far as the tariff is concerned, we are quite satisfied with it, with the exception I have named. We find no difficulty in competing with the imported carriages on legitimate ground—that are imported and sold at a profit. In the past we have experienced a difficulty with American manufacturers. They made more goods than they could find a market for in their own country; the surplusage they sent out to this country, and sold it at an immense sacrifice; which for a long time damaged our business. Now we have the 15 per cent. duty, and get in our materials free, I would indorse the recommendation of Mr. Reid. There is no native timber to take the place of hardwood, and it is a wood that carriage-builders use. I may mention that, in the concluding part of our recommendation, we make the suggestion that it would be desirable for the Government to plant upon their reserves, as far as possible, such trees as hickory, ash, oak, &c., and timbers of that description. The hardiest of those timbers grow in the stoniest and most barren places. Such plantations would, in a short time, be the means of bringing in a considerable revenue; and the cost of planting would not be much. Men out of employment might be made use of in that way.

103. *Mr. Stevens.*] Do you consider that the 15 per cent. duty is “protective”?—Yes; it is sufficiently protective for all purposes.

104. Taken in conjunction with the relief given last year to your trade in taking off the duty on most of the raw materials you use?—Yes. We are perfectly satisfied with the tariff as it now stands, with the exception of one thing, which I have pointed out.

105. About railway carriages: you say here, “So far as we are aware, no encouragement or opportunity has been offered to our trade by the New Zealand Government for the construction and supply within the colony of locally-built railway-carriages.” Have there been no tenders invited for the construction of railway-carriages?—Not so far as I am aware. An order was given to one firm in Dunedin to build one carriage; but, as you can readily believe, that is no fair test or trial at all. The price for which he would build one carriage would be different if the order were to build twenty.

106. Are you not aware, or have you not heard, of an instance of tenders being advertised for the construction of carriages?—Not so far as I am aware. I have never seen anything of the kind myself. I may point out to the Commissioners the fact that Mr. David Proudfoot, of this city, has taken the initiative. He has called for tenders for the construction of four motors for the tram-line. I am perfectly convinced that he will get tenders for their construction for less than they would cost him at Home. I am quite certain that the price will be even less than the imported.

107. *Mr. Bain.*] In proposing to have the railway-carriages made here, do you mean to make the whole of the carriage—ironwork as well, or do you mean to import the ironwork?—The recommendation which I have proposed is this: If the Government at any future time should require railway-car-