

generally unanimous in considering that the increase of the duty last year has had a distinctly protective operation. The Commission would recommend that in any further revision of the tariff the duty on sewing-machine silks and threads, as used in the trade, should be remitted; also that saffron, which is used considerably by tanners as colouring matter, should be exempt from duty.

CARRIAGE-BUILDING.

From the evidence it appears that there is a general feeling of complaint among the carriage-builders that the rolling-stock for use on the railways is all imported, instead of a chance being given to local efforts by tenders being called for in the colony. The Commission are of opinion that when a further supply of railway carriages, trucks, wagons, &c., is required, tenders for their construction might with advantage be invited, and that every facility should be afforded to local manufacturers, as it would greatly strengthen and increase a most important industry. The Commission would recommend that, when a tender is called for, an approved pattern should be provided, with every cost upon it clearly stated, and that amply sufficient time should be given to tenderers in the first instance to enable them to fulfil their engagement. The evidence also makes it appear that, when the last modification of the tariff was made, hickory spokes were unintentionally omitted from the coach-builders' material to be admitted free of duty. "Unwrought hickory" is admitted free; but the Customs authorities, when appealed to, decided that hickory spokes did not come under that denomination. As it is quite impossible, however, to manufacture them at present in this colony, the Commission would recommend that they also be included in the list of raw material admitted free.

METAL TRADES.

The Commission find that the metal trades generally are more or less in a depressed condition.

The evidence shows that the capabilities of many establishments are very great, and that most descriptions of machinery can be manufactured in the colony; but the complaint is that the Government, by importing all they require, never give the local manufacturers a chance of competing for such machinery and ironwork as could be manufactured by them. Another special hindrance which the Commission would draw attention to is the competition by the Government workshops in the manufacture of machinery and other articles, which, as the evidence proves, is most detrimental to private firms. Not only does the Public Works Department compete in manufacturing and forgings, but they draw the best workmen away from private firms by offering higher pay than the current rate of wages. This matter demands the immediate consideration of the Government, and should be made the subject of strict inquiry; as, if local industries are to be encouraged, it is evident that the Government should not compete in any trade which is properly represented in the colony. The Commission are of opinion that, if these causes of complaint were removed, it would be of great benefit to the further advancement of these industries. The Commission would further recommend that all exemptions from Customs duty in favour of religious denominations, corporate bodies, or anybody else, should be abolished, in order to bring local manufactures into relation with the whole trade of the colony on equal terms with importers.

FISHERIES, ETC.

The fish industry does not seem to flourish as it should, considering the immense value of such an industry, and the singular facilities that exist for it in this country. The chief drawback to the development of the fish trade appears to be the high rates charged by the railway for the transmission of fish and oysters, and the uncertainty of the cheaper mode of carriage by sea. The Commission are of opinion that if the rates of carriage by railway were reduced to the lowest possible limit, and facilities established for running fish-trains, it would tend greatly to encourage this valuable industry, and create a demand which is now limited, owing to the present difficulty in obtaining the fish at the large centres of population. They would draw the special attention of the Government to the admirable letter of Mr. Charles Traill, of Stewart Island, on fishing and other