

177. *Mr. Bain.*] At what price is it delivered to you at your tannery?—Five pounds per ton.

178. I suppose it would cost a great deal to carry it on the railway?—Yes.

179. They charge by measurement?—Yes, measurement of one and a half, and if it is in large bundles they will charge double.

180. But if the railway carried it cheaper?—If they bring it into the market I can use it. It would not, however, do to induce “new chums” to go into the bush to get bark. I have been at it for twenty years, and well know the difficulty of getting bark in the New Zealand bush, where a man has to carry the bark on his back. I have done it myself, and carried it for over half a mile.

181. Do you believe that, if the railway carried the bark at a cheaper rate, you might get it in larger quantities?—I do not know that; but I would buy it.

182. Is the price—£5 per ton—you pay, for it delivered at the railway-station?—That is my price for it delivered at my place. Then there is the grinding of it. I find that the Victorian bark—that is, what we get from Port Macdonnell and around Portland—is 10s. cheaper. It is cheaper to grind, and is finer.

183. But we want to encourage native industries.—Yes, that is all very well; so do I. In the forests on the West Coast there are thousands of tons of fine bark for the mere labour of getting it.

184. *The Chairman.*] Will the bark of any of our native trees answer your purpose?—The birch, the hinau, and the rimu will.

185. Very likely other trees would if inquiries were made?—Possibly.

186. *Mr. Bain.*] These are the only trees you have proved to be suitable?—Yes.

No. 122.

MR. ALLAN S. McLEOD (for the Secretary, National Industrial Association) to the Chairman of Local Industries Commission.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 24th May, 1880.

When you were in Dunedin it seems that by some chance the Dunedin Boot-manufacturers' Association was overlooked. This is an important industry, whether you regard the raw material worked up, the quantity of labour employed, or the absolute necessity to every one of the finished product. I am asked by their secretary to forward you the enclosed letter, setting forth some of their views. Being a holiday to-day, I have taken the liberty to act in this matter for the secretary of the National Industrial.

I have, &c.,

ALLAN S. McLEOD.

No. 123.

MR. A. H. SHELTON, Secretary to the Dunedin Boot-manufacturing Association, to the Royal Commission on Local Industries.

GENTLEMEN,—

Dunedin, 22nd May, 1880.

By the request of the Dunedin Boot-manufacturing Association, I have the honor to state their views upon the question of protection to local industries. They believe that the Government is morally bound to find employment for the various classes of labour imported under the immigration scheme, if by any reasonable means it can be done. The numbers of colonial youths just passed through their apprenticeship, and looking to the trade to find a livelihood, are also entitled to great consideration. They think that, unless additional duty is placed upon manufactured goods of all descriptions at present imported, the industry must fail to find steady work for any number of hands, and ultimately leave the market at the mercy of importers, who do not sell (as the past trade of Dunedin amply proves) at the fine-cut prices of the colonial producer. They are of opinion that, instead of colonial work becoming dearer to the public under a protective tariff, it will become cheaper when there is more work to do and more classes of goods to manufacture. The spirit of competition is always very great amongst shoemakers, and a monopoly to the disadvantage of the public almost an impossibility. Fourteen plants of shoe-machinery (including the most improved machinery used in the trade throughout the world) are now being used in Dunedin in the production of boots and shoes. Their value cannot now be stated, but amounts to a considerable sum. The number of hands engaged in the various branches of the trade is estimated at about four hundred (comprising labour suited to the manufacture of any class of work) in Dunedin and suburbs, and it is considered by the members that the influence upon trade in Dunedin and other centres, when taken in conjunction with those employed in other trades, of such a number of consumers, must be beneficial to every class in the community—more especially as the usual busy season of the operatives in the shoe and other trades is at the time when out-door employments are slack, and therefore the expenditure of these work-people's wages at a dull time would tend largely to equalize the receipts of those who supply the necessities of life. In asking protection to their trade, it must not be supposed that the gain is all one-sided, as the class of work, the shape, and fitting are all better suited to the colonial wearer than imported goods. It is a fact that the manufacturers here give more weight of leather for price paid than the Home market, and it follows that colonial goods do not bear the imposition of so many profits as English goods. Upon this point they strongly contend that the advantages do not reach the general public, but go to add to the wealth of a class small in number. The principal opponents of the trade, outside Dunedin, are England and Victoria (the manufactures of Sydney not being suited to our climate, although their cheapness causes a certain quantity to be sold). Victoria often makes Dunedin and other towns in New Zealand a sacrifice-market for her surplus stocks; but it must not be imagined that the public reap any advantage from these forced sales: the retailer pockets the difference in price, we lose the order, and the public do not benefit. To balance accounts with Victoria, the imposition of her own protective tariff is necessary. In Dunedin the opposition of the importer is naturally fierce, and takes the clever form of over-assistance. They have enabled so many persons to start, and the competition has become so unprofitably keen, that capital stands aloof from