finishers and three moulders. Even with the old tariff of 10 per cent. we were able to put our finished work into our warehouse as cheap as it could be imported; but since the tariff has been raised to 15 per cent. we find that our trade has increased in this line. The extra 5 per cent. now enables us to supply some of the importers; and as a result we are now able to make a gross of articles where we formerly only made a dozen, thus reducing our cost, and also the cost to the consumer. But when these exemptions came in they undid for us what the Legislature had previously done. For instance, if pumps were not exempted the increased demand for the local make would enable us to manufacture a larger quantity, and thus reduce our cost. Then there are patent waterclosets for houses. That is an industry we have been occupied in for the last five years. We only make what we sell ourselves; we could make to sell to the trade, but they still import. We only make about 10 per cent. of what is imported. If this exemption was struck off, the trade in this article would become local, and keep a large sum of money in the country. These are the only grievances our trade has got to complain of. We are quite satisfied with the protection we have; none of us desire to see it increased. If these exemptions in favour of large consumers were thrown off, and every one put on an equal footing, we believe that the present tariff would have the effect of increasing our industry tenfold. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that, with these exemptions wiped away, instead of a little over forty brass-founders being employed in Dunedin as at present, over a hundred would be employed. I have every confidence, too, that the consumer would not have to pay any more; in fact, I think that just the reverse would take place, because local competition would spring up in our midst, which would, of course, reduce our profits, and the consumer would be correspondingly benefited. At present the manufacturer gets importer's profits. We do not sell at any loss. Most of you are well aware what importer's profits mean—the importer does not sell at a very small percentage. But when you have a keen competition amongst local manufacturers, the chances are that the consumer would get the benefit. I have only to repeat that our desire is that the exemptions which I have mentioned should be swept away—in fact, the whole community should be put on one footing. We think it wrong that any corporate body should get in goods cheaper than private individuals. Before I call upon the other delegates to address you, I might ask Mr. Anderson, who is in the same trade as myself, to give you some information on the subject I have dealt with.

187. *Mr. Stevens.*] Have you got in your hand a list of the exemptions you object to?—Yes, but it is only a rough memorandum; I will supply you with a proper list afterwards.

188. There is just this question I would like to ask: Will Mr. Burt tell us whether, in his opinion, the 15 per cent. is a duty of a distinctly protective character? From what he has said I gather that that is his view?—Yes, I stated that distinctly. We have no desire for any more. The 15 per cent. only gives an impetus to the manufacturers to supply the present importers.

189. I wish to get this out of you a little more clearly: Is it your opinion that the 15-per-cent. duty is distinctly protective?—Yes.

190. *Mr. Bain.*] I do not quite clearly understand you in reference to the making of closets. You state that you can make them for your own trade, but it would not pay to extend your manufacture?—I cannot sell to the present importer at a price that would allow him to retail; I sell to importers' customers, as there is no margin to work upon.

191. In other words, there is not sufficient margin to allow the importer a profit?—We cannot, with these exemptions, allow the importer a profit on our goods. It may be explained in this way: If a closet were wanted, either Mr. Morrison or myself could sell it as cheap as it could be imported; but at the same time we could not sell it to the importer at a price that would leave him a profit if he wanted to sell it to you. That is the meaning of it.

192. *Mr. Bain.*] You cannot supply the whole trade?—I can supply the retail trade. If the exemptions were thrown off we feel sure that we could supply the whole trade.

192A. *The Chairman.*] I wish to ask you just one question: Supposing the duty of 15 per cent. were lowered or abolished altogether, could you still compete with the importer in brasswork?—Yes, if the whole of the exemptions were thrown out. We, after a time, could compete, with a 10-per-cent. duty. Of course we prefer 15 per cent. I should prefer the old 10-per-cent. duty with no exemptions, because these exemptions are in favour of the largest consumers. These people want a gross, and get them in free; whilst another party, who only wants half a dozen, has to pay duty.

193. I think you stated that the exemption in favour of brass fittings for gas and water-works was largely taken advantage of for purposes of ordinary trade?—Yes.

194. And that it led to a great deal of dishonest trading?—Yes. Of course some people do not call it dishonest, because there is no strict rule about it; still, it leads to that result. I repeat that we were far better satisfied with the old 10-per-cent. duty without these exemptions than we are with the present 15-per-cent. duty and the exemptions. For a long time I was paying duty on water-closets imported, because I did not consider them to be patent closets; but other people imported them as patent closets, and so got them in free.

Messrs. A. and T. Burt to the Commissioners on Local Industries.

Gentlemen,— Dunedin, 18th May, 1880.

We herewith beg to hand you list of exemptions in present tariff which we consider should be subject to duty—viz., (1) Bells for places of public worship; (2) brass steam-fittings, at present admitted free under the head of "Steam-engines, and parts of do.;" (3) brass service-cocks, ferrules, &c., for gas and water, at present admitted free under the head of "Materials which may be specially imported for the construction of gas and water-works;" (4) gaseliers for places of public worship; (5) copper boilers for cloth-factories; (6) pumps, lift and force; (7) water-closets, and parts of water-closets; (8) copper pipes for steam-engine purposes; (9) lead pipe and composition pipe, specially imported for the construction of gas- and water-works.

We have, &c.,

A. and T. Burt.