

HARVEST-BINDING TWINE.

No. 169.

Evidence of Messrs. MASON and STRUTHERS before the Commissioners on Local Industries, at Christchurch, 23rd April, 1880.

WE should like to see the duty imposed if the local men could do the work; but it is an impossibility for them to supply any large quantity by next season. We expect to import seventy-five tons of twine, and it will be a great hardship to the farmers to have to pay $16\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. duty. If the local manufacturers could supply the twine we would give them an order immediately for all that we want, but we know that they cannot possibly do so. We have seen all the makers in Canterbury, and there is only one, Mr. Seed, of Rangiora, whose product is suited for our purposes. We have sent flax to America to have it worked up by machinery there, with the intention of importing the machinery and supplying it to Mr. Seed; but that cannot be done this year, and it is about this year that we wish particularly to speak. If the machinery succeeds in making the twine without any duty, it will compete successfully with the imported twine. The machinery cannot be in working here until next January, and, in the meantime, any duty that is levied on the twine will fall entirely on the farmers. It would handicap the string-binder against the wire-binder, because the wire is admitted free. The great advantage of the string-binder is that it will utilize the native flax.

Mr. Stevens inquired whether there was any information as to the manufacture of reaping-and-binding machines in the colony.

Mr. Mason said he knew but little, except what he had heard. He believed that efforts to make these machines had been very unsuccessful. A Deering string-binder is worth £75 here, and other kinds are sold for what they will fetch, according to the estimation in which they are held for their suitability.

Mr. Bain: Is there no immediate prospect of these reapers-and-binders being made in the colony?

Mr. Struthers: No, I think not. After Messrs. Reid and Gray's unsuccessful efforts, it is not likely that any one else will attempt it for some time to come. That firm could make nothing of it, and I think they lost money over it. Their machine would not work satisfactorily. The binder went principally wrong.

Mr. Mason: We estimate that we should not be able to sell the imported American twine at less than 1s. 2d. to 1s. 3d. per pound, 800 feet to the pound; the colonial twine runs about 600 feet to the pound. The maker said he lost money selling it at 1s. per pound, but he estimates that if he had the machinery he could supply it at 7d.; but that is problematical. He is patenting a process for cleaning the flax. He does not make paper-pulp. The sisal-hemp twine used on the Johnson binder runs 400 feet to the pound. The twine that we use is half the weight of wire, so that 1 lb. of twine will go as far as 2 lb. of wire. The gauge of the various twines is very much the same.

KAURI GUM.

No. 170.

Evidence of Mr. JAMES HARDY MARSHALL before Messrs. Commissioners Tinne and Burns, at Kawakawa, 5th May, 1880.

My name is *James Hardy Marshall*. I have resided eleven years at Kawakawa. I have been engaged in the kauri-gum trade six years here. I send about eight to ten tons per month through my hands. There are from 120 to 140 hands employed at this industry—these are all white men; but occasionally there are, I should say, about a hundred Natives employed gathering gum. The gum field in this district is about ten miles long by three miles wide. Very little of this land is fitted for agriculture; but I believe it will some day pay well to plant trees of various kinds on this country. The men are paid by results. I do not think they average per day 5s. wages, although I have known instances of good men earning from £4 to £5 per week. There are so many different kinds of gum in this field that I am paying from 24s. to 50s. per hundredweight to the workmen employed in the field. This is the amount paid on the field. It costs 6s. per hundredweight to bring the gum to Kawakawa on pack-horses, then freight and charge besides, to land it in Auckland. I pay no royalty to Government for the use of this field. If an excise-tax was imposed on gum, the tax would have to be paid by the producer. It seems to me right that Government should receive some revenue from these fields; but I am not at present prepared to say in what shape or from what source a revenue should be derived.

JAS. H. MARSHALL.

BLOCKS, ETC.

No. 171.

Evidence of Mr. BENJAMIN BLAKEY before Messrs. Commissioners Tinne and Burns, at Auckland 8th May, 1880.

My name is *Benjamin Blakey*. I am a block, mast, and pump-maker, in Albert Street, Auckland. I have been twenty-four years in Auckland. I wish to complain about importing blocks from England and America, which are allowed to come into the colony free from Customs duties, whilst galvanized sheaves are charged 15 per cent. under the head of ironmongery, whilst the same galvanized sheaves pay no duty when fixed in the blocks. I think, in justice to my industry, the blocks ought to be charged duty on and the sheaves admitted free. The shipowners derive no benefit from the free importation of blocks, as the importer gets the profit; and I can supply as good blocks to the shipowner at a cheaper rate than can be imported. There are block-makers owning steam machinery in