

46. With regard to the use of New Zealand products, do the Railway Commissioners make any difference in favour of the products of New Zealand in their requirements for carriage-building, ironwork, paint, or anything of that kind?—Yes, we invariably do if the price will permit. For instance, in the matter of timber, the carriages are almost built of New Zealand timber. I may say the only timber we import is ironbark, for the bridges of railways. It is very suitable owing to its great tensile strength; using timber of less dimensions suffices for the strain it has to bear, and it is in every way the most economical for use. We do not import any carriages, and they are almost entirely constructed—in fact, I may say entirely constructed—of New Zealand timber, with the exception of the understructure, which is partly of imported timber.

47. With regard to New Zealand paints, have the Railway Commissioners been using any?—Yes, hæmatite, which is the only New Zealand paint in the market.

48. There is terra-cotta paint manufactured at Mr. Keoghan's factory, at Anahau, in the Province of Nelson. [Printed circular of firm produced]?—We use hæmatite for some wagons and some ironworks. We have not got any from this particular place, which is near Parapara, where most of the hæmatite is made. We use locally-made varnish for interior work, and we hope to be able to use it for the exterior work as well. Varnish is a material that wants to be of considerable age before it is suitable for exterior surface which is exposed to the weather. As the cost of varnish is small when compared with the expense of putting it on, we are careful not to use an inferior article until we are quite sure that it is as good as what we are importing.

49. *Mr. E. M. Smith.*] Has your attention been drawn to the very large deposits of pitch-coal in New Plymouth?—You have informed the Commissioners of these deposits of coal.

50. Do you think it would be an advantage to the colony if the railway was made so that the coal might be placed in the hands of the Commissioners at a cheap rate?—It would undoubtedly be of considerable advantage to get the coal at New Plymouth, for at present we import coal from Greymouth to New Plymouth, and if there was a local coal available we would certainly use it in preference.

51. *Mr. Pinkerton.*] Is there any difference in the cost of carriage of locally-made dairy produce and that of carrying other produce?—Dairy produce is carried at low rates, relative to its value in the market.

52. *Mr. Duncan.*] With regard to carrying fresh meat to the ports, what facilities are offered at the present time for carrying fresh meat from New Plymouth or anywhere else to Wellington?—There are facilities of placing vans brought along by the fast trains when we can possibly do it.

53. What is the charge?—One to four miles, 4s. per ton; ten miles, 6s. 5d. per ton; twenty miles, 10s. 7d. per ton; thirty miles, 14s. 6d. per ton; forty miles, 18s. 7d. per ton; fifty miles, £1 2s. 11d. per ton; sixty miles, £1 6s. 2d. per ton; seventy miles, £1 8s. 8d. per ton; eighty miles, £1 10s. 6d. per ton; ninety miles, £1 12s. 2d. per ton; one hundred miles, £1 13s. 7d. per ton. We brought a great deal of meat from Patea and Mokoia. They have ceased at present to send the meat, not because the charges were high, but the establishment of refrigerating-works at Waitara and Wanganui, and the rise in the value of stock for local consumption, have given a good market nearer than Wellington. Usually the fresh meat is only carried a few miles—say, from Ngahauranga into the refrigerating establishment at the quay at Wellington, a distance of about three miles. At Oamaru it is conveyed about two miles from the slaughter-yard to the refrigerating-chamber, and the charge is 4s. a ton. It is by no means a profitable business, because the van only takes about 2 tons, and there are not very many vans at a time; and we have at times to run out specially for it. But we recognise that it is very desirable to foster this industry as much as possible.

54. Are there any special facilities for carrying woollen goods?—There is no special advantage for conveying woollen goods; they simply go at ordinary merchandise rates.

55. *The Chairman.*] Has there been any representation made with regard to the carriage of woollen goods from any special factory?—There has been a representation from the Mosgiel Factory Company. They purchased, some time ago, the Ashburton Woollen Factory, and that being an inland factory, they have requested, once or twice, that we would make special rates for them, but we did not see our way to do it.

56. There are no special rates?—No; it goes at ordinary merchandise rates.

DUTIES ON MACHINERY, LEATHER, ETC.

FRIDAY, 2ND SEPTEMBER, 1892.

Mr. W. T. GLASGOW, Secretary and Inspector of Customs, Wellington, in attendance and examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] You were asked to attend and give evidence before this Committee on the suggestion of one of its members. Manufacturers have complained of the difficulties they labour under in consequence of the heavy taxation on machinery of a patent kind, which prevents them competing successfully with manufacturers elsewhere. I refer to machinery which cannot be made in the colony. If the duty were removed from such machinery they say it would be an incentive to them to make greater endeavours to improve and develop the particular branches of manufacture with which they are connected?—One of the difficulties in respect of machinery upon arrival would be to decide whether it is patent or not. If it could be shown the machines are really patent it might be provided that they should not be liable to duty.

2. Machinery that cannot be made in the colony, or, indeed, in any of the colonies, is frequently required in certain manufactures: do you not think such machinery should be admitted duty free?—The difficulty there would be as to what machinery could not be made in the colony. There would be a conflict of opinion between the makers of machinery and the users as to whether or not certain kinds could be made in the colony. In any particular case the same difficulty would be likely to arise.