

18. You say that the cork from one tree would be £120 in value?—Yes, I have known such to be the case.

19. That would be for only one stripping?—Yes.

20. *Hon. Sir J. Hall.*] One stripping?—Yes, one stripping.

21. Of course the trees are not all alike?—No; this would be from a tree bearing a very superior quality of cork.

22. *Mr. Duncan.*] And it would be grown in very superior soil?—Yes, in a suitable soil.

23. *Hon. Sir J. Hall.*] Have you any information as to what has been done in this matter in South Australia?—Nothing further than that they have been growing cork-trees there, I understand. The trees are still young, but they are beginning to bear acorns and cork.

24. Do you know to what extent they have grown?—I do not know; I do not think they have grown to any great extent.

25. Do you know whether they are being grown in Government gardens, or by private individuals?—By private individuals, I believe. They may also have them in Government gardens. I was told of one man who went out there—he was a Frenchman from the south of France. Believing that ultimately corks would be in great demand if wine were manufactured in South Australia he planted some few acres with cork-trees. I do not know whether any further plantations took place at the same time. I was given to understand that people now were turning their attention to the planting of cork-trees there.

26. You have not heard whether cork-cutting is actually going on there?—Oh, yes; if they have cork-trees there they are sure to have cork-cutting.

27. Are the trees old enough to be bearing?—Oh, yes; it is about forty or fifty years since the trees were planted. He was one of the very early settlers who went to South Australia.

28. Do you know whether the cork-tree stands severe frost?—Oh, yes, it does; it grows near the sea.

29. Does it grow inland, where there would be twenty degrees of frost?—It is cold enough in some parts of Spain where it is grown, but I could not say whether such a degree of frost would suit it.

30. *The Chairman.*] Will you state further what quality of soil is suitable to the tree?—It is not very particular as to the soil.

31. I suppose rocky soil is the best?—Yes, gravelly or rocky soil. I have seen the trees coming out of a little fissure in the rock, the roots splitting open the rock and making a way for themselves.

32. *Mr. Duncan.*] I suppose it is closely allied to the alum?—No.

33. *Mr. E. M. Smith.*] You say there is about 60 per cent. waste in making the cork?—Yes.

34. Are you aware that there is no waste in the cork-trade at Home now—that it is soluble with silica and other substances, and made into a material used for ornaments, soles for shoes, and actually cork-bricks?—Well, I have been absent from England for forty years. I know very well that they did use the refuse for making coverings for floors, similar to linoleum. I never knew that they made bricks of it, or that it was used for ornamental purposes. That is a thing that could not be done here in the meantime. It can be used for various purposes, provided we were old enough to be able to find the capital for establishing such an industry, and provided the work was sufficient to warrant the undertaking. I know perfectly well that the capital of the Corkatine Company in Britain was considerable. The manufacture was used for soles of shoes, floor-cloth, and other purposes.

FISH-CURING INDUSTRY.

FRIDAY, 26TH AUGUST, 1892.

Mr. W. INNES examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] Will you tell the Committee your name?—My name is William Innes, of Port Chalmers.

2. Are you engaged in fish-curing at Port Chalmers?—I may state that I was the first to start, over twenty-five years ago, the fish-curing business at Port Chalmers, and the Government then gave me permission to put sheds and the like up on a part of the sea-beach; since then I have carried on the business until it has grown to a pretty large industry. In 1885 the Government gave a bonus on all exported fish, which enabled us to go largely into the trade. In those days there were very few in the industry, there being only about four others besides myself carrying on the business for the purpose of export. As fast as we made the money, we put it into boats and gear, and expended it in such a manner as to promote the industry. At the time the bonus was given there were about thirty men engaged in all in the fish trade as far as Port Chalmers is concerned, and at the present time there are about one hundred and fifty men engaged in Port Chalmers alone in fishing; this includes all fishermen. I am sorry I am unable to lay more accurate information before you, although during the last three days I have been in communication with the Customhouse with a view of obtaining information as to the quantity of fish exported; and the only information I can get is this, that a bonus has been paid on canned fish amounting to £3,258 10s. 3d. The bonus received on this amount represents a halfpenny in the pound sterling up to the present; and the bonus on cured fish, which means smoked fish and salted fish, at one farthing in the pound, amounted to £2,527 3s. 8d. I think there is one canning establishment in Stewart Island. One applied for a bonus in Wellington for curing. I believe there are two in Auckland that registered for the export bonus in 1885. However, the large sum of £3,258 10s. 3d. represents canning at a halfpenny in the pound sterling; whereas the amount £2,527 3s. 8d. represents curing, upon which only a farthing a pound sterling bonus is paid. It is therefore evident that the curing industry must be much larger than the canning industry, as the value shown in the former amount represents a bonus