

42. And the cheapest class of blankets are almost exclusively used by poor people?—No.

43. What about the white blankets?—That is different.

44. Do you try to compete in white blankets?—We can only make a white blanket with white wool—we have no cotton. When it comes to coloured blankets we can put some of our waste into them.

45. Are you aware of the prices at which tweeds, blankets, and woollen manufactures generally produced by your mills are retailed to the people?—No, I could not give you the different prices between the mill and the consumer, but some of the witnesses who propose to follow me are dealing direct with the retailers and can give evidence on that point.

46. Are you in the habit of supplying your own workers with tweeds, blankets, and woollen material generally at the wholesale price?—Not exactly bed-rock wholesale price, but at a lower price than at the shops.

47. Can you say that they derive thereby a huge advantage?—No, not a huge advantage. We give them what we think is a fair discount.

48. You do not supply any portion of the public on similar terms?—No; and we do not allow any of our workers to supply any of the public, or supply them beyond their own requirements.

49. Do you supply working-tailors?—No.

50. Simply wholesale clothiers?—Simply the wholesale people and large retailers.

51. Do you think it would be an advantage to your company if you endeavoured to supply the working-tailor and the workers generally?—I could not do it.

52. Can you tell us approximately the difference between the manufacturer's price and the price of the retailer? Do you think it is 50 per cent.?—No, I do not think it is approaching that. I think that in many cases the wholesale houses sell at $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. advance, but it is not my business to tell you that.

53. You referred to shoddy, Mr. Morrison: do you think it is possible to detect shoddy from other material?—Yes; any expert can do that. By opening up the thread of the material you can always tell whether it is a genuine thread or whether it is rotten; and it is generally a bulky thread if shoddy, because it will not hang together, and you must use glue or some sticky substance to keep it together.

54. Have you heard what difference there is in price between New-Zealand-made clothing and clothing made in the other colonies?—No. We used to sell a good deal of stuff on the other side, and the Kaiapoi mills did the same; but we are not doing the same business since the $16\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. duty was put on.

55. Will you be surprised to learn that a suit can be supplied to workers on the other side at about half the price that is charged here?—No; there are ways of making up which make a difference. I am wearing a suit which cost me £3 10s. or £3 15s. to make, not including the material.

56. *Mr. Duthie.*] You have three complaints to make?—Yes.

57. You want the duty taken off olive-oil?—Yes.

58. A duty on cut lengths?—Yes.

59. And protection from shoddy?—Yes.

60. You are one of the largest manufacturers in the colony: how much olive-oil do you use a year?—About 3 tuns, or 700 gallons, a month, and we pay a duty of 6d. per gallon.

61. That is £17 10s. a month?—Yes.

62. Are there not cheaper oils than olive-oil that would suit your purpose?—No. There is mineral oil, but it is more dangerous.

63. Then, with regard to cut lengths, is not that a very trivial thing?—No; it interferes with the business very much, because nearly every tailor gets them.

64. Your explanation is that travellers go round and take orders for cut lengths: it must be to a large extent exceptional?—It affects us very largely. Nearly every tailor, instead of having a stock of tweeds, simply has so-many suit-lengths.

65. He imports his cloth in suit-lengths?—Yes.

66. Why do you not turn out suit-lengths?—The wholesale man could do it, perhaps, but we could not; and our trade is being killed by these short lengths being sent out.

67. But cannot you cut them?—We cannot cut them, and we cannot make short lengths. We supply our cloths to the wholesalers, and they cut them. We can make nothing less than 25 yards. We supply the wholesale man, who acts as intermediate distributor. He could certainly cut them as required, and does cut them; but, nevertheless, we are being driven out of the market by the short lengths imported from the Old Country and supplied to the tailors direct by the agents of manufacturers at Home.

68. You told us that the lengths are $7\frac{1}{2}$ yards?— $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 yards.

69. You know that webs are cut and that it is only a fractional part that will be wasted?—Yes; but there are men's and boys' sizes. There is a balance which can be cut for such things as caps, and so on.

70. You say that Germany and Yorkshire are killing you through the shoddy business?—Yes.

71. Does the preferential tariff of last year affect you?—Not in cloth.

72. Is it not a fact that in later years more mills have sprung up in the colony than there is really trade for and that that is your trouble?—There is no doubt that we could supply more than there is any demand for; but there is only one mill that has started lately—at Hawke's Bay—and I do not think it is doing any good.

73. As you have been able for thirty years to pay a dividend of 8 per cent., do you not think it is a very fair investment?—Yes; but it is not so now. We have not been able to pay for the last five years 7 per cent., and in some years 5 per cent. For some years we paid 10 per cent.

74. That is due to the extra competition in trade?—Yes, and to the increased cost of manufacture. Wages have increased, and the hours of labour have been reduced.