

75. You have no check over the increase in the number of mills, except that people may discover that the business does not pay?—There will be a check at some time, perhaps.

76. That is the ordinary contingency of trade which we all have to submit to. We have to take the world as it comes, but you want the country to come to your assistance?—Yes; and I want people to be protected. Olive-oil was at one time admitted free in bulk, but the duty levied is now 6d. a gallon, and I would like to see it removed.

77. In reference to suit-lengths, they commenced to manufacture them in Australia?—They cannot do it; they do not manufacture suit-lengths. There is no one in the country who can manufacture suit-lengths and make it pay.

78. *Mr. Hogg.*] The Victorian woollen-mills, which I believe were established in Geelong, had their warehouses filled with material and could not sell it. The clothiers and warehousemen absolutely refused to deal with the company, but the company opened a small place at their own office and commenced to dispose of their material in suit-lengths?—That is a different thing altogether from making suit-lengths and suit-lengths only.

79. That opened the trade at once to them and the clothiers had to capitulate?—That is different.

80. *Mr. Hanan.*] Can you tell me whether the number of hands in the woollen industry has increased during the last five years?—I should say it has increased a little, but not very much. Messrs. Ross and Glendining have increased their hands in the worsted and hosiery departments during the last few years. We have done the same, and probably the Oamaru and Timaru mills have increased their number. There has been a little increase, but nothing compared with what might have been. The fact is that there are too many mills in the colony.

81. Are there any other branches of woollen-manufacturing that could be undertaken in this colony?—I think it is pretty well widespread now. I do not know of any other branch of the woollen industry that you could say was not fairly well taken up. There may be room for a few caps like Scotch bonnets, but they are out of fashion now. All the branches of the woollen industry are pretty well catered for.

82. Can you say to what extent the importation of shoddy goods has increased?—I could not tell you without reference to the Customs returns.

83. Are you aware that some legislation has been passed in America dealing with this particular subject of shoddy goods?—I am not aware of it, but I know it is very bad in America.

84. Do you think that shoddy goods should be labelled or that an increased duty should be put on?—Both. They should be stamped as shoddy and an increased duty put on. That would be a very good solution of the difficulty.

85. You think it would be in the interests of the wool-growers as well as in the interests of the purchasing public?—Yes. While the people are being taken in by what they think are woollen goods the wool-growers are not getting the trade they should get. The wool-growers are crying out because the demand for their pure wool is being interfered with.

86. Can you give us an idea of the conditions of the hosiery-factories in the colony?—There are some small hosiery-factories that are worked by hand-machines, and I cannot speak of those, but the hosiery departments of the woollen-mills are doing very well. Some small factories are carried on by the owners in their own houses, with the assistance of their families.

87. In respect to what goods that you manufacture do you find your trade declining?—Tweeds chiefly. That is what we find in our mill.

88. To what extent has the weekly wage increased per man during the last three years?—I should say, on the whole it has increased from 10 to 15 per cent. during the last fifteen years.

89. Per man?—I could not give it to you per man, per woman, or per girl. Of course, in the case of girls their time has been reduced.

90. *The Chairman.*] Can you give us any idea of what the reduction in time means in the increased cost of the output?—There are so many other things that come in in connection with that point. There is the question of coal, wherein the restrictions have raised the price by about 2s. a ton. It is very hard to answer a question like that right off.

91. By how much have the reduced hours of labour and the increased pay to your hands increased the cost of the output of your stuff?—I should say from about 12½ to 15 per cent.

92. Is it a fact that, wholesale; you can buy a very good suit of colonial tweed for £1?—Yes; but the wholesale price is one thing and the retail price is another. One wholesale man can buy only twenty-five pairs of blankets, while another may buy a couple of thousand pairs. The same principle applies to the price of the tweed.

93. Under normal conditions, suppose a man went into a manufactory, could he not buy half a dozen suits of tweed at £1?—Made-up suits?

94. Yes?—I dare say he could. I do not know very much about the making. If you asked me the price of the material I could tell you.

95. With regard to blankets, I would like to place on record the price of ten-quarter blankets of average quality?—You have asked me a question that refers to wool of a class that has recently gone up something like 100 per cent. Eighteen months ago you could have bought a very good blanket for about 12s. 6d. to 12s. 9d.—that is a ten-quarter blanket. That would be retailed to the poor people who were not able to pay more. Wool having increased from 5d. to 9d. per pound in the grease, I cannot say what they are offering at now, but I should say they ought to be 6d. per pound more, and that would be 3s. 6d. or 4s. more per blanket.

96. The following question was put to you before the Tariff Commission: "In blankets, I hear that there are still some 17,000 pairs imported?" and you answered, "Yes; because a low class of blankets are made in England chiefly from cotton mixed with noils that is combed back from the combing-machine. These blankets can be made very much cheaper than an all-wool blanket can pos-