

129. That coat that you saw the ticket of was sold for £2 5s.: are you aware that the Petone Woollen Company sell a rainproof coat made out of wool for £1 6s. 9d.?—I am aware of that.

130. Where is the disadvantage to the worker in getting colonial-made clothing when he is asked to pay £2 5s. for an article like that which only costs £1 6s. 9d. if made in the colony?—You cannot decide the matter on one article in the trade. You must take the whole purchasing-power of the people.

131. Supposing you shut the imported article out altogether, do you mean to tell me that the workers will have no clothes at all?—They would have a poor class of goods.

132. But this proves that they will not have a poorer class of goods?—That is only one article.

133. You said that moleskin trousers had gone out of use practically?—Only so far as the Auckland Province is concerned.

134. Do you not think the low-priced saddle tweed sold in the colony is better, when the two prices are compared?—Yes, I think so.

135. Cannot a man spend his money to more advantage by buying the article of colonial manufacture?—It means that the community will have to pay a higher price. I say the working-man knows what suits him best, and we should let him be the judge. If a man wants a moleskin you cannot sell him a saddle tweed, and if he wants a saddle tweed you cannot sell him a moleskin.

136. But as they are buying other goods instead of moleskin they consider they are getting a better class of goods?—Yes.

137. So that there is no disadvantage to a man in buying colonial-manufactured tweed?—No.

138. *Mr. Witheford.*] Who pays the increased tariff on these goods?—The consumer.

139. *Mr. Hanan.*] Are you aware that a resolution was passed by the Central Chamber of Agriculture, England, which it was decided should be brought under the notice of the Secretary for Agriculture, England, and the colonial Premiers, to the following effect: "That it is the opinion of the Council that the increasing adulteration of woollen goods, and the unscrupulous substitution of inferior materials, like cotton worsted, mungo shoddy, wastes, and other dishonest substances, in the manufacture of so-called woollen goods in England, America, and the Continent demands, in the interests of the producer and consumer, immediate legislative attention"? Are you aware that that resolution has been passed in the Home-country?—Yes; but it is impossible to carry it out.

140. Are you aware that shoddy is displacing in America and England wool to the extent of 660,000,000 lb. a year?—Yes; but that maintains my contention that owing to the enormous protective duties people cannot wear woollen goods. It is the purchasing-power of the people that will only allow them to purchase shoddy-made goods, and by increasing the protective duty you compel people to purchase only the lowest-priced goods.

141. Supposing you remove the protection on our wool, would that not open a greater field for shoddy in this country?—No, because you would increase the purchasing-power of the people. According to my figures you would increase the purchasing-power of the masses by £240,000 per annum, and £240,000 is more than half as much as the total output of our woollen-mills together at the present time. That would enormously increase the purchasing-power of the masses and enable them to buy the better colonial article.

142. If your argument were sound it would apply to all industries?—Yes, it does apply.

143. Then, you do not agree with fostering colonial industries?—Yes; but it should be done without increased duties.

144. Then, you think that Germany and America have adopted a retrograde policy?—Certainly. You cannot get goods from England and Germany unless you give something in exchange, and that creates colonial industries at once.

145. How can you raise colonial industries?—They raise themselves.

THOMAS FINLAYSON examined. (No. 6.)

146. *The Chairman.*] You are a warehouseman in Auckland?—Yes. There seems to be a great deal of misapprehension in the minds of the Committee. First and foremost, they seem to have confined themselves entirely to tweeds and articles suitable to men and boys. If a Bill were brought in to effect what is suggested it would embrace not only those goods, but dress-pieces for ladies' clothes, rugs and blankets, and a great many other articles. So far as my experience goes, the goods that can be manufactured to advantage by the woollen-mills in New Zealand at the present time are manufactured and have command of the market. Tweeds of the kind suitable to the market are largely dealt in by the warehousemen and drapers. A very large number of Maori shawls and mauds are manufactured. These mauds or shawls were formerly made in England and known as Queensland, but they are now made by the local mills, and hardly any are imported, which shows that we can manufacture that kind of article to advantage. We can also manufacture flannels to advantage, and, with the exception of a few sorts, there are none imported at all, so that the question is not narrowed down to tweeds. It is a very wide question and would affect nearly every person in the colony. My contention is that fashion rules the world, not only with the women but with the men. I have an article here which is called a cheap vicuna. That is an article that the working-men use very largely in the Auckland Province for Sunday suits.

147. *Mr. Barber.*] What would be the price of that?—A suit of that would cost about £1 5s., retail.

148. What would be about the price per yard?—About 3s. It is 54 in. wide. The nearest thing to that is the colonial single-width tweed, 27 in. wide, which I suppose will cost about 1s. 4d. a yard [Sample shown], but it is a different article altogether. It is perhaps the best article you could get as an all-wool tweed for the money, but it is not what the people want. The men want a blue suit either of vicuna or other serge. I might say that these cheaper blue goods could not be made in the colony at the present time, and if they could they could not be sold at anything like the money. If