

160. I understood you to say that the shoddy used in these mills was practically blanket-sweepings ?—That would be in the common rugs.

161. What is the price of the cheapest rug like the sample produced ?—5s. 10½d., ten-quarter.

162. Are you aware that in the Old Country shoddy-mills buy up old rugs, tear them up, and sell them to the manufacturers ?—Yes.

163. Is not that worse than blanket-sweepings ?—Yes ; and I say that up to a certain point our mills can make certain goods to advantage, but when you get below that point they cannot do it. On the other hand, there are a large number of people in this country who require the cheaper goods and must have them.

164. Is it not a fact that a few years ago the mills in this colony were not competing with the English manufacturers as they do now ?—It took them time to grow and improve their goods, and as they improved them they pushed other goods out, but they have not had any extra duty put on, and have done it with the present duty.

165. Do you not think that if they had an equal opportunity it would apply to those other articles you show to-day ?—No ; because they have not got the stuff.

166. *Mr. Witheford.*] With regard to the cheap clothes made of New Zealand wool and sold at £1 5s. a suit, are they not really superior to the low-grade shoddy goods from Home ?—I say that down to a certain price for an all-wool tweed the New Zealand article is as good as you can get anywhere.

167. You are of opinion that there are too many mills in New Zealand, and think that one would be sufficient ?—No ; I said that there was one mill to every 90,000 people—that is, to every man, woman, and child in the colony.

168. By encouraging the manufacture and use of New Zealand tweeds will it not give a future to our boys and girls and foster the use of New-Zealand-made clothes ?—You cannot force people to wear what they do not want.

169. Do you approve of Mr. Chamberlain's preferential scheme ? He made the statement that if the preferential tariff were carried people on the Continent interested in clothing-manufacture would take their machinery to England and employ labour there ?—I do not see that.

170. If the tariff were raised on imported clothing would it not have the effect of employing more people in New Zealand ?—I do not think so, because there are too many at it already.

171. Did you observe the statement that was made in the House of Commons the other day, that trousers were being made in the east end of London for 2½d. per pair ?—That does not apply here, because the workers are protected by their log and the Arbitration Court.

172. Are these imported goods made up by "sweated" people ?—No ; they are all bought from respectable manufacturers.

173. If the hours of labour in England are longer and the wages lower than they are in New Zealand, do you think the New Zealand people are justified in buying these English goods ?—There are very few ordinary fair-priced tweeds imported here except for tailoring purposes, and fashion comes in there. Take, for instance, the saddle tweeds ; there are not many imported.

174. Would not the workers of New Zealand still wear clothes even if the English-made goods were stopped from coming in altogether ?—Yes ; they would have to wear what they do not want and pay a great deal more for them. In mantle-cloths and dress-stuffs you could not produce the variety in this country.

175. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Is this English-made [Sample produced] ?—Yes ; that is a serge.

176. Is it mixed with shoddy ?—It is very hard to say what it is.

177. What would be the cost of colonial material similar in appearance to this, all pure wool ?—The mills could not make it for double the money, even with the duty on it. It is marked £1 5s. for the suit. That costs, landed here, 2s. 4d. a yard double width.

178. What does an ordinary suit of rough tweed cost, similar to what I wear, to the purchaser, tailor-made ?—That depends a lot upon the tailor. Some tailors charge more for making a suit than the material costs.

179. How do you place the several items in the cost of such a suit, between the raw material, the tailor, and the trader—in what proportions ? What is the cost of the wool in the first instance ?—I have not come prepared to go into that.

180. *The Chairman.*] The tendency of your evidence, I take it, is this : that for a certain class of goods the colonial manufacturer supplies the wants ?—Yes, he does.

181. But below that goods have to be imported and will continue to be imported ?—Yes.

182. And tweeds, if they had to bear an increased duty, would not be used ?—No. That is, no more colonial-made tweeds would be used.

183. Taking, for instance, the country trade, does that apply to the country trade as well as to the town trade ? Do the people generally buy that cloth you call "vicuna" ?—The working-men in the country up our way wear the cotton denims every day, or flannel shirts with tweed trousers, and the blue vicuna on Sundays.

184. Coming to the question of relative values for suits used by country people—take the suit sold wholesale at £1 5s. made of New Zealand tweed and the imported material made up in New Zealand at the same price : value for value which is the better ?—That is a very difficult question to answer.

185. Can you tell me if a suit of imported cloth—vicuna or anything else—that will cost £1 5s. wholesale is put into competition with New-Zealand-made tweed, which will give the best results in the shape of wear in the case of a country farmer ?—It would depend upon the use he was going to put it to.

186. Supposing he took it for Sunday use first and then used it for ordinary every-day purposes afterwards, which would be the better ? Say a man buys a suit of colonial tweed at a store, how would