

giving due consideration to the local manufacturers, and fixing such a duty as will give them a considerable preference over imported machines. That the Government should not permit of colonial makes being pirated by importers, who have looked on till the stage when our machines become perfect, and then have secured samples and shipped them to America as copies to be manufactured from and afterwards to be brought out to compete with us; and I am placing evidence before you to show that the trust, who boast of having captured 90 per cent. of the world's trade in agricultural machinery, are now after the remaining tenth; and we are forced to ask help at the hands of the Federal Parliament, or our occupations are in great danger. In asking for the imposition of this duty, I can undertake that the price to the farmer will not be increased; but there is every probability of the lowering of the prices. All the manufacturers agree that if we had a greater output the prices would come down.

*Witness:* The Victorian manufacturers have good grounds for fearing that they will shortly be prevented from carrying on in the face of competition, which is fierce and unfair. If Australian makers are compelled to fight for their existence against American trusts and combines, whose avowed object is to annihilate them; if these combines have many millions sterling at their command, and huge selling organizations established throughout the Commonwealth; if they are secured from outside competition themselves by a prohibitive tariff; if the duty they are compelled to pay to the Commonwealth amounts to less than 5 per cent.; if they can obtain freights which amount to less than half those imposed upon local manufacturers, with the advantage of cheap coal and iron, longer working-hours, and less wages paid to their operatives, then I contend the competition is unfair. The duty in America against Australian implements is 45 per cent., which, with the high freights ruling outwards, puts any attempt to export to America out of the question. A high duty imposed here would be a reasonable recognition of the merits of protection, as our American imitators and competitors understand it. The foreign imitators would have to stay out, or come into the Commonwealth and make their machines here, working under like conditions to ourselves, giving employment to our artisans, and helping to develop our coal and iron resources.

*Witness:* The combine's avowed intention is to wipe out Australian competition in Australia. The representatives of the combine openly boast that they hold 90 per cent. of the world's trade in harvesting machinery, and that they are after the other 10 per cent. In support of that statement I beg to submit a sworn declaration as follows: That I was interviewed by Mr. Beale, one of the travelling representatives of the International Harvester Company of America, and that the following conversation took place: Mr. Beale said, 'The International Harvester Company is determined to get hold of the trade in harvesting machinery, and it's only a matter of a little time till we knock out all the local men.' I said, 'You can't beat McKay.' 'Yes,' he replied, 'we'll beat McKay. We have unlimited money behind us, and even if we worked at a loss for three years we are bound to beat him. If McKay's agent at Namurkah is getting the trade, we shall put on two men to beat him. If they don't succeed we shall put on three, or a dozen if need be. We don't care what money it costs, we shall secure the trade. McKay had an offer from us to buy him out, and he will live to regret the day that he refused the offer. We are going to close him up.'

"There are over fifty pages of evidence directly bearing on this question published by the Royal Commission, but the above will no doubt prove sufficient to show that the trust question is not one to be trifled with.

"The trust is now in New Zealand, and has established its headquarters in Christchurch, and is commencing to do business. Their first move has been to shunt New-Zealanders who have been in the trust's employ, and to fill their places with Americans whose business training has made them not quite so sensitive as the colonial in carrying out the trust's methods. New-Zealanders who for years have been purchasing-agents for American machinery are being shelved, and the various machines known under various names are being concentrated under one roof. The heads of the £24,000,000-sterling trust see what a grand opening they have in New Zealand, and it is only reasonable to suppose that if those same individuals were domiciled in New Zealand instead of America nothing less than a 45-per-cent. duty would suit them. The tariff should be kept free for countries that have a free port, but not otherwise; and in this connection it might be mentioned that America imposes a duty even on our raw products, such as wool, flax, &c. If the industry was protected as it should be competition would be on more equal terms; but without some such tariff our manufacturers cannot hope to stand against the great American financial magnates. Government must be asked to come to their assistance, and it is to the interest of every worker to join hands with the employer in order to impress upon the Government the gravity of the situation, and that only by their assistance will it be possible to fight with any hope of success this gigantic trust, whose avowed objects are the closing of every implement-factory in the Australasian Colonies."

Those, gentlemen, are the reasons adduced for the workers' request. I may say that in opposition to that request the farmers passed several resolutions at their meeting held in the Agricultural Hall on the 13th of last month, which meeting I attended. I dare say you have seen copies of those resolutions. I have not got a copy of them here. The gist of the resolutions is that in the opinion of the farmers the agitation now raised by the workers is premature. Surely, in the face of the evidence which I have just read to you, such a resolution will not require to be answered by me. The last resolution they arrived at was "That the farmers be recommended where practicable to purchase colonial implements." That I take as a compliment to the colonial implement-manufacturers. Therefore the only objection that can possibly be raised by the farmers to the duty asked for by the workers is that in the event of a duty being imposed the whole trade will be thrown into the hands of the colonial manufacturers, with the result that there would be a possibility of the colonial manufacturers combining for the purpose of bleeding the farmer by raising the