

the goods opening in thoroughly good condition, and is very much more expeditious in unpacking. It was agreed, however—and the statistics already quoted bear out the statement—that British manufacturers have greatly improved their methods and shown greater adaptability in the last few years as a result of the stimulus of American competition.

Wire Fencing (both plain and barbed).—Here the strongest competition is from the United States, though there is some also from Germany. In 1904 and 1905 the imports from the United States were slightly larger than those from the United Kingdom, but they declined heavily in 1906 (*vide* Appendix No. 5). British wire is said to be better than either German or American, and to have a longer life, but it is considerably more expensive.

The following prices were quoted by British export firms in June, 1907:—

			British.			German.		
			£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Plain wire, varnished	...	...	10	0	0	7	10	0
„ galvanised	...	...	11	15	0	9	0	0
Barbed wire	...	...	13	12	6	12	0	0

the British quotations being in each case f.o.b. Liverpool, less 2½ per cent., and the German f.o.b. Antwerp, less 3 per cent. It is difficult to obtain comparative prices for the United States product, as the United States Steel Corporation will now only sell c.i.f. New Zealand, and it is impossible to determine how this price is divided between cost of the article and freight.

Machinery, Instruments, &c.—*Gas and oil engines* are imported largely from the United States, but here again in the last two years the British share of the trade has increased rapidly from £35,875 to £56,772, whilst the United States share in both these years was smaller than in 1903. In *sewing-machines* the United States has the bulk of the trade; and in *printing machinery* the imports from the same country rose rapidly from £2,742 in 1905 to £16,161 in 1906, whilst British imports increased only from £21,209 to £24,740. In *electrical machinery* also there is a considerable foreign competition, chiefly from the United States and the Continent of Europe, but the United Kingdom is still credited with more than half of the total imports, some of its share, however, being undoubtedly also of continental origin. Under the head of "*other machinery and parts thereof*" there is also a large importation from the United States, which includes such articles as typewriters and cash-registers. In *scientific instruments* rather more than half the trade is ascribed to the United Kingdom, the remainder going mainly to the United States and Germany.

Printing-paper.—The United Kingdom still supplies somewhat above one-half the imports of this commodity, but there is a rapidly growing importation from Canada, whilst the supplies from the United States have been steadily decreasing in value, and were in 1906 only half of their amount in 1903. This is one of the articles in respect of which the British dominions have enjoyed, and will continue to enjoy, a substantial preference, as their product was admitted free under the Act of 1903, whilst foreign countries had to encounter a duty of 20 per cent. *ad valorem*—an arrangement continued under the new tariff—and it is generally agreed that this has had the effect of transferring much of the American trade to Canada.

Musical Instruments.—The trade in pianos, which has averaged £100,000 per annum for the last three years, is divided almost equally between the United Kingdom and Germany. The British article pays a duty of 20 per cent. *ad valorem*, whilst pianos from foreign countries pay 30 per cent., but, as has been already remarked, this difference is said to be of no importance in the case of the better class of instruments, and the lower freights obtainable from Hamburg neutralise the preferential rate on the cheaper pianos. It was stated that the through freight from Berlin to New Zealand *via* Hamburg, with transshipment at London, is about 10s. per ton less than from London; besides which German pianos are quoted f.o.b. Hamburg (case included), whereas pianos shipped in London have to pay dock dues amounting to about 7s. 6d. per piano in addition to the cost of the case.

Clocks and Watches.—There is a considerable competition from the United States and from Switzerland. The former country has the trade in cheap clocks, and a large proportion of the watches exported from the United Kingdom are, as is well known, really of Swiss manufacture.

Glass and Glassware.—*Window-glass* is obtained chiefly from Belgium, and the imports from that country have risen from £11,144 in 1903 to £28,233 in 1906, the increase in the last year being very marked; various exporters stated that they now never buy window-glass in England. In *other glass*, however, the United Kingdom has a large share of the trade, the imports therefrom into the Dominion in 1906 being £35,815, an increase of £9,000 on 1905. About half the imported *glassware* comes from the United Kingdom, but there is an increasing import from Germany and Belgium. Re-exports of "*glass and manufactures thereof*" from the United Kingdom have fallen off rapidly between 1902 and 1906. This appears to be due, to some extent at least, to the substitution of the Germany-Australia route for the London-New Zealand route. It was asserted that the foreign goods have the advantage of lower freights, even when carried *via* British ports.

Miscellaneous Goods.—Other articles in which there is strong foreign competition are *furniture*, which comes largely from the United States, British possessions (notably Canada), Germany, Austria (bent-wood chairs), and Japan; *candles*, of which there is a rapidly increasing import from Burmah—a movement ascribed to the effect of preference—whilst the imports from the United States, which were £14,482 in 1903, dropped to practically nothing two years later; *lamps and lampware*, which are largely imported from the United States and Germany, though British trade has improved somewhat in the last year; and *ordinary soap*, of which £21,057 came in 1906 from New South Wales and £10,275 from the United States, as against £17,802 from the United Kingdom (more than double the amount from the last-named country in 1904).