

them used to be given out to the local engineering firms. All this, naturally, prejudicially affects the work coming to the local firms, but it does not necessarily mean that less work is being done or fewer hands all round employed.

The boilermaking, in sympathy with the falling-off in steam-engine building, is languishing. This is proved by the imports. There were in 1901-5 (five years) 366 boilers imported, while only 201 were imported during the following five years (1906-10), thus showing a falling-off of 42½ per cent. In order to secure to New Zealand manufacturers as much of this trade as possible, they ask that a duty of 30 per cent. and 15 per cent. preferential should be imposed.

Agricultural implements and machinery manufacturers, I consider, have the "hardest row of all to hoe," inasmuch as they have an entirely free tariff against them, while their neighbours the Commonwealth manufacturers have a protection varying from 15 to 25 per cent., which has enabled them to export to New Zealand during the five years 1906-10 £54,405 worth of agricultural implements; while, during the same period, New Zealand exported to the Commonwealth only £17,963 worth, and this was made up principally of patented implements. From what I have seen I am firmly of the opinion that this is an industry which should receive the very greatest consideration and support possible from the Government and the country. It is capable of enormous expansion as the country is opened up and settled, as the figures following will prove; and no one can say that the implements New Zealand manufacturers now turn out are inferior to anything imported. In corroboration of this I may quote (from the newspaper cutting herewith) the following remarks made by Mr. Richard Evans and Mr. G. Skeat, two of the Scottish farmer delegates who visited New Zealand lately:—

"Christchurch, 27th April, 1911.

"Dealing with the question of agricultural implements, Mr. Richard Evans, at the Farmers' Union meeting, paid a high tribute to the New Zealand manufactures. He said that the New Zealand implements were actually cheaper than the imported goods. They lasted longer, and were more suited to the work they had to do. Mr. G. Skeat spoke in a similar strain, and declared that New-Zealand-made implements were second to none."

There is no doubt but that the New Zealand manufacturer makes a study of local conditions, soil, and requirements, and manufactures accordingly suitable implements for the farmer. This is exemplified from the fact that several such implements have been sent abroad as "copies" for manufacturing purposes. In support of the statement I instance Messrs. Booth and MacDonald's disc harrow, which is now being imported by the agents of Messrs. J. and T. Howard, of Bedford, and the Massey-Harris Company; and with a free tariff in their favour they are underselling the original inventor, and this can easily be done considering the difference in wages paid and the fact that they are duty-free.

The imports of agricultural machinery and implements are very considerable, amounting in ten years to £1,155,573, made up as follows:—

		British. £	Foreign. £
1901-5 (five years)	...	215,445	255,271
1906-10 ,,	...	318,460	271,367
		533,905	526,638
Ploughs and harrows:—			
1901-5 (five years)	...	29,797	19,414
1906-10 ,,	...	34,295	11,524
		64,092	30,938
totalling altogether	...	£597,997	£557,576

or a grand total of £1,155,573; or, taking the last five years only, to an annual importation of £127,129; which the manufacturers assure me—and I have no hesitation in supporting the statement—could and should be made in New Zealand if a duty of 30 per cent and 15 per cent. preferential on foreign was imposed.

The only article which in the meantime I would advise—and the manufacturers agree with me—should come in free is the reaper-and-binder, which has not so far been manufactured in the Dominion. Their argument that local competition will always keep the price low for the consumer is correct, and as a guarantee that their prices shall not be too high the manufacturers have supplied me with published price-lists which they will undertake, by documents, shall not be increased so long as wages and materials remain as at present.

The International Harvester Company and the Massey-Harris Company have introduced the very costly principle of sending out agents to scour the country for orders, which has compelled the local manufacturers, in self-defence, to do likewise. This has increased the cost to the farmer of from 15 to 20 per cent., which is paid in commission to agents. This amount, prior to the advent of the two companies named, was saved to the farmer, as he used to send his order direct to the New Zealand manufacturer.

As I have already said, the agricultural-implement industry is one of great importance to this country, and one that will grow enormously if encouragement were forthcoming in the way I have indicated.

Dairying machinery and implements: As there is no possibility in the near future of cream-separators being manufactured in New Zealand, I advise that they should be allowed to come in free as at present. Milking-machines, however, are largely manufactured in New Zealand, and