

be better to declare the cars in a complete state either free or dutiable; but, as I have said, if the latter principle is given effect to, the manufacturing of them would soon be established within the Dominion.

The brass-founding industry is one which is in close relation to the engineering industry, and, in sympathy with the latter, is not in a progressive state. One firm who used to manufacture large quantities of brass bib-cocks, and who erected an expensive plant for the purpose, have had to cease their manufacture and pay off their hands, on account of the increase in wages and other labour conditions. In 1901 they employed 251 hands in manufacturing, now they have only 162. Another firm has recently installed a plant, costing £3,000, for the manufacture of brass taps, &c.; but they fear they will have to close down, on account of the large amount of imports and the keen competition from abroad, together with the increase of wages and working-conditions in New Zealand. Their wages-sheet runs into £120 per week, and they are prepared to double their plant and buildings if a protection is afforded them of 30 per cent. and 15 per cent. preferential.

There are a few other metal industries which require attention, such as the galvanized-corrugated and plain-galvanized sheet-iron industry. There is at present only one maker of galvanized corrugated iron in the Dominion, and he has the only "pot" in use, but states that the demand does not warrant the putting-down of another. He, however, does not ask for further protection by way of the tariff, but makes the statement that if the Government would continue to specify in their tenders that only Dominion-made galvanized iron should be used, and their officers insisted upon its being used, he is quite satisfied that if this was done he would be enabled to increase his plant and hands considerably. The imports of galvanized plain and corrugated iron during the past fifteen years show a marked increase, though not so great during the last five years as during the previous five years. The imports were as follows:—

	Galvanized Corrugated Iron. Cwt.	Galvanized Plain Iron. Cwt.
1896-1900 (five years)	1,013,510	178,975
1901-5 (five years)	1,397,205	271,593
1906-10 (five years)	1,491,966	351,676

Barbed-wire and staple and standard manufacturing at present is an industry free from duty, and one that would be taken up if a protective tariff was provided. In fact, it was started many years ago under a protective tariff, but for some reason the duty was removed and the factory closed down. The imports of barbed wire for 1906 to 1910 (five years) was 19,224 tons, and of staples and standards 4,559 tons, most of this being staples. In the Commonwealth there is a protective tariff on staples of 5s. and 5s. 6d. per hundredweight. I consider, however, that 3s. and 1s. 6d. preferential would be sufficient in New Zealand, and for barbed wire 30 per cent. and 15 per cent. preferential. In the Commonwealth there are now seven firms engaged in the manufacture of these articles, and no doubt a corresponding number would soon be at work in New Zealand. One firm which is prepared to start manufacturing barbed wire and staples stated that it would guarantee no increase in present prices if security were given that the American combine will be prevented from cutting prices by dumping, and so stifling the industry. This was the experience already in New Zealand in the matter of wire-nail manufacturing, a factory having been established at Woolston, Christchurch; but immediately the nails were put on the market the American article was reduced to such a figure that the factory was shut down and never reopened. This is an industry which I consider, if given sufficient protection—say, 3s. and 1s. 6d. preferential per hundredweight—would soon be re-established.

The imports of wire nails are very considerable, and increasing annually. In 1900 they were £47,799, and in 1910 £67,246, showing an increase of nearly 42½ per cent. Of the latter amount £28,498 was British, £14,608 Canadian, and £24,140 foreign.

Another very important industry has within the past few years been successfully started in New Zealand, that of iron-bedstead manufacturing. Dunedin and Auckland are the pioneers in this particular industry, and the articles I inspected are a credit to the Dominion. It is an industry that employs a large number of hands, and has become such a menace to the imported article that the following appears in W. A. Sparrow and Co.'s London and Liverpool freight-list of the 4th April, 1910: "Negotiations are afoot to obtain a reduction of the freight upon bedsteads, as few indents are reaching this country (England) since their manufacture was commenced in the Dominion. Already the Australian rate is 12s. 6d. a ton lower than upon ordinary rough measurement, and it is hoped to obtain a corresponding concession for New Zealand."

If things remain as at present the bedstead-manufacturers do not ask for further protection, as they consider that they can just hold their own; but if freights are reduced as suggested above they will not be able to compete. Such a reduction in freight would necessitate their asking for an increase of duty, which at present is 20 per cent. and 10 per cent., to 25 per cent. and 12½ per cent.; and this I recommend as being fair and reasonable in order to support an industry which has held its own successfully without the necessity for further protection were it not for such tactics as Messrs. Sparrow's list reveals.

I feel that I cannot conclude without strongly urging upon the Government the national importance of assisting in every way possible the development of the iron- and steel-ore deposits known to exist within the Dominion, and bring them to some practical account. Upon no consideration whatever should the Government allow the exportation of these ore-deposits, but rather offer every inducement for the free working and development of them within the Dominion, and with outside capital if necessary. The manufacturing of iron partakes of a national character of the very first importance. It forms the foundation of independence and of self-reliance,