

127. What would you consider the population of New Zealand would be in forty years at the present rate of increase?—I should say about two millions and a half.

128. If we import 140,000 tons now you would multiply that by $2\frac{1}{2}$ for our consumption in forty years' time?—Yes, more than that.

129. In forty years' time how many people will be employed in connection with those works, including their dependants: would you consider ten thousand a fair estimate?—That is including all the men employed in mining and manufacture and their dependants. I should think that estimate would not be far from it.

130. In making your calculations of the amount we paid, you did not consider the collateral advantages?—I considered them.

131. What would be the value of ten thousand people to the Customs?—About £3 per head—£30,000 per annum.

132. Assuming that we get this iron at 5 per cent., what would you save on the Government requirements?—On manufactured steel we would save very little. On pig iron we would save considerably.

133. Why not on manufactured steel?—The cost of production would probably be more than at Home.

134. Assuming provision is made for this company to sell to the Government at London prices, plus 5 per cent., would you make considerable saving then?—About half the freight.

135. About £1 per ton?—About half that.

136. Would it be a fair assumption that the collateral advantages would more than counter-balance the subsidy that we paid?—That is rather a big question. I do not know.

137. You admit the country would gain £30,000 through the Customs?—That is at the end of forty years' time.

138. Coming to private consumers and iron-manufacturers generally, would the establishment of these works be of very great benefit to the industries of the country generally?—Unless they are going to supply at a lower price than they can buy for now I do not see where the advantage comes in.

139. Assuming that they could sell at the same price, would there be no considerable advantage then?—There would be an advantage in the matter of prompt delivery.

140. And exchanges and commission, insurance, &c.?—Yes.

141. Would it not be a very great advantage if local pig iron could be supplied for local works?—But I do not think the company would be willing to supply the ordinary consumer at cost plus 5 per cent.

142. Do you know whether many of the articles manufactured from cast iron can be produced in New Zealand? It runs into a large amount of money?—Yes, I believe so, such as the manufacture of water-pipes, &c.

143. Did you see the report of the deputation which interviewed me from the Ironmasters' Association in connection with this matter?—Yes.

144. Do you know whether they were unanimous in the opinion that they would receive very great advantage from the establishment of these works?—I think they were, and I think they are unanimous now, but I think it is a unanimity based on want of knowledge. Some of them import iron and steel now at less than it can, in my opinion, be produced for in New Zealand.

145. Do you not think they ought to know?—Certainly, as astute men they ought to know.

146. In connection with the bounties, supposing the Crown gave a bounty instead of a subsidy, do you think we should then get works established?—I think we would. There is a talk of utilizing the ironsands on the Onehunga beach, and also outside the late Sir A. J. Cadman's lease.

147. Where would they find their knowledge?—From the same place that the Parapara people find their knowledge.

148. What amount of bounty would you recommend, Mr. Blow?—I think about 10s. per ton.

149. Do you think that 10s. per ton would be sufficient encouragement for any one to invest a large amount of capital in establishing ironworks?—It is doubtful. The question is whether Parliament would see its way to grant a further amount.

150. Are you aware that the Government was prepared to give a bounty of £1 per ton up to 175,000 tons a few years ago? Did you consider £1 a ton too much at that time?—My opinion was not asked.

151. Do you think 10s. per ton would be sufficient now to encourage any one to establish ironworks?—I am very doubtful.

152. When you recommended a bounty you really had not considered the question?—I had not considered the amount of the bounty, but I think the bounty would be a better system.

153. You say that there is a probability of the iron-deposits being worked out in less than forty years?—I did not say "probably"; I said "possibly."

Mr. Myers: Mr. Chairman, before the Committee adjourns I would like to say that the Bill does not make provision for the plant and machinery required being allowed to enter free of Customs duty. That was part of the suggestion of the Ethelburga Syndicate, and, of course, it is in the interests of all parties.