

inquiries from Australia for agencies, but we can only supply them with surplus stocks. My difficulties are that we have to pay interest on capital. With a plant and plenty of materials our output will increase from two thousand to about six thousand. The demand in New Zealand is limited, and unless we are going to have pumps left on the shelf we want protection to keep out the imported article for a little while until we build up the industry. There is no duty on pumps at present.

*To Mr. Craigie.*] At present we employ from nine to twelve hands. We use electric power, and it is a great advantage.

*To Mr. Sidey.*] In regard to duty, we ask that we should be put on a footing with Tasmania—say, 25 per cent.

*To Mr. Poland.*] Large numbers of pumps are imported from England and America.

*To the Chairman.*] The pumps are retailed at 14s. 9d.

*To Mr. Hudson.*] The pumps are bucket pumps. We have not reached the stage of large pumps for commercial orchards; but if we get protection we shall do so.

RICHARD EVANS, Kaiapoi, examined.

I am a farmer. Mr. Jones, president of the Farmers' Union, has asked me to appear in his place to-day in connection with wheat-growing. I am a miller as well; but I am a farmer really—that is my occupation. We consider, as farmers, we ought to be treated the same as the Australians treat us—that the same tariff ought to be put on all cereals as the Australians put against us. We do not want to be selfish wheat-growers; we consider, in reference to butter, cheese, and bacon, that the same tariff ought to be put against the Australian goods as they put against us. There is a great misunderstanding, I think, between the public and the wheat-grower. We have had three exceedingly bad years. We have entirely to depend upon the weather. But we must admit that this year those who have kept on—most of them as a matter of patriotism—they are going to get a good crop, and the crops will pay this year. I can assure you that the three years that have gone by have been most disastrous. I am not speaking on behalf of the large farmer, but the small farmer. The small farmer cannot carry sheep, and in our opinion he ought to be protected. There is a great misunderstanding of the public about the profit that is to be got out of wheat at the big price the Government has promised us this year—6s. 6d.—but I hope the Committee in making their report will remember that it has taken us fully double to produce the wheat since the war started to what it used to do before. A cast-iron shear which formerly cost 1s. 3d. now costs as much as 5s. 3d. The labour on the farm now costs twice as much as before the war. The men you used to pay £1 10s. and food, you have now to pay for a reasonably good man from £2 15s. to £3 5s. Twine, which was 3½d. per pound, is now 11d. To show you how Australia is interfering with us: they are landing this class of wheat in Auckland at 6s. a bushel. [Sample shown to Committee.] I am not sure whether there is any duty charged on that. There was a line of 3,000 sacks—it is supposed to be fowl-wheat. You can buy flour from that quality of wheat to-day in Sydney and Melbourne at £3 per ton less than the price we are charging in New Zealand. The Government supplies wheat to the miller there at 4s. 9d. a bushel, and they have risen up to 5s. They make the miller take a large quantity of wheat to reduce the price of their flour: we have to compete with that. Our soldiers are coming back from the war, and there is a lot of land in Canterbury that is suitable for this sort of industry and work. If we are to protect these men I think it is only reasonable that Parliament should impose the same duty upon the Australian products that come to this country as we have to pay for sending ours over there. I am not speaking my own views only, but the views of the Farmers' Union of North Canterbury.

*To the Chairman.*] We want the same protection as they have in Australia. We are getting a higher price from the Government than the Australian growers are getting; but there is no comparison between growing wheat in Australia and growing it here. In New Zealand the Government is promising 6s. 6d. f.o.b. We wanted more. The reason we wanted more was this: the Committee led us to believe that a tariff was going to be put on equal to that the Australians put against us. Wheat would be sold cheaper if there was more encouragement given to grow it.

*To Mr. Veitch.*] I speak on behalf of North Canterbury wheat-growing farmers, and especially for men farming 100 and 200 acres of land. The big man is able to get on all right when he runs a lot of sheep. I think there has been very little difference in land-values in the North Canterbury district since the war began. New Zealand does not export much wheat to Australia, but we have exported a lot to Great Britain and other places. Our wheat is not hard enough to send to Australia. I think to increase the duty on Australian flour would increase the price of flour here to the consumer by £1 10s. per ton.

*To Mr. Forbes.*] The Australians generally do not take our wheat because it is not good enough; but they would have gladly taken it in 1915 if the Government had allowed us to export it; but generally speaking they will not take our wheat unless they want it very badly.

*To Mr. Luke.*] In regard to milling-cost during recent years, coal and wages have increased and interest on money. I should think that the increased milling-charges are reflected upon the price of flour to the consumer to the extent of 10s. a ton.

*To Mr. Sidey.*] We want to protect the small man who has to make a living by working his own farm. As to the small man who eats the flour—as to protecting him, he is paying better than we are: he has doubled his wages. If the market were thrown open it would cost a million and a half to import the stuff into this country. You must have a rotation of crops. My own personal views are that it is necessary to grow wheat if we are to keep the population in this country.