

to the position in this country, I may state that the question has been seriously discussed as to the possibility of some of the larger iron firms in this city going to Australia, for they would there have better scope for their works; the people there take a greater interest in manufacturing, and the population is larger. In regard to Arbitration Court decisions, I think some better system could be arrived at than the present one. I think that something on the lines of the report presented to the House of Commons in 1918 should be instituted in this country.

*To Mr. Luke:* In the case of up-to-date plant in foundries, there is not enough of it; there is a lot of the plant that is obsolete. Although the result of one New Zealand manufacturer going to Australia may not have been satisfactory, the conditions have changed since then; there was not at that time the same tariff as there is now in Australia. There is not very much mining machinery being made now. In regard to the industry generally, you must put on a protective tariff to reinstate it—the only way is to put on a tariff sufficient to reinstate it—the reinstatement must be genuine. I anticipate much benefit from the Government being the purchaser of the raw materials. The Government would hold the stocks.

*To Mr. Veitch:* In New Zealand the proportion of cost of manufacturing going in wages is 25 per cent., and in the primary industries 6 per cent. In the former 50 per cent. goes in material and 25 per cent. in expenses and so forth. I have not worked out the exact ratio wages have gone up during the last five years, but I can tell you that in 1910 there were 41,726 employees, and they took in wages £3,098,561; and in 1916 there were 48,399 employees, who divided £5,749,554. That is a percentage of increase per man of more than 10 per cent. The barometer charts show that in pig iron, if anything, there has been a slight reduction in the cost. I think the relative increase in material and wages has been about stationary; there has been no increase in the cost of material. There has been an increase of practically 30 per cent. in wages in the war period.

G. E. MORETON, representing Messrs. Moreton and Bradfield, examined.

We are indent agents, but we are also manufacturers of one of our New Zealand products, and we have been hit pretty hard in respect to protection. We are manufacturers of a few lines of cheese in tins. The empty tins we receive from Australia at the present time; they cannot be obtained in the Dominion. A very considerable amount of Australian cheese has been imported into this country in tins, on which the duty is 20 per cent. *ad valorem*; and therefore it does not give us much chance against the imported article. They are selling some of the lines wholesale to-day cheaper than we can put them up, consequently our industry is suffering through that. New Zealand produces, and particularly Otago and Southland, the finest cheese in the world. It is almost an insult to our people to allow cheese to be imported into this country. We ask you to give us your favourable consideration, whereby we will get a reduction on the duty on tins. 25 per cent. is the duty on tins, whereas the imported articles, when the cheese comes in in tins, only pay 20 per cent.

J. DOWNIE examined.

I desire to make one or two suggestions to the Committee. What we want here is immigration. It is the want of people of the right kind that is stopping the progress of the country. I am not afraid of wages going back to cheap wages again; they cannot go back. Another thing that is stopping progress is that our Arbitration Court limit the number of apprentices to workers. Our industries are constantly being blocked through strikes. The Government have got the labour at their command, and they have the coal-mines at their command. Why not put some prison labour in the mines? If the suggestions I make were adopted it would result in greatly increased prosperity in the country.

F. RYLANCE, Paint-manufacturer, examined.

With regard to whiting and putty, I desire to say in regard to the former article I think I am about the only manufacturer in the Dominion who is manufacturing it, and it is manufactured from local material. Whiting is composed of what ought to be a substance which is largely in evidence in New Zealand. What we would like the Government to do is to give it as much protection as possible, because it is a low-grade material. The present duty is only 1s. per hundredweight. If a large duty were put on a larger amount would be manufactured in this country. Putty is made from whiting and oil. There is no putty made in New Zealand. I ask that an extra duty be put on putty. The duty is £2 10s. per ton. I think the duty ought to be at least double in order to benefit the local industry. We can make as good, or better, putty as can be made in the Old Country.

J. M. BENTON, of Messrs. Hogg and Co. (Limited), further examined.

I desire to say a few words in addition to my previous evidence in regard to the question of manufactured doors. The duty on American doors is 20 per cent. and 10 per cent. additional. Our firm has up-to-date machinery for making doors, and I think we have the largest stock of doors in the Dominion. We ask that a similar tariff be imposed here to that in force in Australia.

*To the Chairman:* We cannot compete at present with the imported doors. If you go through the bush districts of this country you will find that imported doors are frequently to be seen in the houses. Then, in regard to picture-mouldings, the present duty is 20 per cent. and 10 per cent., but that protection is quite insufficient if the market is not to be allowed to be flooded with the imported article. In respect to the use of imported timber, I may say that I think this country made a mistake in the pioneer days in not putting down oak saplings. There is no reason why in some districts the oak should not be successful for such purposes. Otago Central is a suitable district in which to grow oak in New Zealand.