

without increase, but also to modify prices; and, as labour becomes more plentiful, and its cost and the cost of money modified, our market would become more and more extended, embracing the neighbouring colonies. The permanent nature of the work thus provided for the labouring-classes would compensate most fully for any possible modification in the rate of wages, while workmen would be less liable to be driven to seek uncongenial employment in other than their legitimate pursuits.

Under such circumstances free trade would become possible without injury to the colony, because the conditions of competition would be equalized, and no possibility would exist of the re-establishment of foreign supremacy in our markets. So far as our extensive experience as manufacturers and importers can show, we have become convinced that such a consummation is not possible under present conditions. If growth were possible it would be at the best slow, laboured, immature, and unsatisfactory. Protection offers to our view the one possible means of achieving the aim while conserving the best interests of the colony. With it, in the present, we shall be able best to realize those conditions which have made Great Britain independent of it, and thus work out the idea of all political economists, who teach that free trade is something ideal to which to rise, but whose operations must be varied to the circumstances of a community or nation.

I have, &c.,

WALTER GUTHRIE,
Managing Director, Guthrie and Larnach's New Zealand Timber and
Woodware Factories Company (Limited).

No. 53.

Mr. R. J. WHITE, Cabinet and Upholstery Manufactory, Christchurch, to W. Hoskins, Esq.,
Town Clerk, Christchurch.

SIR,—

19th April, 1880.

Referring to your letter asking for information as to local industries, we employ about sixty hands, but find we have many drawbacks to contend with. Firstly, the prejudice against colonial work: in days gone by there is no doubt that a large quantity of rubbish was turned out by unskilled workmen; but now we have some of the best workmen that England, France, Germany, and Italy can produce, and all we want is the public and the Government to appreciate our efforts in not sending out of the country for any goods that can be produced here.

Another drawback is our timber. Now, we find all our colonial timbers so difficult to season. We sometimes fancy that Government should insist—that is, where they have control over forests—to have it cut only at certain times, so that the sap should not interfere with the seasoning for the purpose of manufacturing.

Another encouragement would be to remove all duties from timber, so that it may come in free.

Of course you are quite aware that we pay much more for labour than in any part of Great Britain. To counteract this we want the Government to give us all the encouragement they can to get cheap and good timber, so that instead of using colonial we may use imported when necessary.

Our local industries of all kinds must be fostered at all risks; or what is to become of the present generation just springing into manhood?

Our laws relating to apprenticeship must be of the most liberal kind, both as regards master and apprentice; no loophole should be left for either, and they should be to the advantage of both. That will be the one way to encourage us to produce and teach others.

Another idea which I believe would have a very good effect on present and future would be to establish, as soon as possible, schools of art all over New Zealand—I mean in all the centres of population, such as Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, &c. If we take the mother-country for our guide, we must all admit what good they have done in promoting taste for all that is lovely in nature, and bringing out ideas which would not have been developed had it not been for schools of this class.

I have, &c.,

R. J. WHITE.

No. 54.

Evidence of a DEPUTATION from the CABINETMAKERS of DUNEDIN before the Commissioners,
Dunedin, 18th May, 1880.

A DEPUTATION from the cabinetmakers of Dunedin, comprising Mr. H. North, of North and Scoullar, Dunedin; Mr. R. Chisholm, of the same firm; and Mr. Gillies, of Craig and Gillies, Dunedin, waited upon the Commission this afternoon, and gave evidence.

Mr. H. North: I may state, gentlemen, that we have condensed our remarks into writing, and, if you will permit us, we will read them to you. Perhaps that will save time, and we can discuss it afterwards.

Mr. Chisholm then read the accompanying statement, as follows:—

GENTLEMEN,—Thanking you for your courtesy in permitting an interview, we have pleasure in laying before you the conclusions which many years' experience have forced upon us in connection with the subject of encouraging or protecting local industry; and we would preface these by expressing our strong convictions that a protective duty on such articles of furniture as we import would be fatal to our interests and paralyze trade.

Our experience in the manufacture of furniture in Dunedin has extended over a period of more than fifteen years, and even now, in the depressed state of trade all over the colony, we employ upwards of fifty hands in the manufacturing and carrying-on of our furniture business; and our experience has invariably been that, when additional duty is placed on articles of furniture, no benefit is derived by the manufacturer, while it prevents the sale of goods we find it necessary to import, and consequently prevents much labour being spent in the fitting-up and finishing of articles which, if not imported, cannot be made in the colony, thus causing a general depression throughout our trade.