

58. Do you or do you not think that an individual or a company, starting with a capital of £10,000 to manufacture sulphuric acid in the colony, could beat out the imported article, considering its dangerous character *in transitu*?—I think it possible.

59. There was, I think, a change in the duty on sperm candles last year?—Yes.

60. What has been the effect of it? Have you had an opportunity of judging?—I could not say positively, it having been in operation such a short space of time.

61. Are you aware that the principal reason alleged for putting the increased duty on sperm candles was the fact of a duty being placed on stearine?—Yes, I have been informed such was the case.

62. *Mr. Bain.*] Have you any idea of the quantity of sulphuric acid that may be fairly estimated to be consumed in the colony if we manufactured it here?—No. That will entirely depend on the amount of manures, candles, &c., made by its use.

63. What you complain of is, the prejudice that the people have against the colonially-made article?—I do not complain of it; I merely throw it out as one of the difficulties we have to contend against, and which makes our prices very much lower, and our fight with the foreigner harder.

64. Is it not a fact that your products secured a first prize at the Sydney Exhibition?—Yes.

65. Do you not think that that will assist in removing the prejudice you speak of?—No doubt; but there is not a Sydney Exhibition every day, and everybody does not get such an award.

66. *The Chairman.*] Suppose a duty were imposed on sulphuric acid in order to encourage the production of that article in the colony, would it have a very serious effect on your business?—It might, unless more than one individual established a manufactory.

67. In that case, it would place you at the mercy of the local manufacturer?—Yes. It should be noticed that the candle industry would be the greatest portion of this market, consequently would have to be well-considered.

68. It would be liable, at all events, to prove a serious blow to your business?—Provided one thing did not take place—namely, that the Government granted a monopoly to one firm—so long as there were two or three makers to buy from—there would be no danger; but in case, possibly, of there being only one manufactory, there would, to some extent, be the danger you speak of.

69. Have candles to be made from stearine?—Entirely so.

70. Where do you contemplate getting the sulphur from for the purpose of making sulphuric acid?—In New Zealand there are two sources of supply. Melbourne supplies itself largely from Home. I believe that last year they imported 450 tons into Victoria.

71. From the Mediterranean, probably?—It came from Sicily, no doubt. Here there are two sources of supply, Whale and White Islands. I have been all over Whale Island. I spent a Sunday morning there. There is a large sulphur-deposit there.

72. I suppose you know that there has been a company working at White Island for some time?—Yes. There is a company in private hands, I believe; but they are not making sulphuric acid.

73. It was formed with that object, but they met with all sorts of difficulties.—Manufacturing concerns always do.

74. But their difficulty was that the sulphur was not there. I had a long conversation on the subject the other day with a gentleman, who told me that the island was enormously over-rated. There has not been any sulphur found on it for months back; and unless there is a constant supply it is not worth while going into the thing?—True; but it is quite different on Whale Island. White Island is a factory itself, while on Whale Island there is a deposit of sulphur like a rock.

75. You state that for some time Melbourne made stearine and sent it in its prepared form to Wellington, where it was manufactured into candles; and that this manufacture was too much for the New Zealand manufacture?—I did not say that it was too much.

76. It successfully competed with you?—No.

77. Then they did not undersell you?—They never attempted it in New Zealand.

78. I understood you to say that they actually did?—No. The Victorian factory never ran it so close.

79. *Mr. Stevens.*] Do you mean Kitchen's firm?—Yes.

80. Then they did not compete successfully with your candles?—They never attempted it; but they could have done it if they had wished to.

81. Had they not all the stearine apparatus there?—Yes. I understand they brought it down and sent it back again.

82. *The Chairman.*] What I understand you to say is, that at the time there was a duty on candles, and when stearine was admitted free as an article not being included within the tariff, the Melbourne manufacturers of stearine sent that material in its prepared state to Wellington, where it was manufactured into candles and sold, and that these candles were sold at a lower price than imported candles?—Yes; and the colonial articles are sold cheaper than the imported. That can always be taken for granted.

83. At all events, that was a good thing for the consumer, was it not?—Undoubtedly.

84. And the candles were as fine—as good, if not better than the imported?—They were just as good.

85. But sold at a less price?—Yes. Still, they were the outcome of protection.

86. It was a very good thing for the New Zealand consumer, who got the benefit of somebody's loss in Victoria. You give us to understand that these candles were a loss to Victoria through over-production in the factories there?—Not necessarily a loss to the Victorian maker.

87. Well, a loss to somebody?—Not necessarily. There was the larger trade. The manufacturer may be willing to run the risk of a temporary loss, with the prospect of a future benefit.

88. The over-produce of the Victorian manufactories was sent down to New Zealand and sold for anything it would fetch?—Yes; that was done several times.

89. That must be a great advantage to the candle-consuming public?—Do you mean to the advantage of New Zealand as a country? Not if any lengthened period is taken into account.