

741. *Mr. Beauchamp.*] Assuming the rates of wages and the hours of labour were uniform throughout Australia and New Zealand, are you of opinion that the industries of New Zealand could not exist, although the Australian people would be handicapped to the extent of the freight from Australia to New Zealand?—It would lessen the difficulty a little, but not put us on a good footing.

742. You say that, owing to the raw material being cheaper, and the fact that they have a larger home population to tap, they can throw off their surplus here at such a price as would render it impossible for you to compete against them?—Certainly. We could not compete against the surplus of such large firms as there are in Melbourne. You would have to compete against their cost price.

743. That is the chief difficulty that many people here have in respect to American goods—that the Americans, after supplying their domestic trade, export the surplus?—Yes. I have bought American manufactures at less than I know they cost them, just because it was a surplus.

744. What is the rate of freight you would pay on ordinary manufactures from, say, Sydney to Dunedin?—Case goods are from 12s. 6d. to 15s. Sometimes we get pig-iron or plates for 7s. 6d. a ton, but it is generally 10s. When it has suited them we have had freight as low as 7s. 6d.

745. That was probably when the competition existed between the Union Steamship Company and Huddart, Parker, and Co.?—No. It is a matter of convenience for the Union Company to take a few hundred tons of heavy goods at a small rate.

746. Have you any market in Australia for your goods?—Only for specialities. There are some specialities in brewers' plant that we send to some parts of Australia.

747. With a moderately protected tariff, do you suffer any competition from Australia?—Not now. Of course, specialities may come over, but the general run of brass and metal goods we do not hear of coming to the colony. When the Australian manufactures do come it is not a matter of price, but a matter of getting the article.

748. In respect to the technical schools in New South Wales and Victoria, do you find that the higher wages and the shorter hours in New Zealand attract any of these men to this colony who have been educated there?—Yes. We have several men employed who were trained over there. I have observed the better knowledge of theory they have than the New Zealand men, though they are not such good workers. They seem to have grasped the theory, which, of course, our technical schools would teach if thoroughly equipped.

749. At what rates does the New Zealand coal sell?—Nuts for steam purposes cost, I think, £1 8s.; but we do not use that class. Lump coal, which we use for our furnaces, is £1 12s. We never pay under £1 9s.

750. *Mr. Millar.*] You are aware this question of federation is bringing about a conflict of opinion between the interests of manufacturers and the interests of agricultural producers: could you give us any idea of the manufactures of the colony?—I think the Government have the statistics. I did not look them up, because I thought you would be able to get the information from the Government. At any rate, the value of the manufactures must be considerable. It has increased very much during the last few years.

751. You could not give any idea of the value of the manufactures in Dunedin alone?—No. We fill up printed forms for the Government giving all that information. Of course, it is supposed to be private. No one giving evidence would state the extent of his own output. I would not do it; but I say it must have increased considerably during the last four or five years.

752. We have evidence that the total value of the export of produce to Australia is worth to this colony about £1,750,000?—Yes.

753. Dunedin pays in Customs duties about £400,000 per annum?—Yes.

754. The bulk of that, I suppose, is paid by the workers?—Yes.

755. Well, I suppose I am correct in saying that the four centres of the colony are more or less dependent on the manufactures?—For actual manufacturing wages they are.

756. Shopkeepers, again, are dependent on the workers?—Yes; and no doubt the working-man in Dunedin forms the multitude.

757. So that the four centres of the colony are really dependent on the manufactures?—Well, even if federation did not take place they would be bound to take some of these goods. The total of £1,750,000 might be reduced, but not wiped out.

758. If £400,000 is the amount paid as duty per annum in Dunedin, that, at 20 per cent., represents a total value of two millions?—Yes.

759. And, of course, the bulk of the expenditure of the colony does not pay duty?—No, of course not.

760. There is house-rent, fuel, flour, oatmeal, and so on?—Yes, and many of the goods that are imported do not pay duty either.

761. A large part of their expenditure is not dutiable?—That is so.

762. If it is shown that the workers consume a large portion of the two millions' worth of goods upon which duty is paid, and if you take, in addition, all the amount paid for rent and other items upon which no duty is paid, would it be fair to assume that the total value of the manufactures to Dunedin is worth three millions per annum?—You could assume it, but I would not like to give it without working it up. It is not a matter I have studied. It is a matter that could easily be brought out mathematically.

763. If it can be shown that the manufactures of the colony are worth to the colony at the present time between eight and ten millions, as against £1,750,000 which the Australian market is worth in export, there can be no quibble as to which is of the greater value to the colony?—I quite agree that the manufactures have the best of it. That is quite evident without calculation. I think you might lose a portion of the £1,750,000, but not all of it. Of course, we would have the London market to fall back upon.