

86. How many hours do the workers in this colony similarly employed work?—Forty-seven. I may point out that the American has no Saturday half-holiday.

87. *Mr. Kirkbride.*] I would like to be quite clear as to what the proposal of this gentleman (Mr. Willis) is. (To Mr. Willis): I understood you to say that you are here to ask that a 40-per-cent. duty be levied on American implements?—On American implements and machinery, providing that similar machines and implements are at present made in the colony.

88. *Sir W. R. Russell.*] At present?—At present made in the colony. That is the proposal. I said that we did not ask for any duty on any American implements or machinery that are not made in the colony at present.

89. *Mr. Kirkbride.*] A great deal has been said about the prices charged for harvesters in America and the Argentine and those charged in Australia and New Zealand. (To Mr. Mitchell): Are there any harvesters or binders manufactured in New Zealand?—No, not now.

90. Are there any mowers?—There are no harvesting-machines of that nature at all manufactured in New Zealand. It is not intended to ask for any duty on these lines, nor, I may say, on the English binder—the Hornsby.

91. It is not intended to ask for any duty on reapers-and-binders or mowers?—No.

92. You said that the Deering machine was sold for £35 in New Zealand before the Harvester Trust commenced operations here, and now it is sold for £40—that the price has been raised?—That is so. While the machine was handled by the local agents it was sold for £35. This year, since the establishment of the trust's headquarters for New Zealand at Christchurch, it has resumed control of four binders. The Deering has come under their control, and the agent handling it for the trust has received notice that the price is to be £40.

93. Might we not fairly attribute that to the cutting that went on before between the different American firms, and take it that the machine was really sold below what was a legitimate price in New Zealand?—That extract that I read gives the price, taken from sworn evidence, as to the cost to the American manufacturer of the machine, which, in our opinion, leaves room for a fair profit.

94. Do you happen to know whether the old firm of Reid and Gray, when they manufactured reapers-and-binders, sold the machines to the farmers any cheaper than those imported?—That question I cannot answer.

*Mr. Uttley:* I might say that, in the course of conversation with Mr. Gray, he told me that the reason why they had ceased manufacturing these articles was that they could not compete with the imported implements with the duty on at that time. There is another question I would like to answer. You asked Mr. Mitchell about the selling-price of the Deering machine. I was assured by a manufacturer whose firm had the agency that they were selling the machines at £35, and they were quite satisfied with the profit they were making. Towards the commencement of last month they received notice that from the 1st October the agency for those machines would be taken away from them as far as Dunedin and Christchurch were concerned, but that they could hold the sub-agencies in the meantime, and they were to sell no machines which they were selling at £35 for less than £40 as from the 1st October.

95. *Mr. Kirkbride* (to Mr. Uttley).] In what trade or profession are you?—I am a carpenter.

96. You say that you had it from a firm that they made just as much profit when they sold the Deering at £35 as they would when they sold it at £40?—No; when they sold the Deering at £35 they were selling it at a profit with which they were satisfied.

97. (To Mr. Willis): You say that the manufacturers will guarantee that if they are protected to the extent proposed they will not raise the price of implements to the farmer?—That is so.

98. Have we any guarantee that if this protection were granted the workers would not after this ask for a higher rate of wages, and so increase the cost of the implements?—That would increase the cost to the manufacturers. That question was put to the manufacturers, and they said they would have to submit to such occurrences and take their chances.

99. Then, we can have no guarantee that that will not occur?—The only guarantee you can have is the integrity of the employers of agricultural-implement workers.

100. *Right Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] You say it would all depend upon the integrity of the employers and of the workers. It could be put beyond that, could it not, if we passed an Act and fixed the maximum price that should be charged, and said that if the manufacturers raised the price instead of the duty being 40 per cent. on the imported articles it should come down to 20 per cent.?—That is so. That has been explained.

101. Then, it is not necessary for the Legislature or the consumers to depend entirely upon the integrity of the manufacturers if they can regulate it by legislation?—That is so, providing that suggestion of theirs is adopted.

102. Can you give us the number of men employed in the manufacture of the articles that were enumerated by Mr. Mitchell as being manufactured in the colony?—No.

103. Can you get that information for the Committee within twenty-four or forty-eight hours?—Yes.

104. Could you get information as to the amount of capital that is invested in the buildings and the machinery where these employees are working?—That could also be obtained.

105. You have the number of men employed in Christchurch in the manufacture of these articles?—It has not been given definitely. It is about six hundred.

*Right Hon. R. J. Seddon:* You might give us the amount of capital that is invested in implements, machinery, and buildings in Christchurch.

*Mr. Mitchell:* We could get that information also by wiring. I may say in that connection that we understood Mr. Beaven had already imparted those particulars, and that it would not be necessary for us to give them. But if it is necessary we can get them.

*Mr. Alison:* I would suggest that we should also have a statement showing the prices of the several locally manufactured implements and the prices charged by the trust.