

92. Equal to the American?—I say it is equal because we manufacture it. But I will tell you this: that Mr. Andrews, of Andrews and Beaven, got some from us because he had run out of his usual supply, and he came afterwards and told me that he must congratulate us on the malleable castings turned out by us; that he had had English and American malleable castings, but he had never had them of such uniform quality as he got from us. And I believe that is right. We are making link chain that will stand 20 per cent. more strain than any American chain we have tried alongside of it.

93. Is it not a fact that all the agricultural machinery manufactured in the colony—the class of machinery that you ask for protection on—is heavier on the whole than the American? No. Some of it is. I cannot see that that is an accusation which is a fair one, because we could make machinery just as light as the American machinery, if it were the proper machinery to make for the country, but it is not. When a machine is required to be light I say we can make it just as light as the American article, and we do. Cooper and Duncan make drills as light as any American drill, and stronger. We also make spring-toothed harrows of exactly the same weight as the American article, but we do not make ploughs the same or disc harrows, because they are of no use of that sort.

94. If they are of no use why do the people buy them?—Well, I mean they are not of so much use. They are not so durable. The American machinery is made for a few years only. I went to Invercargill about five years ago, and I got drills of Duncan's in that, to my knowledge, had been sent out fifteen years before, and they were still good. I also got American drills in that had been out only two years, and one did not know where to start repairing them.

95. Do you think the farmer is sufficiently educated to distinguish between the suitability of a heavy machine and a light one for his work?—Yes.

96. Do you think he is educated enough to go for the machine that will save horse-flesh?—Yes, if he knows. But there are a good many farmers and mechanics also who think that because a plough is light it pulls lighter. But they are both wrong.

97. You are not afraid of the English manufacturers because they turn out heavy machinery?—That is why we are not afraid of English manufacturers.

98. Take the case of a mowing-machine. In England the farmers are not particular about a machine being fairly heavy, because they only cut down about 10 or 20 acres at a time; but here a farmer would go for a light machine because he would probably cut 300 or 400 acres at a time; he would save a lot of horse-flesh, and if, after cutting 300 or 400 acres, he threw his machine on one side, it would pay him?—Yes, but I can tell you this: if the farmer here wants a light machine he can get it. If a mower is too heavy the farmer has only to say so and he will get a lighter one. But supposing the farmer got the light machines from America and we were not carrying on business, he would not be able to get a heavy one. While we are here he can get whichever suits him. I might say that there are crops in Canterbury that American mowers will not cut.

*The Chairman:* That is all, gentlemen.

*Mr. Cooper:* Might I mention this? The Year-book for 1903 shows the number of New Zealand factories engaged in this industry as thirty-six, employing 528 hands, while in New South Wales, which was also a free-trade country, the number of factories was seventeen, and the hands 304. In Victoria, where protection prevailed, there were at that time seventy-one factories, employing 1,090 hands. I think there is a little object-lesson in that. The matter of twine was also mentioned. The same Year-book shows that in 1901 the hands employed in this industry numbered 222: but the duty was taken off the imported article, and the number of hands came down to 150.

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