

however, no encouragement has been given to the industry, and it is not a business proposition to develop these lines without protection from the Government.

1. *To Mr. Luke.*] I do not think the Government are bound by their contracts. The contracts, I understand, were cancelled on account of war conditions. When supplies are wanted now the Government call for tenders. There are repeated applications for supplies of paint from the Public Works Department and the Railways Department. We tender on every opportunity. I am certain that in many cases the tenders from the Public Works Department never reach us, because the business we have done with them for the last year would not represent the amount of paint that would give the Royal Oak Hôtel a couple of coats. We are supposed to get the same chance as other tenderers, but we do not get it. There is a prejudice against the locally manufactured material. We have given the Department samples of our material to compare with the best lines on the market. Various painters, decorators, and master tradesmen admit that the majority of our lines are equal to anything on the market, but we cannot get the Government Departments to take them up. With the City Council we have the same difficulty. We have shown them certain lines, but they buy a line at almost double the cost of ours. The City Council sent out tenders for various lines, but in the past twelve months our business with them does not amount to more than £50. I understand that the chief workman in the place is an old Englishman, and we cannot convince him that the locally manufactured article is equal to the imported. The hæmatite class of paint was made by people in the Parapara district forty years ago. It was ground by a crude process—in fact, when a tin was opened there was a sediment of 1 in. or 2 in., and it went off the market, as better lines were imported. We have overcome the grinding proposition, and can grind it now as fine as anything imported from England, America, or other countries. The prejudice against hæmatite was largely against the large percentage of unground material in it. We treat it by better means now. We obtained permission from Mr. Montgomery, of the Customs, to set up a still to experiment with turpentine and methylated spirits during the recent shortage, but so far we have not been able to work them up to a commercial proposition.

2. *To Mr. Hudson.*] All the railway-stations and all the under-gear of carriages are painted with oxide, but we never sell to the Department, in spite of the fact that we have written to it and gone to Petone to demonstrate that our products are equal to those they are using and cheaper. We only got a line of ground pumice from them because they could not get it anywhere else. Generally speaking, the chief lines of the paint trade that we manufacture are equal to anything imported. If an expert saw the two side by side he would report on the local production as favourably as on the imported article. Various painters who have been in the habit of using imported lines have taken to our lines, and use them only. Hæmatite can compete with the imported article, though for colour it is a question whether we can get as bright a colour as that of the imported article. For durability and fineness in grinding we can get our oxide up to anything that is imported.

3. *To Mr. Hornsby.*] Some of our prices are lower than the prices of the imported articles. It must be remembered that there is a difference between the Imperial gallon and the American gallon, the former being the greater. At the present time the market rate for the best imported paint is £1 5s. per gallon, and our price is £1 0s. 6d. Much of our material comes from Parapara, and there is no difficulty in obtaining it. There are about 2,000,000 tons of it on the surface. We purchase from Mr. Washbourn, who has an estate there.

4. *To Dr. A. K. Newman.*] Our putty has the same strength and durability as the imported putty. During the past week two large firms in the town have been unable to get their English supplies to hand, and had to fall back on our lines. We are willing to demonstrate the two lines side by side to the Committee. At present we employ ten hands, but we have been working short-staffed since the epidemic. With a fair share of the Government business we would have to employ more hands.

5. *To Mr. Craigie.*] I am not sure that the duty on mixed paints was put on to encourage local industry. Australia has invested in paint-factories about a quarter of a million sterling. We have to import the raw oil, the white-lead, and the pigments for colouring. Most of the general mixed paints are imported. There are a few lines of ochres and umbers that are obtainable locally. The hæmatite that the Railway Department use is not New Zealand hæmatite. About thirty or forty years ago they used it, but they fell away from it on account of the stuff not being properly ground. I know that manufacturers at Home make a speciality of some line, such as colours, varnishes, enamels, and so on, and the men who import no doubt know where they can get the best. Our articles, however, are admitted by many painters to be better than anything else that is used. I should like the Committee to see if something cannot be done to make the various Government Departments recognize the industry. When they can obtain goods at a better price and equally as good made in the country they should not buy foreign articles. I know that some years ago a man in this town made bad varnish, and anything like that cripples a new industry for a time.

6. *To Mr. Sidey.*] I would like the Committee to (1) induce the Government Departments to order more of our material, and (2) recommend increased duties. During the war we could turn out our paint cheaper than the imported article, but notwithstanding that we have not been able to make headway. Now that the war is over, unless we get encouragement and establish our industry, keen foreign competition will set in, and the local industry will have to die in time. If the duties we ask for are put on it would help us to a great extent. The duties in Australia have made the industry there, and they have not one factory but several factories.

7. *To the Chairman.*] It is a matter of expense to us to pay Professor Easterfield for his experiments. In that respect the Government might help us. Mr. Aston, of the Department of