

adjust themselves the importation will again be very large. The imports of curled hair from Australia for 1916-17 were 19,122 lb. During the same period there was also imported prepared hair for brush-manufacturing, termed "brush drafts," to the extent of 22,558 lb., or a total of 41,680 lb. A fair average price for that quantity would be 2s. 3d. per pound, which would equal £4,600. During the same period New Zealand exported to Australia 60,701 lb. of raw hair, of a value of £2,197. On that transaction there was a loss to the Dominion of about £2,300, and there were still 19,000 lb. of raw hair left in Australia for further profit. This process is also going on with Britain during normal times. Australia has a tariff of 30 per cent. on imports of curled hair and brushmakers' drafts. In this Dominion both these articles are duty-free. We suggest that a tariff similar to that of Australia be placed on the two items in New Zealand, but we recommend that white hair be duty-free, on account of the very small quantity in the Dominion being insufficient for the brush trade. We estimate that about fifty adults would be required to work up all the New Zealand hair into the finished article, instead of the raw material being exported to England and Australia and then returned in the finished state. Considerable quantities of curled hair, which is used chiefly in the manufacture of furniture and bedding, are imported from Australia and Britain. In Australia the tariff has led to the industry being firmly established. One factory in Melbourne employed thirty-eight hands. That New-Zealand-manufactured curled hair is as good as what could be imported is evidenced by the fact that the New Zealand Railway Department is using the locally made article, which is apparently giving satisfaction. It has used a considerable amount in the last three years. It uses it for cushions for seats. A weakness in our tariff is the fact that no encouragement is offered to the establishment of new industries in the present rapidly changing times. There is no legislative machinery, as in Australia, permitting a duty being placed on any article to enable a new industry being established between the periodical revisions of the tariff.

With regard to the brushware industry, we suggest that all woodenware for the trade be dutiable. Our own experience—and we are the largest users in the Dominion—is that New Zealand timbers can be used for all purposes of brush-manufacture. In our own factory we have five lathes at work. We ask that a duty be placed upon bristles that have already been manipulated in other countries. As the tariff stands at present there is nothing to prevent any manufacturer from having bristles-knots, ready for the brush, made by cheap labour, and all that has to be done is to simply put them together, thus displacing a considerable amount of New Zealand highly paid labour. We consider that the time has arrived when the industry in New Zealand should be placed on the same footing as recommended in Australia—namely, 40 per cent. tariff against foreign countries and 30 per cent. tariff on British goods. The Japanese are now starting the paint-brush industry, and under our present tariff any foreign country can make brushes up to a certain stage and send them here free. Some of these countries have cheap labour, while we employ a man preparing bristles who gets £6 per week. Faced with the unequal competition with Japan, we do not see how the brush industry is going to hold its own in New Zealand unless the wages and hours in Japan are raised to the same level as in New Zealand, or a prohibitive tariff is imposed. The only other alternative is to give up the manufacture of certain lines and import those goods from Japan, acting as merchants instead of manufacturers. We manufacture artists' brushware, but are considerably hampered by the fact that such brushes are free of duty. We ask for a duty of 40 per cent. and 30 per cent.

*To the Chairman.]* Unprepared bristles are now free, and we ask for a duty of 25 per cent. The duty on ordinary paint-brushes is 25 per cent., and that is sufficient, unless the goods come from Japan. The duty on the foreign brush is 37½ per cent., but even that does not keep the Japanese goods out. The duty against Japan should be 50 per cent. We have ninety hands in our factory.

E. E. STARK, City Electrical Engineer, Christchurch, examined.

I represent the City Council, which is the principal purveyor of the hydro-electric energy from Lake Coleridge. From that standpoint we are finding ourselves hampered in respect to the selling of electricity for purposes that will displace the use of petrol and of fuel. At present the whole of the electrical industry is dependent on the use of imported materials from England and the States that are charged a fairly high duty. The Government, in installing its plant at Lake Coleridge, had the advantage of any other purveyor of electricity by importing its materials for the plant free of duty. The City Council, in importing the machinery, motors, transformers, electric vehicles, or anything else, has to pay a fairly high duty. We could sell our electricity quicker and cheaper if we could have the duty removed from this very important enterprise. We want to be on the same footing as the Government—not only the Christchurch City Council, but all Municipal Boards, Power Boards, or the like. If the duty is removed we shall be able to sell current cheaper than at present.

J. A. FROSTICK, Boot-manufacturer, examined.

In 1915 and 1916 the Commonwealth Government had a Commission sitting. It presented about 360-odd reports; these were summarized in one volume, copy of which I have here. About two years ago a copy of each report was obtained. These were bound, and are now the property of the Canterbury Industrial Association. If after looking at the summary of these reports you desire to know the full text the association will, I feel sure, be pleased to lend you the volumes. I propose to give a few figures with regard to our industries. I know most about the shoe trade, and propose to show the progress of that industry during the last thirty years. I want to disabuse the minds of the members of the Committee, should they entertain the idea, that the industry is behind the times. The industry compares favourably with the same industry in other countries where