

to stress particularly the fact that Australia has £7 against us, and we have nothing against them. Australia gets its flax from New Zealand and works it up. It is a large buyer. Fully 50 per cent. of its trade is made up of flax binder-twine. The manufacturers of binder-twine have not made undue profits during the war. Prices have advanced owing to war conditions, but any manufacturer could produce a balance-sheet and prove conclusively that they have just about made their normal profits. The Hong Kong rope is not as good as ours.

*To Mr. Luke:* 2,000 tons of New Zealand fibre are used for local manufacture every year. The flax-mills generally are not turning out as good a fibre now as they did years ago. There is a great future for the fibre industry. If improved machinery could be brought into use there is no reason why we should not make shop-twine.

*To Mr. Sidey:* During the war the price of fibre was controlled by the Government at Home. If the Government give us what we ask we are agreeable that there should be a regulation of the price at which we sell. Prices must come down. Very little binder-twine comes here, but we are afraid that eventually it will.

*To the Chairman:* The wholesale price of "O" manila was 57s. per hundredweight before the war; to-day it is 122s. About 25 per cent. of that manufacture would be New Zealand rope and the rest manila. Gold Medal binder-twine before the war averaged 4½d. per pound, and to-day it is 9d. To improve the quality of the flax of to-day the grading standard should be amended, and New Zealand flax would then command a better price in the market. If more flax like the Blenheim flax were produced it would in many cases replace the manila.

Rev. C. P. BUSH KING, Anglican Minister, examined.

The Otago Winter Show, and more recently the war service rendered by the women of the Dominion on behalf of the War Contingent Association, the Red Cross Society, and allied causes, emphasize that there is a great deal of potential service that might be used in the interests of the Dominion. But I particularly wish to emphasize the following points: This is not an attempt to interfere with or compete with existing industries, nor is it an attempt to introduce sweated goods or sweated labour into the Dominion. It is really a suggestion for the continuance of the employment of the leisured classes who have the time and the inclination for this work, and also returned disabled soldiers who may not be able to resume former occupations, so that instead of inter-missive efforts for specific objects this work might be made continuous for the good of the Dominion. It would provide an outlet for the energies of the unemployed women of leisure and means, and I think that some place should be found for them in the system of our national economy. I believe the women would welcome some organized channel through which they could render more continuous service for the good of the State. The history of the development of industrialism reminds us that a large number of discoveries and inventions took place in the homes of the people, and that the subsequent development of industrialism meant the transference of women's labour from the home, where they worked as individuals, to the factory, where they worked collectively. The war has again emphasized the development of home-made industries, and we have heard no criticism of the effect that this had on the labour questions of the day. I am of the opinion that this should be continued and encouraged, for the following reasons: (1) It will give an organized outlet for a great deal of potential energy that might be used for the good of the Dominion; (2) a ready market will be found for such products, and that without much effort. With reference to No. 1, the war gave thousands of women and adolescents, especially those who previously had very little to do, the opportunity for working for the good of the Dominion. The enormous amount of material made and sold for the benefit of the War Contingent Association, and in the Red Cross shops, emphasizes what can be done in the Dominion for the Dominion. The war gave the women the opportunity of helping a worthy cause, and I believe that our hospitals, convalescent homes, and allied causes would benefit materially by the continuousness of these industries. These goods would be made not for the sake of the living, but for the benefit and upkeep of the causes referred to. A ready market would be easily found for such products, and if supply exceeded local demand trade might be opened up with countries like Egypt and England. When I was in Cairo some few months ago I saw a shop where Australian-made goods were being sold. Guaranteed home-made goods would find a ready sale, and the war has already taught the producer how to make and pack such goods. It would be necessary to establish local receiving-depots, also a clearing-house for the Dominion, and also sales-depots abroad. Such a clearing-house would serve two purposes: (1) It would enable the Dominion to estimate the questions of supply and demand, and (2) it would save the industry from being exploited. The producers might not be in a position to place a value on their goods, but a clearing-house could be used both for this purpose and to return the income to a central fund. It might be worked that from this central fund allocations would be made to the various charitable organizations to be decided upon.

A. C. BROAD, Otago Brush Company (Limited), examined.

I want to draw your attention to the necessity for the appointment of a Minister of Industries, or a Committee of Industries. I think it would lead possibly to the prohibition of the exportation of our New Zealand timbers which have taken hundreds of years to grow. Look at the laxness of the Government in this matter, and compare it with the action of the Australian Government in prohibiting the export of millet, of which they can grow two crops in a year! Before the war we could get millet from five countries. Now, because of the absence of shipping, it looks as if it can only be procured from Australia, and in Australia the broom-manufacturers, recognizing this, have influenced the Government to prohibit its export. The result will be that we will be unable to make brooms, and they will dump their manufactures into New Zealand at