

in up-to-date machinery and appliances, in which we were encouraged by the pre-war tariff throughout the Dominion—the chassis being duty-free, and 20 per cent. *ad valorem* on British imported bodies, thus making it possible for the local maker to turn out body work at a payable rate—to find that owing to some unknown reason the Dominion tariff has now been altered to 10 per cent. *ad valorem* on chassis and the same rate on finished cars. This is the surest means of destroying local enterprise, and a very unfair treatment to the body-makers throughout the Dominion, many of whom may have found it hard to get the cash to buy the machinery for its manufacture; and now that the bodies of the car complete can be brought in at the same rate as the chassis it means partial ruin to those engaged in the industry. In Australia this industry has made big strides in the industrial world, and until recently, when the importation of motor-car bodies was prohibited, the protection was, on single-seated bodies, £15 British, £17 foreign; while double-seated bodies were £21 British, £24 10s. foreign. Bodies with fixed or movable tops, as the limousine car, are £36 for British, £42 for foreign; chassis only, British are free and foreign 10 per cent. Now, we respectfully ask you to use your endeavour to induce our Government to give us an adequate protection, for which we have the right to look, and which we were led to understand would be granted, provided that we could show we were able to make the bodies in a properly finished and workmanlike manner; and this will, we think, be accepted by all competent judges. We are asking no special favours, but have a right to be protected, so that this industry would be payable and would keep a considerable amount of money in our Dominion.

*To Mr. Veitch:* The date of the Customs revision was 1907. We were in business before that.

*To Mr. Luke:* The adoption of the Australian tariff here would give us a big help. The help would be little enough with present labour conditions.

*To the Chairman:* A case came under my notice of a car which had been sold in the Old Country; a local body was put on, and the order was cancelled for the body at Home; £14 was allowed for the body, which it had cost £40 to build.

*To Mr. Hudson:* There is a prejudice against the local body in favour of the imported body as far as the money is concerned—that is to say, a man importing a certain line of chassis wants to grind us down to the lowest, and get the biggest price from his customer; we are squeezed from outside and inside, as it were. Getting in the chassis free of duty and putting it on the body of the car would get over the difficulty. As far as the local man is concerned, he would go for the local body every time if we produced it anywhere near the figure; the quality is superior here.

*To Mr. Sidey:* We can make the weight lighter in the case of the locally made article. There are three or four other similar manufacturing firms in Invercargill. Three of us are able to be quite independent of each other, and have a complete set of machinery. We import chassis, too, occasionally, and we sell the completed article—we did before the war, but with this duty coming on, and with the labour trouble, and the taking of our men for service at the front, the position is changed. The trouble is that we have to build to every man's design; we are not in the same position as builders in those places where there is a standardized body; we cannot standardize, because every customer has his own fad to carry out—that is the biggest handicap we have.

*To Mr. Forbes:* The industry has made wonderful strides in Australia; the imports have decreased.

*To Mr. Hornsby:* We are not at present hampered by royalties.

*To the Chairman:* I could not make a statement to the effect that there is any faking of invoices, or that the Customs are defrauded in connection with the importation of the motor-bodies. I would not care to say that. As to the saving in connection with the chassis as against the complete car, I could not say what it would be, but I should think it would be fully a third—say, 3 tons in measurement. I suggest that the whole tariff should be put on the body and not on the chassis, and we would complete the body. As to what the Government would do for revenue, I would suggest putting it on the tires, where there is no revenue now.

*To Mr. Craigie:* There is no factory for making tires in New Zealand at present. I would not like to put money into it without further protection; the trade is maintaining four shops here on jobbing principally.

A. HALLIDAY, Sawmiller and Farmer, examined.

I am of opinion that a Board of Inventions should be established. Practical men with a wide knowledge of various subjects should be members, and the Board should have power to give sympathetic advice to inventors, and to recommend Government monetary assistance, after going thoroughly into the matter before them, if deemed advisable. The Board should be so constituted that inventors would have every confidence in them that their ideas would be safeguarded against piracy whilst in the embryo state. Inventors whose ideas might be considered by the Board worthy of exploitation should have access to a Government workshop or laboratory. I suggest that the costs of patenting an invention in countries where it might be considered advisable should be borne by the Government. The patent should be taxed with the costs out of the royalties that might accrue. The Government should be the patent agents and be able to protect patent rights. The law at present requires amending to give greater protection from infringement. We have Government State insurance (fire and life), public trust machinery, and others—all for the protection (and most wisely so) of the public; and patentees should also be afforded facilities for similar protection. I can speak from a practical point of view. [Witness showed members of the Committee drawings of a patent spark-quencher.] A poor man may have a brilliant idea, and he has to go to a patent agent. My idea is that the State should take him by the hand and help him right through.