

It could not have been produced in New Zealand for double that money. If we could get hides manufactured here it would be a great industry. We get hides from Australia.

*To the Chairman.]* Utrecht velvet and furniture-plush could not be used for any other purpose than for furniture; they could not be used for dress materials.

G. C. RICH, of Strange and Co. (Limited), examined. (No. 36.)

The recommendation I wish to place before the Committee is that raw material used for the manufacture of furniture, such as locks, hinges, handles, glass movements, screws, and tiles, which it is quite impossible for many years to come to manufacture in this country, should be allowed, if of British manufacture, into this country free.

ARCHIBALD SMELLIE, General Manager, Otago Iron-rolling Mills (Limited), examined. (No. 37.)

Mr. Ringland and myself are on our way to America and the Old Country to get information about up-to-date machinery for our plant. Our company was formed in 1886. The business consists of iron and steel rolling. Our raw material consists of iron and steel scrap and hæmatite pig iron. We get no protection whatever on our finished product, consequently we submit that we should be entitled to get all rolling-mill machinery into the country free of duty. At present we have to pay 20 per cent. on British and 30 per cent. on foreign. Recently we imported electrical equipment for a steel plant, and although we made strong representations to get a drawback on the duty we had paid our application was turned down. During the war period our industry was taxed to the utmost to supply the wants of New Zealand, and during the last eighteen months we have been practically the only source of supply. During this period our prices were £5 or £6 per ton less than the English prices, showing what a benefit our industry has been to the Dominion. We had to purchase ships to carry our goods, which meant the diverting of capital which should have gone to the development of our industries. What we ask is that all rolling-mill machinery should come into the country free of duty, and that we should have a preferential railway tariff on locally manufactured goods.

*To Mr. Luke.]* There is not enough scrap iron in the country to keep one mill going. Assuming that we cannot obtain sufficient scrap we hope to get pig iron to make up the deficiency. If the Parapara iron industry were brought into being I do not think it would produce suitable iron for our purpose. We have seen an analysis of the ore. We import scrap.

JOHN RINGLAND, Manager, Iron and Steel Company of New Zealand (Limited), examined. (No. 38.)

I am interested in an iron and steel company which is a subsidiary company of the Otago Iron-rolling Mills Company. We take the products of the mills and distribute them. We are mainly interested in selling, and also assist largely in bringing over certain classes of raw material. At the present time there is a great shortage of steel. Recently we made arrangements to get steel billets from Sydney. We tried to get them over, but could not do so, and had to send the steamer "Stella" across. She is a small vessel and brought only 140 tons. We have to depend on Australia and America for steel billets. We would also like your Committee to give us assistance to get semi-finished materials here. There are a number of articles that could come in in a semi-finished state and which could be put together here if the duty were remitted. For instance, there is an article in the form of a water-heater, which is of great use to dairy-farmers. A firm in Sydney manufacture these heaters. Our company got over a number of the parts unassembled, and we had to pay the same duty on them as on the finished article, and therefore instead of selling it at the same price as in Sydney we had to put £2 on to the Sydney price. We get a concession in the tariff on the railway. There is a preference on 4-ton lots and over on certain sections of the railway. That, however, does not benefit the small purchaser. The preference ought to apply to any quantity. A man has to be in a big way to buy 4 tons of bar at the present time. We ask the Committee for (1) a concession in the way of a remission of duty on machinery we import in connection with iron-rolling, (2) a preference on iron produced in New Zealand as far as railway freights are concerned, and (3) assistance in getting a recommendation from the Minister of Munitions for freight space. There is also the matter of the semi-finished articles. I have already referred to the water-heater. It is sold in Australia for £3, and the duty here is 20 per cent. If we bring that article over in its unassembled parts we can fit it up here. It cannot be manufactured here. The duty ought to be removed to allow that work to be done here.

C. M. OLLIVIER, representing Canterbury Progress League, and Woolston Tanneries (Limited), examined. (No. 39.)

There was a meeting of the executive of the Canterbury Progress League, and I was asked to represent it before the Committee and suggest one or two matters. The first is that the Government should have a separate Department for industry and commerce, with a new Minister who has some capacity for the work. As far as industry in Canterbury is concerned, the conditions are extremely favourable, because of our electric-power supply. As a result, if we have a sympathetic Government, industries will follow in due course. Another suggestion is that the Government should make advances to industrial enterprise, provided they are satisfied of the *bona fides*, as they make advances on the land. It is submitted that money employed in industry will employ more men than money invested in land. The third point the league wishes me to bring forward is that of devoting an adequate sum of money towards scientific research work in connection with industries.