

also carried on. It would give a wonderful impetus to the Dominion. So much money has been spent on the West Coast line that it is expedient to get it completed, and then we can throw our energies into the completion of the South Island Main Trunk line. Goods consigned to Lyttelton have to be sent on to Christchurch and then sent back, and the consignee has to pay the two railages.

SATURDAY, 15TH FEBRUARY, 1919.

CHARLES HORACE GILBY, representing the Automatic Stamping-machine Company (Limited), examined. (No. 41.)

I wish to introduce to the Committee the automatic stamping-machine which is in use largely, and to ask the co-operation of the Committee in bringing the matter prominently before the Government with a view to its adoption in the same way that the Government have adopted the telephone. About £20,000 has been sunk in the development of the machine up to its present stage. If the machine were adopted by the Government it is probable that other countries would follow suit. At present the machine is under the control of the company, subject to certain limitations imposed by the Post Office Act. All possible safeguards have been introduced from time to time as points have arisen during the last ten or twelve years, and every direction in which the machine could be defrauded has been provided against and the trouble eliminated. The machine as we see it to-day has had about two years of practical trial throughout the Dominion in Government offices and elsewhere, and is absolutely perfect in its mechanism, and cannot be defrauded. The point I wish to bring before the Committee is this: At present the machine is controlled by the company; we put the machines in on the application of users, but we cannot afterwards get access to a machine unless we are accompanied by a Postal official. If anything goes wrong we have to go to the Postal officials and get one of them to proceed with our repairer to put the machine in order. This is a serious loss to the Department. It should not be necessary for two men to go and put perhaps a trifling thing right. If a telephone goes wrong some one is sent over from the Department and a defect is remedied at once. In the case of this machine the repairer is accompanied by an official to see that the repairer does not manipulate the dials fraudulently. If the Government had the thing in their own control this loss of time would not take place. My recommendation is that the Government should do with this machine as they do with regard to the telephone—that they should purchase the machines from the company and lease them out to holders. If the Government wish us to manufacture machines and supply them at a certain price we shall be happy to do so. If they wish to take over the manufacturing and the factory they are at liberty to do so. The company want the Government to have the benefit of the machine and to take it under conditions fair to them, and leave the company a free hand to deal with other countries with regard to the machine. The machines are in use only in New Zealand. The price is £32 10s. on installation. The promoters of the company are Canterbury men. They have sunk about £20,000 in the machine, and, in view of that expenditure, they will expect to get something in the way of a royalty from New Zealand. We do not expect to get the £20,000, because we have the whole world before us. Our factory is at Dallington, near Christchurch. The Government has been approached to take the machine over, but never formally. The thing has had ten or twelve years of proof throughout New Zealand, and we are selling more machines to-day than ever before. We are not prepared to submit to the Committee the price at which we are prepared to sell.

ERNEST MOSS, Manager of the Automatic Stamping-machine Company (Limited), examined. (No. 42.)

There would be a saving in the cost of manufacture if the Government took over the factory, because of the larger manufacture. The Government would have a large output, and could turn out 1,000 at the same cost as 250. The machines can be used in any town, large or small, wherever there is a post-office. Considerable saving results to the Government in the use of the machine, because they do not have to print the stamps.

CHARLES HORACE GILBY, representing the Efficiency Implement Company, examined. (No. 43.)

Another matter upon which I wish to speak is the production of improved agricultural appliances and the difficulty a patentee experiences in bringing an improvement before the users and getting it properly tried out and proved. I have here a model of an improvement on a lift for a plough which enables even a boy or girl of fourteen years to manipulate a three-furrow or four-furrow plough with the same ease as a strong man. The appliance was shown at the last show in Christchurch, and gained the silver medal. It would have had the gold medal, but that medal was awarded to an imported tractor. I wish to point out that at the present time inventors get little encouragement from anybody. Generally, the inventions fall into the hands of somebody who has a few pounds and who pays a man so much for his patent rights and exploits it, and if it turns out a success he gets everything, and the inventor gets nothing. I suggest to the Committee that a recommendation might be made by it to the Government that it should set up what I call a Board of Inventions, to whom should be submitted every new invention considered to be worthy of patenting, or that had been patented. The Board in its turn would appoint experts to thoroughly test the inventions and give a verdict thereupon. That is what they do in the United States. In this country the man who invents is not encouraged. I speak from experience. With regard to this appliance for ploughs, a girl of fourteen in this city drove a six-horse team with a three-furrow plough and the appliance attached, and drove it for a con-