

Australia took about half of the paint we made, and I have had many inquiries from there asking if any more could be obtained. We were also asked to give a quotation for a 100-ton lot for them, but being under option at the time we could not quote. A good trade could be worked up with Australia, where the good standing and fire-resisting of the paint makes it very suitable. We had many letters in appreciation of these qualities from there. A very important point in connection with successfully producing Parapara oxide paints would be an establishment for grinding them in oil and mixing ready for use. This would greatly extend the sale, as from their great covering-power and easy spreading nature they do not require the skill to apply that white-lead does. The cost of pigment for painting a building would not cost a quarter that of lead, and they would protect the wood or iron better and last longer. This would be of great advantage to farmers and settlers by enabling them to paint their buildings, gates, &c., at a small cost. With timber always rising in price it is worth considering the best means of preserving buildings. The superiority for the good standing and protecting quality of these paints is from the fact that the ironstone from which they are made has gone through all possible chemical changes from air and water, so that they are quite inert when exposed to the weather on a building and do not injuriously affect the oil like lead and other chemical made paints. They form an impervious coating of iron-oxide, on which the oxygen of the weather has no effect, protects the oil, and prevents the oxygen of the air from getting access to the wood or iron underneath. Painters object to using the paints in the dry-powder form. This is a reasonable objection, as, besides the time and trouble of mixing them when required, the paint is neither as good nor as easy to apply as when ground in oil. This emphasizes the necessity of having them made and put in as good and convenient a manner as the imported paint. I was frequently asked "How much of the Parapara oxide will it take to paint my house." As they could not give the number of square yards, my reply was, "For every hundredweight of lead that it will need 28 lb. of the oxide will be ample." The truth of this statement can easily be demonstrated. The actual cost of material to paint 1,000 square yards one good coat was (on my own house)—3 gallons of oil at 14s. per gallon, £2 2s.; 28 lb. Parapara oxide at 20s. per cwt., 5s.; total, £2 7s. These were both war prices, otherwise the cost would have been 16s. I am aware that there would be trade prejudice and the importing interest, and also the supineness of those having painting done to be overcome. A few demonstrations would soon show the superiority and cheapness of these paints.

To sum up: There is plenty of various-coloured oxide of iron of good quality which can be made into paints cheaper than the same quality as made in any part of the world; and I believe that a good export trade could be done with them in the dry powder state, but for consumption in New Zealand and a good deal in Australia it is essential that they should be ground in oil and be put up in a convenient form. If done in a proper businesslike way I am satisfied that there is a large and profitable industry to be made out of the iron-oxide paints that can be made from the various iron-ores at Parapara. I do not consider there is need of Government assistance in establishing this industry, as it is quite within the means of a small company or firm. If the Government would use them on railway-stations, trucks, bridges, &c., and whenever suitable, and prevent the substitution of the imported article for them, I think that is all that they need be asked to do.

To Mr. Craigie: The deposit is situated at Parapara. The standing-quality and the keeping of the colour can be put against any other paint that is made.

To Mr. Forbes: The syndicate bought out the paint-works. We would have gone on if they had not bought us out. We could start again, whether the leases are cancelled or not. Some of the colours I produce do not come off the lease.

To Mr. Veitch: A capital of £4,000 or £5,000 would be required to start the industry. It is not correct to say that the quality of the Parapara product has been deteriorating over a number of years. The quality was as good at the finish as it was at the start.

S. KIRKPATRICK, Jam-manufacturer, examined.

The matter which I wish to speak about is the duty on machinery necessary for canning. Machinery for industries in New Zealand, I think, is either admitted free or 5 per cent. is charged on it—or, at any rate, that is the position in regard to most of that machinery; but the duty on fruit-canning machinery is 20 per cent., and 10 per cent. preferential, which works out at 33 per cent. The present tariff was fixed at a time when none of this machinery was invented. The machinery has been invented in America since that time. I have tried for a number of years to get it altered, but the reply was that it could not be done, because it would interfere with the tariff. The machinery which we want would probably cost between £2,000 and £3,000. It is the latest machinery. The duty on that would be from £900 to £1,000. I want to get the best and latest machinery I can get. That is the only thing I want to bring before you. Unfortunately, a fire in our premises swept out the whole of our canning plant. We have put up a temporary building, and we will have to get new machinery, and that machinery has gone up greatly in price. Some time ago we imported apple-grading machinery. The apple-grading machinery used by orchardists comes in free. I imported exactly the same machinery, and I had to pay 20 per cent. on it as duty. We used it for the same purpose. We are short of labour—in fact, we cannot get hands.

To Mr. Hornsby: As to local machines for grading fruit, I may say that I only referred to grading machinery, but I refer to special machinery for canning fruit and vegetables. Two of our pea-podding machines were burnt, and we paid 30 per cent. duty on them. We paid the duty under protest. It is seed-cleaning machinery. We got the amount refunded. But the position was that because we imported it the Department charged 33 per cent. on it.