

N. McROBIE, Representative of the New Zealand Master Printers' Association, examined.

On behalf of the master printers of New Zealand I desire to make a recommendation to the Committee. When the Hon. Mr. Millar was Minister of Customs the trade approached him to get a tariff on printed stationery of 3d. per pound, or 25 per cent., whichever was the greater. Parliament inserted 3d., and the 25 per cent. was omitted. Under the tariff as it now stands a firm may send Home to have a catalogue printed, such as the one I produce. The paper used in it might be made in Scandinavia. The catalogue would bear only 3d. per pound duty. If the work was published in this country we would have to pay 20 per cent. preferential duty on that class of paper. In Australia on foreign printing there is a duty of 10d. per pound, or 40 per cent. *ad valorem*, whichever is the greater, with a preference given to the United Kingdom of 8d. per pound or 35 per cent.; and I suggest a tariff in New Zealand on the lines of that in Australia. To show the Committee that there is no need to go out of the country for catalogue and other work I produce samples of work done during war-time in New Zealand. It is work that is equal to anything produced either in America or the United Kingdom. [Samples produced.]

*To the Chairman:* While there is not much danger in the way of competition from the Homeland, there is danger from America and Japan. Some of the finest coloured work brought into the country has come from Japan.

*To Mr. Sidey:* If additional protection is given we would agree to State regulation of prices.

F. W. JONES, representing New Zealand Master Printers' Association, examined.

So long as wages in England remain as they are to-day I do not think there is fear of great competition, but there is fear that wages may be reduced at Home, because they have advanced very much more in proportion than the wages have advanced here. Wages in the Homeland to-day are, speaking generally, the same as they are here in New Zealand. I want to refer briefly to a special class of printing—the offset process—the machinery of which is very expensive. During the last six years I believe we have had some ten machines installed in New Zealand for turning out this class of work—work which had hitherto come from America and England. Unless some protection is given to us it is just possible that this machinery may be thrown upon our hands. The present protection is quite inadequate in comparison with the wages we have to pay and the large amount of money invested, which means £20,000 on the actual machinery without any of the subsidiary machines which are necessary for this class of work. There may be danger of Japan cutting into the market. Japan has in certain respects entered the field; and judging from her ability to imitate it is more than likely that there will be competition in this branch of lithography. For instance, many of the steamship companies' posters and plans have been produced in Japan, and numbers of these have been freely circulated in New Zealand. Some of the specimens produced are part of our process.

*To Mr. Hudson:* I suggest that this class of work should come under the general printing tariff. I agree with what Mr. McRobie has said in that respect.

R. L. STEWART, representing New Zealand Master Printers' Association, examined.

Our interests lie in an allied trade—namely, manufactured stationery. Other witnesses have spoken from the printers' side; I am speaking from the side of the manufacturers of stationery from the paper. For many years past the duty on manufactured stationery, account-books, &c., has been 25 per cent., with preference against foreign countries, making the duty 37½ per cent. That is the present duty. That was the duty when the wages of journeymen were £2 10s., whereas to-day they are £3 17s. 6d. per week, and the tariff is just the same. Japan is coming more and more into this market, and we cannot with the protection afforded us of 37½ per cent. compete with the Japanese. America is manufacturing these articles in large quantities. We suggest that an increase in the tariff against other than the United Kingdom would be beneficial to the trade here. With regard to manufactured envelopes, this is a growing industry in this country; and yet within the last four years there have been imported from America no less than from 100 to 150 million envelopes, which could very well be manufactured in this country. On one line of envelopes the Customs impose a duty of 7s. 6d. on the raw paper, or 33 per cent. on the manufactured article. We hold that this is a line of business which should be manufactured in the Dominion, and which can be manufactured here if we are given protection, and that can be done without an unduly advanced price to the public. We think the paper to be manufactured into envelopes should come in duty-free and not be subject to a duty of 5s. or 7s. 6d. per cwt., or £7 10s. per ton.

*To Mr. Hornsby:* At one period during the war there was a great shortage of envelopes. There is not a great quantity of our raw material comes from the Continent; we prefer the Scotch paper.

*To Mr. Hudson:* I suggest a duty of 40 per cent., and I would increase the duty on the foreign article beyond that. I think a duty of 50 per cent. would do no harm, because the manufactured article that would come in from England would keep the price stable in New Zealand, and it would keep out the foreign article of which we are afraid at the present time.

*To the Chairman:* I suggest that the foreign duty should be 50 per cent. and British should remain as it is—25 per cent. *ad valorem*.

*To Mr. Hornsby:* The duty in Australia in 1916 was 35 per cent.

*To Mr. Craigie:* What we are most afraid of is Japan, with its cheap labour.