

*Witness:* I desire to draw the attention of the Committee to another matter. I am not now speaking as president of the Industrial Association. On behalf of the corn-broom industry I wish to direct attention to the attitude taken up by the Australian Commonwealth with reference to our industry. The past two seasons have been disastrous to the cultivation of broom-corn in New South Wales, consequently all reserves have been depleted. However, through the rise in cost of millet from £1 5s. per ton to £5 5s. per ton, causing a corresponding rise in corn-brooms, the demand was reduced so that sufficient supply was obtainable. The Australian manufacturers succeeded in cornering millet. Subsequently they induced the Commonwealth authorities to place an embargo on the export of all millet. Having thus blocked New Zealand manufacturers obtaining the raw material, they then set agents to work to canvas New Zealand for orders for manufactured brooms, thus causing a considerable loss of business and employment to local manufacturers. Fortunately we had a considerable carry-over, otherwise the loss would have been greater. I would point out that through the working of the Australian combination forcing prices, together with the Government intervention, New Zealand customers have had to pay the great increase in prices during the past twelve months. On behalf of the manufacturers I would urge that the tariff should be so adjusted that the same rate be placed on corn-brooms imported into New Zealand as is placed on the same article when imported into Australia—that is, 40 per cent. against foreign countries and 30 per cent. against British goods; that Australia should be treated as “foreign” so long as the Australian authorities place New Zealand on the foreign list; or, in the alternative, I would recommend that the flat rate of 35 per cent. *ad valorem* be placed on corn-brooms.

W. COWPERTHWAIT, representing Cowperthwaite Cement Roofing-tile Company, examined.

I wish to put before the Committee the position of what has become a new industry in the Dominion, and I also desire to submit to you samples of our manufacture, and a sample of Japanese roofing. [Samples shown.] I commenced to manufacture these cement roofing-tiles some seven or eight years ago, but Marseilles then were so cheap that with New Zealand labour it was impossible to compete satisfactorily—it was not worth while. Directly there was a change in regard to iron I developed the thing further. I now hold a patent, and at the present time it is a success. These tiles are now “taking on” exceedingly well. I will put it this way: for every £1 in wages that I pay in my factory I have to use 10s. worth of cement. That means that it is helping another industry. At present my wages-bill is about £80 a week, and that has developed since the war on this particular line. My works are in the Mount Eden district. The tiles which I now show the Committee are everlasting, practically; they are weatherproof. I have patented this in New Zealand; I hold three patents; and I have applied for patents in Australia and in America. I am not asking for favours; but I put the position in this way: at the present time I cannot supply all that Auckland would take. For normal requirements I would need something like five times the amount of factory-room and number of men. The sample of Japanese roofing which I submit is of cement and asbestos. I have carried on this tilemaking at my own expense, and, as I have said, it is a success. I can always compete with the clay tile; but if outside tiles are to be dumped into New Zealand we would have to close down.

*To Mr. Veitch:* I have not touched on the question as to what protection would be necessary to keep the foreign article out. I simply desire to bring the position under the notice of the Committee. When such an article as we turn out is produced in New Zealand, I would like to ask why we should not get some support from the Public Works Department.

*To Dr. A. K. Newman:* The price of iron would have to come down a lot before I could not compete with it, and the quality of the other article would also have to go up a lot.

*To the Chairman:* The price per square would be about £4 10s. The colouring is Spanish oxide. I cannot get any other oxide. If any local manufacturer will give me an oxide which will appeal to the public I will buy that oxide; in fact, I would rather give more for the local product if it is good. If there were a tariff put on Marseilles tiles that would cover this, but I think the suggestion might with propriety be made by the Committee that the Government should use this article when it is applicable.

R. R. HUNT, representing R. R. Hunt and Co., examined.

The Committee has already had the question of Parapara iron-ore brought before it. I may say that some years ago I went to England with all the Parapara leases in my pocket. I failed to float a company because of the crisis which then existed. I may state that during the war I have received letters from abroad asking to be supplied with 3,000 tons of iron-ore from Parapara. Parapara hæmatite is wanted in Canada, America, and England; and the letters I have received state that even after the war is over the raw ore would be wanted. Of course, I had to reply that there was no means of shipping the iron-ore from Parapara. There is no wharf or tramway there. It is a matter of bringing down the ore to a deep-water wharf in Golden Bay so that an ocean liner could take in a thousand tons—the ore sliding into the hold of the vessel by means of gravitation. If that were done there would be a market for the product. I can substantiate my statement by letters which I have. With regard to paint, Mr. Washburn has given evidence before the Committee. I may state that I took 5 cwt. to England and submitted it to large paint firms there. It was suggested that it was valueless. I told them to try it; and I then had them running after me to get it; but it could not be produced. There was only a small plant available. The quality of the article has, however, been proved. When I came back from England I erected a house of my own and I had some Parapara paint used in connection with it. That paint can be seen now, and it is apparently as good to-day as it was when it was first put on. I think Washburn's iron-paint deserves protection. What I came principally to speak to the Committee about