

PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE.

On the 8th November, 1929, the House of Representatives agreed that a Select Committee, consisting of four members, be appointed to "inquire into and report upon the means necessary to increase the efficiency and promote the development of the following industries of the Dominion: Coach and motor-body building, engineering, flaxmilling and rope and twine works, fruit-preserving and jam-making, woollen-mills and clothing: the Committee to sit in the recess, and to report to Parliament on or before the 1st day of July, 1930. The Committee to consist of Mr. H. R. Jenkins, Mr. D. G. Sullivan, Mr. A. Harris, and the Hon. Mr. Cobbe."

The Committee proposed holding meetings in the four chief centres for the purpose of hearing evidence from those interested in the above industries. It was also their purpose personally to inspect representative factories in each class of industry. The investigation would include consideration of the following matters:—

- (a) Methods making for greater efficiency in plant and personnel.
- (b) Hours of labour.
- (c) Working-conditions.
- (d) Piecework and conditions thereof, and methods of wage-payment.
- (e) Efficiency of workmen, and output per individual.
- (f) Power employed, particularly in regard to the use of electricity.
- (g) Standardization.
- (h) Costing systems.
- (i) Efficiency in management and supervision.
- (j) Relations between employer and employee.
- (k) Methods of marketing.

The manufacturers would also be asked to submit evidence to the Committee as to what, in their opinion, are the difficulties with which their industries are faced—

- (a) Whether overseas goods of the class or description produced by the particular industry are being imported into New Zealand in sufficiently large quantities to prevent the proper development of the local industry.
- (b) Whether the overseas goods so imported are being sold or offered for sale at prices which are below the prices at which similar goods can be profitably manufactured or produced in New Zealand.
- (c) Whether, by reason of the severity and extent of such competition, employment in the manufacture or production of such goods in New Zealand is seriously affected.
- (d) Whether such competition comes largely from countries where the conditions are so different from those in this country as to render the competition unfair.
- (e) Whether in the case of goods exported from New Zealand, such goods are similarly faced with competition from countries with conditions so different as to render the competition unfair.
- (f) What other difficulties are preventing the industry from proper development.
- (g) What means should, in the opinion of the manufacturers, be taken either by themselves or by the Government to make the industry more efficient, and to bring about its proper development.
- (h) Tariff anomalies and effects.

The Committee had arranged a complete Dominion itinerary, commencing at Dunedin on the 3rd March, 1930. Owing to the resignation of Mr. H. R. Jenkins, the Committee could not function as authorized by Parliament. The inquiry as originally contemplated by a Select Committee had therefore to be abandoned. This announcement was received with some disappointment by the Manufacturers' Federation and on further representation being made to the Minister of Industries and Commerce, Hon. J. B. Donald, it was considered that a committee appointed under the Board of Trade Act could effectively undertake the investigation as originally planned, and submit a report to the Hon. Minister.

FOOTWEAR MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY.

The Department's previous annual report referred to the progress that had been made by the Committee appointed to investigate the footwear industry. Since the issue of that report, the Committee have held several meetings and have finalized their special report, which has been made available for the information of the manufacturers and workers engaged in the industry.

The present causes of depression in the industry are dealt with very fully in the report, so that there is no need to reiterate them here. The recommendations for the improvement of the industry are, however, of especial interest, and therefore are briefly summarized below:—

- (a) That "payment by results" systems be installed in factories to reduce unit labour-costs;
- (b) That factory layouts be analytically studied, and machinery and adjustment rearranged to reduce lost motions between operations to a minimum;
- (c) That routing of orders by a planning-clerk be established in factories in order to deliver work in correct sequence at least cost;
- (d) That the method of settling local differences between employers and employees should be improved, as suggested in the report;
- (e) That accurate detail costing of work is essential for manufacturing purposes, and that such methods should be installed;
- (f) That an experienced consulting management engineer be made available to those in the industry and other industries as recommended;