

has not yet been properly tested, but where struck is from 18 inches to 2 feet in thickness, the coal being of the most superior quality. The party of men who discovered this portion of the seam were at the time of their discovery engaged in prospecting for gold. A coal reserve of 500 acres has been protected to these men, to enable them to prosecute their discovery.

101. In case tramroads were made, would the difficulty of exit arising from the existence of a bar at Greymouth River not operate to prevent any large export?—I think not. A merchant in Greymouth has recently had a vessel built in one of the neighbouring colonies expressly for the Greymouth trade. The vessel only draws some  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet of water, and on her first trip she brought 420 tons of cargo to Greymouth.

102. What is the cost of the Greymouth coal in Hokitika and at Greymouth at present?—The cost is, at the pit mouth, 10s. per ton; at Greymouth, 16s. per ton; and at Hokitika about £2 per ton.

103. Are you acquainted with the coal deposits of the Buller River?—I have been at the Buller, but I know little of them.

104. Has the company at present working the Greymouth Mine any capital?—The Nelson Provincial Government are at present working the mine, but only on a small scale.

105. *Mr. O'Neill.*] What length of tramway do you consider would be necessary to connect the Grey River coal mines with the port?—The entire distance in a straight line is less than seven miles, and there would be no material deviation in the line.

106. *The Chairman.*] Is there any other observation which you would wish to make to the Committee?—I may state that a constant supply of water could be calculated upon in the large races alluded to in the first portion of my evidence, without the construction of large reservoirs, the water being simply diverted from the beds of rivers or creeks. I may also state that the money expended on water supply for the Victorian gold fields was to a great extent thrown away in the construction of large reservoirs, which were in a short time rendered useless by the accumulation of *débris* brought down by floods. Another cause which prevented many of these waterworks from being reproductive was, that the nature of the ground proposed to be sluiced was of so clayey a nature as to prevent sluicing operations from being successful, except the dirt had been previously puddled. That objection would not exist in any part of New Zealand, as the ground throughout the gold fields generally, can be readily sluiced in the ordinary manner, a very large proportion of it being sand and gravel. As an illustration, I may mention that in many cases on the Victorian gold fields, more especially in the Ballarat district, the red clay when put in the sluice, carried away the gold with it; and although the ground was proved to be payable when puddling operations were carried on, still, when the ground was washed in much larger quantities by sluicing operations, the greater part of the gold was lost.

FRIDAY, 29TH JULY, 1870.

Thomas Birch, Esq., M.H.R., in attendance and examined.

107. *The Chairman.*] You have had considerable experience as to brewing, malting, and hop-growing?—I have had experience in brewing and malting, but not in hop-growing.

108. Will you favour the Committee with your opinion as to the present position of the brewing trade—whether the article produced can compete with foreign manufacture?—Yes; an article can be produced equally as good as that imported; and as a proof that this is the case, there is very little ale imported into the Colony, especially to the Middle Island.

109. Do you think beer made in the Colony would bear transportation anywhere?—We sent bottled beer and stout, two years ago, to Great Britain, for the purpose of testing what effect the voyage would have upon it; and on the vessel's return it was ascertained that the article was of such a quality that it took the best judges to determine whether it was English manufacture.

110. *Hon. Mr. Seymour.*] Do you consider New Zealand, from its climate, to be suitable for making beer for the Australian Colonies?—I look upon the New Zealand climate as being the best climate in the world for making beer, and the water is good throughout the Colony.

111. *The Chairman.*] Has the existence of protective duties any effect on the development of this brewing trade?—Yes; it has. The imposition of a duty of £2 10s. on foreign beer has given an impetus to the Colonial trade.

112. *Hon. Mr. Seymour.*] Could it stand alone now if that duty were taken off?—I am not prepared to answer that question. I may state, from experience, that in the Province of Otago the people prefer the Colonial ale to the English; it is not so heavy or intoxicating.

113. *The Chairman.*] Do you consider that the existence of a protective duty is essential to the permanent continuance of this trade?—I believe that, although it is necessary at the present time, it will eventually become unnecessary.

114. Have you any special difficulties to contend with in your trade that do not operate as against the foreign brewer?—We have the difficulty of skilled labour and the increased rate of wages to contend with, as against the foreign manufacturer. The absence of accumulated capital is another element of difficulty.

115. Do you find any difficulty in obtaining skilled labour?—No, we can get maltsters, coopers, and others; the only difficulty is the high rate of wages.

116. Do you manufacture your own malt?—We do.

117. How do you find the Colonial barley adapted?—It is well adapted. The country is well adapted for malting and for the growth of barley, but nothing but the best barley should be sown; I would recommend Chevalier barley.

118. To what do you attribute the large importation of foreign malt?—To the fact that brewers hitherto have been prejudiced against Colonial malt. As a proof that brewers are beginning to recognise the fact that they can get the same extract from Colonial malt as English malt, the brewers in the Province of Otago are erecting malt-houses.

119. Do you find Colonial malt to be cheaper than English malt?—Yes, at least 40 per cent. cheaper. The price of English malt fluctuates; sometimes it is 10s. and sometimes 12s per bushel. Colonial malt can be manufactured at 6s. a bushel.