

For growing oats, the climate of Otago is most suitable, and, with care in the choice of seed, the produce will, in most parts of the Province, be excellent. There is an abundant supply, and a great quantity is shipped every season to Australia.

The climate is also very favourable for growing barley, and first-class samples are offered, suitable either for milling or malting. This also is extensively shipped to Australia.

I have had considerable experience in malting, and was amongst the first to commence this industry in Dunedin, having erected brewing and malting premises in 1861. The malt required for brewing in Otago can now be fully supplied by the Dunedin maltsters, and English malt will soon be unknown here.

There is an abundant supply of skilled labour required for milling and malting, at from 10s. per day.

The grinding power of this Province, which is capable of manufacturing for upwards of 100,000 inhabitants, is forty-four pairs flour stones, capable of producing over fifty tons of flour in ten hours, and which could be doubled by working extra time, and would therefore grind, without increase of machinery, for over 200,000 people.

Twelve pairs oatmeal stones, which can grind over 2,000 bushels of oats per day, or equal to twenty-five tons of oatmeal in ten hours. This also could be doubled by working extra time, and then would be equal to five times the quantity consumed in New Zealand. At present the mills are not working a tenth part of time.

Six pearl barley mills, which can produce three tons per day of twelve hours. As, however, there is a very limited demand, the mills are seldom working.

Last year I manufactured over 43,000 bags of grain, and exported a good quantity all over New Zealand; also to Australia. I, however, sustained great losses in competing with Australia and California, as a greater preference was given to their flour. I will only grind about half that quantity this year, being compelled to supply only provincial demand.

Capital required for properly carrying on the milling business, £10,000.

My manufactured produce has given general satisfaction, both locally and in the other Provinces of New Zealand generally, but, as before mentioned, the foreign flour is preferred to provincial. There being no other market open, I think the proposed duty will be the only remedy to give us a market, and enable us to hold our present population, as the want of an outlet for produce is causing farming to be neglected, and is therefore turning a great number of men out of employment, and they are consequently leaving the Province whenever an opportunity offers.

I have, &c.,
G. DUNCAN.

The Chairman of Joint Committee on Colonial Industries.

No. 7.

SIR,—

Auckland, 9th August, 1870.

Replying to your circular letter of 1st instant, requesting us to furnish you with any information in our power, with a view to develop the producing and manufacturing resources of the Colony, and especially having reference to the business of tanners and leather manufacturers, with which we are connected, we beg to state:—

That the principal impediment we have experienced in our business has been the introduction of Australian leather, boots, and shoes.

That the business is suitable to the circumstances of the Colony is proved by the fact that it has existed and enlarged its operations in the face of Australian importations, that it is still progressing, and can be extended so as to supply the full wants of the community, save and except, for the time being, the dearer and finer kinds of leather, such as French calf, and enamelled and japanned leathers. We have repeatedly exported to England parcels of leather tanned in this Colony, and it has left a satisfactory result. We anticipate an export on a larger scale than hitherto.

The raw material employed is hides and bark, both of which are obtainable in this Province. The latter, since the opening of the Thames Gold Fields, has not been procurable in such large quantities as formerly, thereby necessitating the importation from Australia and Tasmania.

The supply of provincial bark is, only for a time, partially suspended, and will develop itself again, very probably during next Spring.

The local barks referred to are towai and birch. The latter we have no difficulty in procuring in any quantity, but the former is the better bark, and the description that has experienced the shortness of supply.

We have experienced no insurmountable difficulty in obtaining the skilled labour required.

The business can be extended to meet the requirements of the whole Colony in all respects where leather is used, principally in boots and shoes, saddlery, and harness.

A large capital is required for successfully carrying on the manufacture of leather, and placing the same in the market in the form of articles suitable for private use. Nothing short of £10,000 would suffice to perfect the arrangement for plant, machinery, and a full working stock of materials. A much smaller capital would suffice where the operations are confined to certain branches only, such as tanning, currying, closing uppers, making boots, saddles, harness, &c., being all different branches which are frequently worked separately and distinct from each other.

We are of opinion that the interests of our business would be best promoted by excluding the importation of all manufactured articles, and by placing a reasonable duty upon all unmanufactured leather of, say, 2d. per pound; this to include sole, as well as kip, and other kinds.

Probably, the Committee would not go so far as to recommend the total exclusion above referred to, but a duty of 5s. per foot on all boots and shoes, and 4s. or 5s. per foot on harness and saddlery, would very soon exclude all goods suitable for manufacture by colonial industry.