

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

THURSDAY, 8TH AUGUST, 1872.

The Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL attended the Committee, and stated as follows:—

1. A sugar factory capable of producing 800 tons of sugar per annum would cost for the first outlay about £15,000. It could only be worked to advantage about four months in the year; because the roots out of the ground lose their saccharine matter by evaporation, and after being four months in store, are not worth working at all. In France the sugar factories are worked from September to January. The crops should be sown in rotation, and the roots taken up before the frosts set in, as the frosts destroy the saccharine matter. The best seed is to be obtained in Germany, for in Germany the duty is fixed by the weight of the root; in France by the result obtained in sugar, so that it is to the interest of the producer in Germany to produce plants which yield a high percentage of sugar. I saw in France a factory, but it was not working at the time. In France the roots produce from 8 to 10½ per cent. of sugar, and in Germany from 12 to 14 per cent. I consider that £5,000 should be offered as a bonus for the first 800 tons of sugar produced in New Zealand. Of course skilled labour would be required, and the services of a first-class chemist would be also, whose salary would probably be about £700 per annum. About one hundred hands would be required to work the factory. The factory must be situated where labour would be easily obtainable. The portion of the root of the beet which is in the ground gives a much larger proportion of sugar than that above the ground. In Germany beet is worth at the factory about 25s. per ton. One acre will yield about 1 ton of sugar. Twenty gallons of proof alcohol can be obtained from one ton of beet. Alcohol would pay much better than sugar if protected. The sugar from beet is equal to the best cane sugar. In England it is worth £45 per ton, and molasses about £30. The pulp might be used for making paper, and the spirit distilled from the beet is worth about 2s. per gallon in bond in London.

Mr. KRULL, Consul for the German Empire, in attendance.

2. Witness stated that he had forwarded to the Berlin Government in February, a memorandum showing what action the Joint Committee for Colonial Industries had taken in regard to beetroot, and stating that the Government of New Zealand were prepared to carry out the recommendation arrived at by the Committee. That the receipt of his despatch had been acknowledged, and a further communication on the subject promised.

3. Mr. Krull further stated that he had written at the same time to two mercantile firms, one in Berlin, and the other in Hamburg, and had been advised that the papers had been forwarded to the Magdeburg and Halberstadt districts, where the culture of sugar beet is brought to its greatest perfection. No definite answer had arrived, but he expected to hear fuller particulars by the next mail, when he would immediately communicate with the Chairman of the Committee.

4. Mr. Krull also informed the Committee that a parcel of seed from the three recognized best kinds of beetroot, ordered by direction of the Committee, had just been landed, and that he would forward it to Dr. Hector this day for distribution.

FRIDAY, 9TH AUGUST, 1872.

Mr. KEBBELL in attendance, and examined.

5. In answer to questions, Mr. Kebbells stated that all he knew on the subject of coal was already reported at a previous Session of Parliament. He had, at the same time, given all the information he was possessed of in regard to flax; about beetroot sugar he did not know anything.

Hon. Mr. WILLIAMSON examined.

6. Witness stated, in reference to the coal mines, that the quantity now being delivered from the mine was not at all equal to the demand. They were not in a position, owing to natural obstacles, to deliver the quantity required. Touching what Mr. Kebbells said of the New Zealand coals burning furnace bars, he was of opinion that that arose from an imperfect knowledge of the best mode of using the coal. He had found that light firing, with close bars, prevented anything of the kind—at least that was the experience of those who used it in Auckland; and it would be wholly used there if they could get it in sufficient quantity. The average price in Auckland was from 21s. to 24s., and about the same at the Thames; at the pit it would be about 8s. per ton less. The price of the slack was only 8s. at the pit. Most of the steamers along the coast use the coal; some, from the absence of a constant or regular supply, object to alter their furnace bars to suit the coal. The steamers running to the Thames always use the coal when they can get it. Some of the stationary engines on the gold fields use the slack, and the flour mills use nothing else.

7. *The Chairman.*] Have you any idea of the price and quantity of Newcastle coal imported?—The price of Newcastle coal in Auckland has been very much reduced from the effects of competition with the local mines. For some years previous to the opening of the mine in Auckland, coals averaged 37s. 6d. to 40s. per ton; since then the average cost has been 30s. The general price of Newcastle coal is about 26s. to 27s. I believe the Province of Auckland has saved more than £50,000 since the Kawa Kawa Mine was opened in the difference between the price now paid and that formerly paid for imported coal.

8. *Mr. Murray.*] Do you think sea-going steamers generally will use it?—I cannot say that they would, but all our own steamers would.

9. *Hon. Colonel Kenny.*] Is there not some difficulty in the matter of stowage?—I have heard it spoken of; the general opinion is that it would occupy 2½ to 5 per cent. more space.

Hon.
Mr. Campbell.
8th Aug., 1872.

Mr. Krull.
8th Aug., 1872.

Mr. Kebbells.
9th Aug., 1872.

Hon.
Mr. Williamson.
9th Aug., 1872.