term of years certain suitable pieces of land on the railway reserves at a low rent. This would also benefit the railway-embankments in wet places. I cannot purchase osiers grown in the colony. At present the whole colony is supplied with osiers from England and Tasmania. It takes two years to obtain a crop of osiers of any use, and four years before a payable crop is obtainable. Large quantities of baskets are imported from America free from duty: if a duty were imposed upon baskets it would tend to the fostering of our trade, and eventually the consumer would not pay any more for baskets than at present. I can compete with the baskets imported from England even now. I made some coal-baskets last week, upon which I only put the bare cost of materials, and labour at 8s. per day. I went round to the ship-chandlers for orders, but I could not sell one of them, because a ship from Newcastle, New South Wales, landed a number of baskets of no better quality than mine, and at no cheaper rate. Formerly I had good orders for these kind of baskets from local ship-chandlers. Had the number of baskets imported been made in Auckland it would have employed one man for eight weeks. One firm imported about ten tons of round cane from China, which is used as dunnage on board tea-ships. They asked me to give a quotation; but I could not purchase, as I could obtain no orders for baskets made from that material.

If perambulators, which are now duty-free, were charged 20 per cent., we could compete with the prices now charged for the imported ones. Perambulators are packed with hair, flock, &c., which reduces the freight to a minimum. Therefore, if a duty was charged the consumer would purchase from us instead of from the importer, who at present derives all the benefit.

There is a large number of manilla kits imported from England duty-free. If a duty were imposed upon these manilla kits it would enable our consumers to purchase flax-made kits at a cheaper rate than the manilla imported ones, and equal in quality. HENRY RAFTON.

No. 44.

Extract from a Newspaper forwarded by Mr. A. HILLS, Island Farm, Manurewa.

The Production of Wattle-bark.

THE production of wattle-bark having attracted notice in the House of Parliament, some information may be useful. We have gleaned it from the report of the Wattle-bark Board of Inquiry, appointed by the Victorian Government in January last, and to which Mr. Moss referred in bringing the subject before the House, and partly from the memorandum on the subject supplied to the Government by Professor Kirk, of the Wellington College. The report says that any figure above £5 per ton, guaranteed for a few seasons, would have the effect of causing many holders of land to turn their attention to wattle-growing as a regular occupation. This view was taken by nearly all the owners of land who gave evidence before the Board. The age at which trees may be stripped with the best advantage has been determined at from five to ten years. At the present time there are tracts of Crown lands on which the wattle flourishes luxuriantly, although the soil is so poor as to be practically valueless either for pastoral or agricultural purposes. The Board also notice that many extensive areas of land in the districts specified were leased for grazing purposes at a nominal rent, and it was often in patches most barren of grass or surface-vegetation that the finest specimens of wattle trees were met with. On poor lands the wattle grows as readily as grass, and in many instances more so.

There are three species of acacia from which the bark is derived: the first in point of strength being *Acacia pycnantha*, more commonly known by the several names of the broad-leaf, the golden, and the green wattle; next, if not equal in strength, certainly more common in Victoria, is the *Acacia decurrens*, or black wattle; the third is the *Acacia dealbata*, or silver wattle. The *Acacia pycnantha* possesses a thick, glossy leaf, the bark being thinner and smoother than on either of the others. Its bark is superior to any other, but the habit of the tree is not so advantageous, being of a slower growth and not attaining such large dimensions as the black and silver species. For tanning purposes the silver wattle is generally discarded; but it is nevertheless occasionally stripped and mixed with other barks. It grows freely on the sides of creeks and rivers, and on wet, marshy soils; and the bark is weak in tanning material. The black wattle is of vigorous, robust habit, and for commercial purposes is equal to the broad-leaf species. It is in general demand from the rapidity of its growth and the ease with which it can be stripped during the proper season. The Board consider that for all practical purposes it is desirable to cultivate this species, either alone or with the broad-leaf wattle. The report also says that the wattle grows readily in almost any soil, and it requires so little attention as to make its general cultivation extremely profitable. The wood of the wattle is of considerable value for industrial purposes. It can be readily utilized for cask-staves, axle-spokes, for axe and pick handles, and many other articles requiring wood of tough, durable grain. When dried it forms the best firewood known for culinary and all other domestic purposes, also for ovens and furnaces. It emits a clearer and greater heat than any other firewood; and it may be anticipated that, as facilities for transit increase, it will be brought more into requisition than at present. The wattles also may be utilized for fencing, the trunks making top rails of the best description. In addition to the value of the bark and wood a good profit may be derived from the sale of the gum which exudes from the trees. Under such a system of cultivation as the Board desire to see established, the collection of gum could be made an easy and remunerative employment, more especially when the trees are punctured to increase the yield. The Board also state that the bark obtained from trees growing on a limestone formation is greatly inferior in tanning to bark obtained from any other district, although the climate was in every respect calculated to produce better results. From bark grown within five miles of the Buchan River, 42 per cent. of tan-material was obtained, while the bark taken from the limestone formation on both sides of that stream only yielded 29 per cent. The bark in each case subjected to analysis was of the black or feather-leaf species. The bark of the golden or broad-leaf species was also tested, and its strength exceeded all the other species by 55 per cent. Respecting the growth of