

facturer. In order to be as brief as possible, I shall confine my remarks to my own personal experience of fourteen years in the trade in New Zealand. I have at present all the requisite machinery to carry on all the branches of the above-named business. These machines comprise cutting-machine, ruling-machine, numbering-machine, perforating-machine, sewing-machine, large presses, and a large variety of tools—in short, I have sufficient machinery to keep twenty men employed had I only the work to do; but, unfortunately, this machinery is allowed to stand idle three-fourths of the year, it being only used for supplying orders for lines which the importers run out of, or when time will not permit them to send abroad. Whereby, instead of affording remunerative labour for fifty men, which my own trade-connection alone would keep going, I can only find work for myself and two boys; and, in order even to be able to do that, I am obliged to have all the requisite machinery sufficient to keep twenty men in constant employment. Such is the experience of our trade in New Zealand, which is well represented in every centre of importance throughout the colony. What, then, it may be asked, could be expected from an imposition of duty to foster this industry? The answer is, that all ruled account-books, day-books, ledgers—in fact, all ruled books and papers, and many varieties of stationery, representing many thousands of pounds in labour, would be and could be manufactured in the colony. What remedy, then, is proposed? Why, this: that the Government should steady the industry for a few years by imposing a substantial duty—say the same as in the United States, of 35 per cent.—on all ruled books and papers, and should also relieve the articles used in the manufacture, as far as that can be done without conflicting with the legitimate claims of other industries. These reliefs under the existing tariff I shall presently point out. If such were done, the consequence would be that bookbinders would at once feel justified in largely increasing their staff, and would soon be found manufacturing all account-books, such as ledgers, day-books, cash-books, and all kinds of ruled paper, by the hundred instead of by the single copy, thereby greatly decreasing the cost of manufacture, and thus at once being enabled to sell at a much lower price. A strong competition would soon arise among them, which would also strongly tend to reduce the price of manufacture to a mere minimum. In fact, I would guarantee that, once the trade was fairly and properly established, it would, without protection, stand against all outsiders, as the rate of wages here is not very greatly different from the Home or American rate, and the slight difference would be met by the freight from these countries and the length of time it takes for the delivery of goods on our shores. To show you the impossibility, under existing circumstances, of the local bookbinders competing with the imported goods, I will give you an example from my every-day experience: A merchant requires a specially-ruled ledger to suit his business; the stationers only keep in stock the regular ruled patterns; therefore he is obliged to come to the “local binderies” to get his ledger made. Now, in order to manufacture this one book, a special pattern has to be designed at a considerable loss of time, and that pattern, once completed, would rule a thousand ledgers as easy as one. After the pattern is ruled it then has to go through the whole stage of binding—a process which consists of several branches of the trade, each man being kept constant at his own particular branch—and the book is passed through these various stages before it is complete. The work completed, the book is sent to the merchant. Now, if ever that merchant requires another ledger of the same pattern, he tears my pattern out of his book, and sends it Home to London, to be manufactured there and sent out again, ready-made, to him in New Zealand; and, as nearly all the importers act on the same principle, I should not be justified in making up other ledgers of the same pattern and keeping them in stock for persons in the same line of business as the original orderer, because they would either compel me to take whatever price they chose to offer, or have them lying on my shelf for ever. Thus you can at once see how impossible it is to make this first-class industry ever prosperous in this colony if the Government continues to allow such unfair conduct on the part of our importers to continue. Here is the importer who earns his living and supports his family by selling us his imported ready-made goods; and if ever he should require an article for his own particular business, rather than give those people from whom he is gaining his wealth the work to do, he is found sending his money out of the colony, and getting it made elsewhere. There is just one especial point to which I wish to direct the attention of Government—it is, that if they will only foster and protect this trade until it is thoroughly well established, it will be found to give good employment to some hundreds of good men in the trade, many of whom have been induced by the Government to come out to New Zealand, but, unfortunately, when they arrived had to work on roads, &c., there being no employment for them in their own line of trade; and, if once thoroughly established, I am quite convinced that the consumer would not have to pay more for the colonial-manufactured article than he does at present for the imported article. Coming in the last place to the tariff as it stands at present in relation to my business—I wish particularly to point out that the duty on bookbinders’ ruling-inks, red and blue, which are not and cannot be manufactured in the colony, owing to the smallness of the demand, should be repealed, and such inks should be admitted free; also, the duty of 15 per cent. on bookbinders’ leather, which is of a finer quality than colonial tanneries manufacture, and therefore must be imported, should be abolished. Trusting that these remarks will aid you in your labours, and that you will see your way to foster and encourage the bookbinding and paper-ruling industry—an industry which might, if properly fostered, become one of the chief in New Zealand, and would probably furnish, through the very dullest of times, constant employment to hundreds, if properly worked,

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM LEYS.

BRUSHWARE.

No. 47.

Mr. LOUIS HENLY to Secretary, Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 14th April, 1880.

In connection with circular letter of the 5th instant *re* local industries, I would most respectfully submit as follows:—