

*Mr. Charters* added that an experiment had shown that the imported pipes absorbed much more water than the local ones.

*Mr. Allan* thought the local firm should have competed successfully for the drainage contract. An Auckland firm had actually sent a lower tender than the importer, but it had been received too late.

*Mr. Bain* : That shows that the industry can stand alone, without artificial aid.

*Mr. Allan* : So it seems, unless difficulties are purposely thrown in the way of the local firm.

*Mr. Stevens* : But the Drainage Board tender seems to have suited the Auckland firm.

*Mr. Allan* did not know all the facts about that. If there had been a duty of 10 per cent. the local firm would have got the contract.

*The Chairman* : Would they not have added 10 per cent. to their tender?

*Mr. Allan* thought not. Protection would cause more competition and not raise the cost.

In reply to *Mr. Burns*, *Mr. Allan* said the progress of the local industry had compelled the importers to lower their price.

*Mr. Charters* said the local tender undertook to deliver the pipes wherever they were required, while the imported cargo was to be delivered in one lot at the drainage depôt. Thus there was really very little difference between the tenders.

*Mr. Stevens* asked *Mr. Allan* what was the best way of ascertaining whether the addition of 5 per cent. to the import duty on various articles manufactured locally had increased the price of local manufactures.

*Mr. Allan* said the duties did not operate immediately. In leather goods the result of the increase had been that uppers were manufactured here and sold as cheaply as before. Some of the material for this manufacture was imported, but much material manufactured in the colony was also used. Calf was a French specialty, but there was a constant demand for all that could be produced in the colony.

*Mr. Charters* said that the increase of duty had not raised the price of locally-manufactured woollens; on the contrary, the demand for them had increased so much that the manufacturers had actually lowered the price, and made preparations for largely-increased production.

*Mr. Allan* spoke of the leather goods trade generally. His business had been originally an import business entirely. As the duties grew it had turned into a manufacturing business. A hundred and seventy-two hands were now employed in it, and 500 in Christchurch. The goods were now sold at from 10 per cent. to 12½ per cent. less than before the duties were imposed.

*Mr. Burns* : Then that industry can stand alone?

*Mr. Allan* : Now it can; but it would not have grown up without the duties, while the cost to the consumer has not increased.

*Mr. Bain* : What is the rate of wages?

*Mr. Allan* : Girls, learners, from 8s. to 25s. a week, and a few as high as 30s. Boys are taken as apprentices at from 8s. to 16s. a week, with a bonus of 15 per cent. for what they make over and above their wages. The rest is done by piece-work. The men earn from £2 to £4 per week. The best men all like piece-work. In England the men would earn from £1 10s. to £2 10s., but they would work longer. Our men mostly work about fifty-two hours a week, or nine hours a day. I am not in a position to state as a matter of fact whether in other trades than mine the manufactures were increased in price by the increased duty. The Association hoped the duties that had been abolished last session would not be reimposed. The removal of the duty had appreciably helped the industries.

*Mr. Charters* wished to speak about cement. A company was about to be formed to work the Oxford chalk. The question was, whether the Government should be recommended to grant a bonus or to put on a small duty.

*Mr. Allan* mentioned the desirability of planting the railway reserves with hickory, ash, elm, and other trees used in manufactures.

*Mr. Stevens* asked whether the coach-builders could compete with the importers now that the duties on their materials have been remitted, and the duties on the imports increased?

*Mr. Allan* thought not, but the changes had not operated long enough to show results.

*Mr. Allan* drew attention to the necessity for simplifying the patent laws. There should be some system by which any person could get information at any of the centres, and could apply personally instead of being obliged to employ a solicitor.

*Mr. Allan* spoke of the manufacture of twine such as was used in the reapers and binders. Five hundred tons of twine would be needed for Canterbury alone if the machines came into universal use. Twine is charged 15 per cent., which is sufficient; but wire is admitted free. Twine also is admitted free under a Commissioner's decision as a substitute for wire. The local manufacturer will eventually be able to compete successfully, but not for a year or so. Further information would be forthcoming from the twine-makers themselves.

*Mr. Charters* said he hoped the straw-binder would do away with the twine-binder. The canvas aprons and elevators might be made in the colony; but the materials are charged 15 per cent. *ad val.*, equal to 16½ per cent., while the articles themselves are admitted free as machine extras.

*Mr. Allan* considered this an important matter, and worthy of consideration.

*Mr. Allan* thought there was a chance of the manufacture of linseed-oil springing up. It was a farmer's question really. Ninety thousand gallons of linseed and 18,000 gallons of rape oil were imported last year. There would be no difficulty in producing it in the colony. *Mr. Murphy*, secretary of the Agricultural and Pastoral Association, was about to deliver a lecture on the subject, and a copy should be forwarded to the Commission.

*Mr. Charters* gave some information as to the manufacture of flax-pulp for paper-making, and hoped to be able to give further particulars later on.

*Mr. Allan* : *Mr. Gray*, of the Canterbury College, is about to give a lecture on cement. He had mentioned that many people often brought minerals, &c., to the College for analysis, and he thought it would be worth while to afford readier facilities for supplying information.