

of them. I have brought a specimen. These are presented to the local firms for the sake of the advertisement free of charge.

192. How would it be possible to assess the duty upon a thing that comes in free, or to prevent this being done?—We have come to the conclusion that it is a matter which might be left to the Commission to recommend some means whereby these billheads might be kept out. The cost of production at Home is from 4s. to 6s. per thousand, and, I take it, the Government would ascertain that, and assess the duty accordingly. At the present time this is a most serious matter.

193. *Mr. Tanner.*] Would it be possible to get at this by some regulation through the Customs that no package should be allowed to contain anything other than what it is described as containing in the invoice?—Yes; that would give means whereby it could be got at.

194. That would render everybody liable who attempted to import other matter. Is it not a tolerably well-established practice in importing patent medicines to pack quantities of printed matter in with them, which is afterwards circulated through the colony?—Yes.

195. *The Chairman.*] Do we understand you to express the opinion, or to say decidedly from your own knowledge, that this matter comes in absolutely free?—That is so. I have it from the retail dealers themselves.

196. Do you know, as a matter of fact, whether the Customs collect duties upon these billheads?—So far as I am aware, they do not. There is a duty on billheads that are invoiced, but I venture to think there are a considerable number which are imported by leading merchants because they can get them somewhat cheaper than here. We wish 50 per cent. placed on them. Then, there are printed and embossed envelopes, on which we wish 35 per cent. placed.

197. Do you mean 35 per cent. additional?—Additional in every instance.

198. Then, you want a duty on these envelopes of 60 per cent.?—Yes. We want 35 per cent. on bankers' cheques; on lithographic cards and stationery, 35 per cent.; on writing-inks of all kinds, including copying, 30 per cent.—this is a little out of our line.

199. Can any of these inks be manufactured in the colony?—Yes. We are using a locally-made ink now.

200. Taking the ordinary rate of wages, can you produce writing-ink in the colony as cheap or cheaper than the imported ink?—It is being retailed at the same price as the imported article.

201. So you want to shut out the outside article at an increased cost to the consumer?—Where an article can be manufactured in the colony, and sold as cheap as the imported article, it is desirable that encouragement should be given to local producers.

201A. So, as a matter of fact, it is only a question of loss of revenue upon what is imported?—Yes.

202. *Mr. Tanner.*] Is printing-ink manufactured in the colony?—It is writing-ink I refer to now, including copying-ink.

203. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Is ink made in Wellington?—Yes; by Meek.

204. *The Chairman.*] If these recommendations were carried out, and the duties you propose were put on, do you think it would stop the importation, and throw the trade into the hands of the local printers?—Yes, decidedly.

205. How many more persons do you imagine there would be employed?—I think, where there are now three compositors employed there would be four.

206. Have you looked up the number of compositors in the colony?—I can give them roughly, but the figures would not be exact. I should say there are over a thousand employed in the colony.

207. And two hundred and fifty would get employment who are not employed now?—That is so.

208. Is there anything you would like to add?—I think I have gone pretty well into all the items I mentioned. But I would like to ask the Commission to give careful consideration to this question of imported matrices. It is, from our point of view, a most serious question, and if a prohibitive duty is not placed upon them they will before long interfere in a most disastrous way with the legitimate trade of this colony. If matrices are allowed to come into this colony wholesale it will induce other firms to go in extensively for the business, and thus lead to a competition which will be detrimental in the extreme to the interests of a large section of workers in this young colony. The various other matters which I have brought before the Commission call for a few remarks, especially those billheads with an advertisement at the head, which are given to the tradespeople by certain Home firms for the sake of the circulation of the advertisement. All other classes of work that I have mentioned, and which bear a slight duty at present, can be checked by the additional duty asked for, and we trust, therefore, that the Commission will come to the conclusion that what we ask for is not beyond the bounds of reason.

209. *Mr. Tanner.*] *Re matrices:* did I understand you to say that twenty stereos could be taken from them?—Yes.

WEDNESDAY, 6TH FEBRUARY, 1895.

(4.) GEORGE McWHIRTER examined.

210. *The Chairman.*] Your name is George McWhirter?—Yes. I am a currier at Petone.

211. I see you say you are deputed by the tanners and carriers of Wellington to bring before us certain matters. Are you appointed by your society?—No; I have been appointed by the men in the shops. There are only two shops in Wellington—Hirst's and Tyler's.

212. *Mr. Hutchison.*] It is the workmen you represent?—Yes.

213. *The Chairman.*] Are you requested to appear by the owners?—No; the employés.

214. What are the matters you wish to bring under the consideration of the Commission?—I will give you my last two or three years' experience of the state of our trade. I find it has been