

616. *The Chairman.*] Is the cataque the same article as is used for dyeing?—No; it is ground up very fine. I have a ton in Auckland now, and it has been passed “free.” Possibly this is the first ton imported into the colony.

617. *Mr. Tanner.*] If passed “free,” it has not been charged as a drug?—It is ground up in such a manner that it cannot be used as a drug.

618. *The Chairman.*] By the Commissioner’s decisions it appears that cataque has been imported into the colony, but it is also referred to as cutch?—At present this one shipment has been sent here to decide whether it is free, and I ask that cutch of that kind shall be declared free. Another ingredient is sal ammoniac, ground. We would require 10 tons. It is valued at £28 a ton; it varies according to the market. We want that admitted free. The boxes we pack the manufactured article in are made of wood, and are dovetailed. I cannot get them made in the colony, and I have to import them from America. They are fitted with sliding lids, and are similar in construction to the patent-medicine boxes made in America.

619. What quantity of boxes would you require?—Between 50,000 and 100,000 a year, including Australia.

620. What is the size of the boxes?—They are 4lb., and cost 21 dollars a thousand. The duty on them is 15 per cent., and I ask that they be made free. There are also manufactured compounds admitted free, and if we manufacture in the colony I would like a duty imposed on boiler compounds and anti-fouling compounds.

621. You want a duty as against all competing articles?—Yes.

622. What are your ideas as to the amount of duty necessary to give effect to this?—I should say they should be taxed at 25 per cent.

623. *Mr. Tanner.*] Would 15 per cent. be a satisfactory duty?—The more you put on the more satisfactory it will be; 25 per cent. would suit better.

624. *The Chairman.*] What would be the amount of labour you would be likely to employ?—At present we have only one branch, and there we shall employ twenty to thirty hands. Fifty to one hundred would be employed.

625. If your calculations are borne out, you would employ thirty men. What would be their average wages?—As ordinary labourers, £2 10s. a week. The pay all round would average 6s. to 8s. a day.

626. Do you know whether there are any other manufacturers of boiler composition in the colony?—I am quite sure there are not. [I have since heard of a local article being manufactured in Napier, but of no account.]

627. Is the material you make used anywhere else?—We supply the naval departments of the different Governments of the world and the colonies, including New Zealand.

628. It is a well-known article?—Yes. We have been manufacturing it a number of years.

629. *Mr. Stevens.*] What advantage is it to manufacture this stuff in New Zealand if you have to import your empty boxes in which to pack it?—To save the inward freight, which is very heavy.

630. Then, you import all the articles required, as well as empty boxes?—We get a special freight for the boxes—viz., half-rates across America; but even then we could save a great deal by manufacturing here.

631. Because of the cheaper rate of wages?—Wages are not any cheaper here in comparison. It is more convenient to manufacture here, because we can get some of the materials from India, such as cutch.

632. You say you are allowed by the steamship companies to carry your raw material cheaper than the manufactured article?—No. I get a reduction of 50 per cent. in freights from the Spreckles Company. We have never imported any boxes yet, but I have a shipment arriving this month.

633. They bring the boxes at half-freight because they are empty?—There is always a reduction for empties crossing the States; and another reason is the competition of the Vancouver service.

634. *The Chairman.*] Are your boxes made up in sections?—Yes. They are made in a machine.

635. *Mr. McGowan.*] Is any particular kind of wood necessary for these boxes? And must they be made in a special manner?—Yes, to keep them air-tight. I have tried to get them made here, but they cannot make them, not having got the necessary machinery.

636. *Mr. Tanner.*] I cannot understand the low price of the boxes?—In America there are firms who make nothing but these little boxes. The firm who supplies us are the firm of Hopper and Boggard.

637. You know that nails are made largely in Massachusetts and Lowell. Have you seen the boxes in which they are packed?—No; the boxes we use are 8ft. by 1ft., with a sliding lid.

MONDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY, 1895.

(17.) MESSRS. BELL and PHILIPS examined.

638. *The Chairman.*] What is your name in full, Mr. Bell?—Charles Robert Edward Bell. Mr. Philips accompanies me on this interview as he is our agent in the colony.

639. What is your business?—Match-manufacturer. I am managing director of the firm of R. Bell and Co., London. The factory in Wellington is a branch of the London business, and I am managing director of the whole concern.

640. What representations do you desire to make to the Commission?—I had not intended to appear before the Commission, but I saw from the papers that you had had some evidence as to a match-factory before you, and I thought it would be as well for me to come and explain to you that