

694. *The Chairman.*] Are the two factories in New Zealand not at present capable of supplying the whole of the local demand?—No, they are not.

695. When your factory is increased to the size you propose, the output of the two factories, I gather, will be amply sufficient to supply the local trade?—Yes.

696. Then, it follows, if you produce a sufficient quantity and at a less price than the same article can be imported at, the importation must cease?—Yes.

697. Supposing the whole business of the colony in wax matches is obtained by the local industry, what would be the total amount of stearine imported?—The total consumption would be from 12 to 15 tons a month.

698. What would be the quantity of paraffin-wax?—We use about 20lb. of paraffin-wax to 100lb. of stearine, equal to 30 tons, on which we pay duty.

698A. Chlorate of potash?—Three tons a month, valued at 7d. a pound, equal to £65 a ton. That pays 15 per cent.

699. Tin boxes?—Six hundred cases of tin boxes are used a month, six gross in a case, equal to 3,600 gross a month. The duty is 7d. a gross.

700. Can you tell us the duty in Victoria on "plaid" vestas?—1s. a gross.

701. And on No. 4 tins?—I cannot tell you, because they do not import any. They use nothing but plaids.

*Mr. Philips:* I am more conversant with some of the matters that have been mentioned than Mr. Bell, and I might say we have had a good deal of difficulty with regard to labour. The manager has done his best, but he has not been able to get girls who will stay at the work. Otherwise they would be earning considerable wages.

702. *Mr. Tanner.*] Have you been obliged to discharge any for inattention?—Yes. With regard to obtaining the supplies of material in the colony, we intend to obtain everything we possibly can here. I have interviewed the stearine people, and as soon as they can make a stearine hard enough they will get the order, and the same with glue.

*Witness:* I have arranged for the supply of both in Melbourne, and shall do the same here.

DEAR SIR,—

Wellington, 22nd February, 1895.

With reference to the case of necrosis which occurred at our factory, and which I mentioned in my evidence, I fear that I led the Commission to come to a wrong conclusion in the matter. After stating that there had been a case, I was asked the question, "Did the man die?" Without thought at the moment I said "Yes," because, as a matter of fact, he did die shortly after, but he did not die of necrosis; he died from an accident he met with: and I may also state that I have never known a case of necrosis to be fatal, and the man who died whilst in our employ had quite recovered from necrosis.

I am, &c.,

CHARLES R. E. BELL.

The Secretary, Tariff Commission.

(18.) FREDERICK CALTON examined.

703. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—Frederick Calton. I am a maker of whip-thongs at Newtown, Wellington. Might I ask whether the evidence I shall give this afternoon will be published?

*The Chairman:* Not unless you wish it.

*Witness:* I prefer it being kept private, as otherwise it might do me some little harm with some of my customers.

704. *The Chairman.*] How long have you been engaged in this business?—About seven years on my own account. I have been employed in the business fourteen years in Wellington. The request I have to make is for the remission of the duty on kangaroo-skins for making whip-thongs, or the reduction of the duty to 1d. a pound at the most. It is now 3d. a pound. It was raised to that from 1d. at the last tariff revision. There are no skins dressed in the colony for whip-thong making.

705. Can this skin be distinguished from the kangaroo-skin used for shoemaking? Could they be distinguished by an amateur?—With a little instruction, I should think so.

706. It could be distinguished by an expert from other kangaroo skins?—Decidedly.

707. What quantity of skins (kangaroo) are used in connection with your industry throughout the whole colony?—There are two other makers in the colony. I import kangaroo- and wallabi-skins to the extent of probably £40 to £50 for three months, according to business. Sometimes there is a run on green-hide thongs, and we get that material here. I should say £500 would cover the value of whips imported in a year.

708. What is the value of kangaroo-skins?—From 3s. 3d. to about 4s. per pound. Latterly, for the last two or three consignments, I have only paid 3s. 3d. per pound. When the extra 2d. was put on kangaroo-skins no increased duty was put on the imported manufactured article. That still remained at 15 per cent., and I say it is only fair that the cost of my raw material should not be increased. I do not want any special protection in my trade, but I ask for the reduction of the duty on my raw material.

709. You say, further, that at the time the duty was increased to 3d. there was no increase in the duty on manufactured whips?—No; it still remained at 15 per cent. *ad valorem*. During Sir Harry Atkinson's Administration I brought this matter before the Customs, and he instructed that thongs should be admitted under the heading "Leather goods," and made 20 per cent.; but, through the influence of the wholesale importers, that was altered, and it went back to 15 per cent. on whips again.

710. Is kangaroo the only leather from which whip-thongs are made?—We also use green cowhide and calfskin, obtained locally.

711. Are the imported whips made of greenhide?—A large number of kangaroo thongs are imported from Australia, and the Australians are pushing their articles here at a low price. This