

brown paper imported is not used for manufacturing wrapping only. Brown bags are made here from colonial brown paper. I have no doubt that in the near future we shall get "caps" good enough for our purpose; but at present we should not be left to the mercy of our colonial manufacturers.

(2.) Statement by Mr. S. S. BLACKBURNE, *re* Sheep-dip.

I am a merchant, and am the senior partner of the firm of Blackburne and Co., carrying on business in Christchurch. My firm are the chief New Zealand agents for the firm of Morris Little and Son, the manufacturers of Little's sheep-dips, and I am their representative under power of attorney. This firm manufacture both a fluid and a powder sheep-dip, which is made at Doncaster, in England. Little's was one of the first sheep-dips imported into New Zealand, and it has been in steady and increasing demand here during the past fifteen or twenty years; and it was largely by its means that the scourge of scab was stamped out in New Zealand. Sheep-dip is at present, and has always been, free in New Zealand. I learn that you will be approached on behalf of New Zealand makers of sheep-dip, and asked to recommend the imposition of a duty on sheep-dip, and I desire to give evidence why no such duty should be imposed. Sheep-dip ought to be free of duty, for the following reasons:—

1. Every sheepowner is by law compelled to keep his sheep clean from parasites; and it is in the public interest that this should be so, as otherwise there would be a serious deterioration in sheep, and clean sheep would be constantly infected by dirty ones. Sheep can only be kept clean by the use of sheep-dips, and therefore to put any restriction in the way of a free choice by farmers in the use of sheep-dip, or to increase its cost, would be—(a) Contrary to public policy and interests; (b) an injustice and a great hardship to farmers; (c) an impediment to carrying out the law.

2. The manufacture of a really reliable sheep-dip requires great skill and experience, and it is only old-established firms which are able to make it uniform in quality, so as to give general satisfaction. A slight error may either cause the loss of sheep, or deteriorate the quality and value of wool, or prevent the dip from properly destroying parasites. It is, therefore, of great importance to farmers to have a wide and unrestricted choice. Two of the imported sheep-dips are, for this reason, in greater demand than all the other scores of sheep-dips added together; and this applies not only to New Zealand, but to every country in the world where sheep are grown. These two firms bring an experience—one of over half a century, and the other of over a quarter of a century—to bear on the manufacture, and farmers would complain justly and bitterly if any obstacle were placed in the way of their getting either of these two brands.

3. The process of manufacture of the principal imported dips is a trade secret, and the same quality of dip could not be made in the colony in any case.

4. Sheep-dip is an article that employs very few hands in its manufacture. With proper machinery, the requirements of the whole of New Zealand could be made by less than twenty hands, working about two months out of the twelve. A prohibitive duty would not, therefore, result in the employment all the year round of even an additional dozen labourers; and there is not at present, I believe, a maker in New Zealand that employs any hands constantly engaged at all in the manufacture of sheep-dip all the year round.

5. On the other hand, there are, according to the last published sheep returns, 15,837 owners of sheep in New Zealand, every one of whom would suffer by the imposition of a duty on sheep-dip.

6. A duty on sheep-dip must inevitably result in an increase in its price, and therefore in cost to farmers. This is so, because, owing to the severity and wideness of the existing competition, prices are, at present, cut down to the lowest paying-level, and because farmers would still demand to have the best brands of imported dips. The manufacturers of Little's sheep-dips make less than 10 per cent. profit on their selling-price in New Zealand. I know this because they make returns through me for the purpose of the income-tax.

7. Little's fluid sheep-dip is largely used in New Zealand as a disinfectant; also as a blight specific; and as a cure for bot-fly on horses, for which it is recommended as the best remedy, in a leaflet issued by the Agricultural Department.

It took the gold medal at the New Zealand Exhibition of 1881 as the best disinfectant; it is recommended by Mr. Murphy, the author of "New Zealand Gardening," and other high authorities, as a blight specific. To restrict its importation by a duty would, therefore, besides injuring sheepfarmers, be detrimental to the public health (disinfectant); to the fruit-growing industry (blight specific); and to all owners of horses (bot-fly preventive).

8. A duty on sheep-dip would be the greatest hardship to small farmers. Runholders and large sheep-owners are not under the same necessity of dipping their sheep as the smaller farmers are, because runholders and squatters own a large proportion of merino sheep, which are not so subject to parasites, whereas the small farmers own only crossbred and long-wool sheep, which are very subject to parasites. Consequently, every small farmer must, of necessity, dip every sheep which he possesses; and the expense of dipping, to him, is a serious item, which he would be anything but pleased to find increased by a duty on sheep-dips, especially during the present ruling low prices for mutton and wool.

You will probably have your attention called to certain so-called public trials of sheep-dips which have taken place in New Zealand, and which appear to have been favourable to local makers. With regard to these, I have to say:—

(1.) That there has never been a public trial of sheep-dip in New Zealand worthy of the name. A public trial, to be satisfactory, should deal with several hundred or several thousand sheep, but the trials held dealt with only units or dozens. Local judges are also very liable to favour locally-made dips, and no outside expert has ever had anything to do with the judging. The last so-called public trial was little less than a scandal. Previous to the award being made, one of the judges, who had taken an active part in the proceedings, resigned his position as a judge and took up the agency for the dip which was ultimately placed first. Comment on this is superfluous.