

OPPOSITION FROM HOME INDUSTRIES.

I regret to report, however, that the few wagon and carriage manufacturers of this country are up in arms, and are using every effort to have Parliament enact laws that will place a prohibitive duty on American vehicles. The wagon makers met at Worcester on the 25th of March, and the Paarl Protective Association urged combination, memorializing Parliament to place a high duty on imported vehicles.

King Williamstown, where wagons and carts to the value of \$271,693 were built in 1896, has also taken action. In 1896, the South African Republic alone imported carts and carriages from different countries as follows:—

| From. | Carts. | Carriages. |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Europe | \$105,609 32 | \$26,384 94 |
| Other countries (United States) | 63,373 33 | 19,498 32 |

The duty on vehicles of all kinds is twenty per cent. ad valorem. The duty now desired by the home builders is £20 per vehicle; or \$97.20. The duty on a fine vehicle, valued at \$1,000, such as they cannot build here, is \$200; the proposed duty would be \$97.20; on an ordinary four-wheel vehicle at a valuation of, say, \$100, the present duty is \$20 and the proposed duty \$97.20, the same as on a high-priced vehicle.

It is obvious that the duty would be prohibitive and would shut out all but the most expensive vehicles. Timber to make parts of vehicles pays a duty of two cents per cube of twelve feet; finished wood and iron parts pay a duty of twenty per cent. With no change in duty on these items, it seems conclusive that manufacturers here would make money.

The sale of American-made vehicles is in the hands of resident merchants, who do not desire any change in the duty; certainly the users do not. As all the timber and iron used here in the manufacture of vehicles is imported, I am of the opinion that no change in duty on these items will occur.

Horseless carriages are being introduced for passenger service, and are quite successful.

HARNESS.

The imports of harness into South Africa in 1897, with the exception of Natal and Lourenco Marquez, were:

| Country. | Value. | |
|----------------------|----------|-----------|
| United Kingdom..... | £108,017 | \$525,664 |
| Natal..... | 1,108 | 5,392 |
| New South Wales..... | 65 | 316 |
| Victoria..... | 22 | 107 |
| Belgium..... | 328 | 1,596 |
| Franco..... | 27 | 131 |
| Holland..... | 21 | 102 |
| Germany..... | 1,102 | 5,362 |
| United States..... | 2,864 | 13,937 |

For Natal, the total value was £57,906 (\$281,789), the countries of origin not being given; but it is estimated that about the same proportion came from the United States as given above.

Samples of harness sent to the United States could be duplicated and again sent here, at a less price than now charged, with a good margin of profit. Pack saddles for mules, head collars with ring, Boer saddles, team harness, barouche, cab and other harness, if made to meet the demand, would find a market; as well as all kinds of girths, etc.

The harness used here is usually of "russet" color. An ordinary single harness sells at \$55 to \$75; double harness, \$125 to \$250; and cart harness is offered as low as \$25.

The duty on harness is £9 on every £100 value.

BICYCLES.

Imports of bicycles and accessories into all ports of South Africa, except that of Lourenco Marquez, for 1897 were:

| Country. | Value. | |
|----------------------|----------|-------------|
| United Kingdom..... | £244,709 | \$1,190,876 |
| Mauritius..... | 21 | 102 |
| New South Wales..... | 59 | 287 |
| Victoria..... | 15 | 72 |
| Belgium..... | 1,051 | 5,114 |
| Denmark..... | 5 | 24 |
| Holland..... | 1,631 | 7,937 |
| Germany..... | 9,665 | 47,034 |

| Country. | Value. | |
|----------------------|----------|-------------|
| France..... | 1,542 | 7,504 |
| Austria..... | 8 | 38 |
| United States..... | 35,897 | 174,692 |
| Other countries..... | 791 | 3,849 |
| Total..... | £205,394 | \$1,437,534 |

The imports from the United States in 1896 were £13,202 (\$64,248), and the increase for 1897 is estimated at 171 per cent. All the English makes are sold here, and several American. Some very cheap bicycles have been imported from the United States, which has injured the trade. There being a lull in the demand, it was believed that a cheaper machine would find a market; but it was soon found that a cheap machine was not an economical one, and now only the best are in demand.

The duty on bicycles is 9 per cent. They sell here at about the same price as in the United States, with freight and duty added.

AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS.

The imports of agricultural implements into the ports of South Africa for 1897 were to the value of \$525,827.70, of which the United States furnished \$295,662.96.

There should be openings for mowing machines, corn cultivators, grinders and shellers, wheat binders, potato diggers, etc. Africa can raise as good wheat as any other country, and the Government is now buying seed wheat and testing several kinds. A large number of small, cheap plows, both steel and cast, cutting from 7 to 14 inches, have been sold; and there is a demand for a light gang plow, the two small plows held together by an iron frame, with iron handles and no wheels.

The five-tooth cultivator is also in demand. I am of the opinion that hand corn planters, hand seeders, disc harrows, and in time sweep corn grinders, will sell. One dealer said to me that he wanted for immediate delivery 100 feed cutters, and could not get them. Only the cheapest implements are purchased now; but in the future, when farmers farm as they should, the larger and better ones will find a place.

Agricultural implements of all kinds are admitted free of duty. In the line of implements, as in all others, the market should be studied with the fact in mind that both England and Germany are good imitators, and that America must do all she can to keep this trade. Durable goods should be made, and, although they may not be expensive and such as are used at home, in time the best will be wanted.

THE SUPPLY OF CALCIUM CARBIDE.

The rapidly increasing use of acetylene has pushed the demand for calcium carbide so close to the present limit of available supply that the questions of increased productive capacity, the future out-put, and probable price of this new and important material assume a definite international interest.

It is understood that the use of acetylene, and consequently the consumption of carbide, has increased somewhat more rapidly in America than in Europe, and that, notwithstanding the large out-put at Niagara Falls, the home demand has rather more than kept pace with the supply. The latter may practically be also said of Europe, at least of Germany, which country obtains almost its entire supply of carbide from Switzerland, notably from the great works at Neuhausen.

The whole carbide industry, so far as central Europe is concerned, is now in a transition stage, and the conditions of supply and price are likely to be greatly modified by the increased production of next year. The most important accession will probably come through the operations of the great combination headed by the Schuckert Electrical Manufacturing Company, at Nuremberg, which expects to have in operation during the course of next year, the following carbide factories:

| | Horsepower. |
|---|-------------|
| Electrical Works Lonza, at Gampel (Wallis)..... | 2,500 |
| Electrical Works Hofslund, at Sarphog, Norway... .. | 5,000 |
| Bosnian Electrical Company, Iajce, Bosnia | 8,000 |
| Societo Espagnolo, Broga (Catalonia)..... | 2,500 |