

eight hours without giving time for refreshment. If we were to work from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., it would be an advantage.

75. *Hon. Mr. Reynolds.*] Do you find any hardship with regard to holidays?—Of course there is a hardship. Every holiday costs us £30. We give, however, two holidays more than the Act specifies—namely, the Queen's Birthday and the Jewish Day of Atonement.

76. Do you consider there is any hardship in the general working of the Act?—No; I am quite satisfied with the Act; it is not more liberal than I have always been to my people without it, during my experience of seventeen years in the trade. I do not think it is oppressive. The only thing, as I have said, is, that I should like to be able to work a double shift when there is a demand for it, especially seeing that if we were to make a further investment in machinery we have not space to accommodate it.

77. *The Chairman.*] To get a greater interest on the money invested you require to work the machinery to a greater extent?—Yes, we do not work the machinery sufficiently long to obtain a fair remuneration.

Mr. JOSEPH HAIG examined.

78. *By the Chairman.*] I am a partner in the firm of Haig, Bramwell, and Co., boot manufacturers. We employ eighteen females and from twelve to thirty boys; just now we have fourteen boys. We commence work at 8 a.m. and close at 6 p.m. There are not more than six boys and girls under fourteen years of age. We do not care about taking any under twelve. We have about twenty young persons altogether. We do not bind them as apprentices at first, but at fourteen or fifteen they are bound for four or five years under regular articles of indenture, the wages being 5s. a week at first, with an increase of 2s. 6d. every six months. We have a notice posted up in the factory in terms of the Act. During the hour for dinner the work is entirely suspended. A number of the hands who live at a distance remain in the factory to take their dinner. Fire is provided for them. The men are paid by the piece, the women by the day. The wages of the females are from 25s. to 40s. per week, according to skill. The men make much better wages—some as high as £5 17s., others as low as 35s. The women could not do the work of the men; they do the light work. We have had difficulties in consequence of the men combining together with regard to wages. They do not want to do away with piecework. There are such combinations in every large centre of population. The women do not combine for a similar object. I am not aware that any in our employ support their parents. The parents of all of the young persons we employ are, I believe, able enough to do that themselves. I consider 25s. enough to keep a woman in comfort.

79. *Mr. Bradshaw.*] Our place is well ventilated, so far as windows are concerned. There was a complaint some time ago in connection with the urinal in the men's department. The grievance has been remedied. There are no married women in the establishment, excepting the wife of one of the partners in the firm.

80. *The Chairman.*] I am not aware that we have ever been visited by the Inspector under the Act.

81. *Mr. Bradshaw.*] I do not think the inspection sufficient. I hold that the Act is a good and useful measure. The only objection we have is to the number of holidays it has become the custom to pay the females for. We do not object to four holidays, but we do to sixteen. I was under the impression that we were bound to pay for all public holidays.

82. *Hon. Mr. Reynolds.*] We have never found the Act to go against us in our business. If we want to get through more work we must employ more labour. I hold that this Act ought to be strictly looked to.

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FRIDAY, 10TH MAY, 1878.

Mr. JOHN CLARK examined.

83. *By the Chairman.*] I am a partner in the firm of Reynolds, Clark, and Co., boot manufacturers. We employ fifty-eight hands, all told. We open the factory at 8 o'clock in the morning, and close at half past 5 in the evening. Six o'clock is the general hour for closing. We keep none later than 6. We have perhaps six boys and one girl under the age of fourteen; fifteen or sixteen boys and two girls between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. We have three apprentices over fifteen, who were indentured before they were fourteen years of age. They are apprenticed for four years. The rates of wages are entered in the indentures. The first year they get 5s., the second 7s. 6d., the third 15s., and the fourth 22s. 6d. We do not give piecework to bound apprentices, and there is no work done by them outside. The females do not do piecework. We have not posted up the notice under the Act. The dinner hour is from 12 to 1. It is the only meal during working hours. None of the females remain in the factory for dinner. Those who remain take their chance as to facilities for meals. About half of the men remain. There is a fire, and they can warm anything they require. We employ thirty men. The girls above eighteen years of age, not apprenticed, earn from 18s. to 27s. per week. The average wages of the men, mostly piecework, are £3 a week. The females do not do the same kind of work as the males; they do the light work, not being fitted for the heavy work. It is not usual in the trade for the women to do the heavy work, nor would it be advisable they should. If it were attempted the men might combine against it. There is a shoemakers' society here. It is confined to Dunedin. The men here have never combined to carry any point against the manufacturer, except to keep up the wages. They have not particularly insisted on piecework, but all prefer it. The reason why the women are not employed on piecework is not because the manufacturer refuses to give it to them. The women have not the same opportunities as the men to combine together. If they were to combine they could carry their point as well as the men. All the women do their work by machines. They sit to it. They have never complained of it as being injurious. We have never attempted piecework by the women; Hallenstein's, I believe, have. The Inspector has visited our factory once, I think.