

562. Last year I kept gas-jets burning all day long in the winter, and that helped to warm the place; but it is cold in winter time.

Mr. S., a compositor, examined.

563. I am member of the Otago Branch of the New Zealand Typographical Association.

564. As to the rate of wages in the trade, the first point I wish to bring forward is the rate paid to time or jobbing hands. They get £3 a week; and generally that is considered satisfactory, though employment has not been so plentiful during the past few years as formerly. This is partly accounted for by the large increase of competition.

565. As regards piecework, the rate has been steadily declining for a considerable time. The leading morning paper in Dunedin has been the prime mover in this direction.

566. The recognised rate is 1s. per thousand "ens," although the *Daily Times* Company only pays 11d. to its hands upon the *Otago Witness*. Even at 1s. one requires to be expert to enable him to earn a wage sufficiently adequate to recompense him for work in which there is a reversal of the usual hours of labour—that is, night-work.

567. The principal—the gravest—difficulty the workers in this trade have been struggling against during the last few years has been the enormous increase of boy-labour. This has now assumed very serious proportions. In some cases the offices are worked entirely by boys, the result being that at short intervals the labour-market is flooded with young men who have partially learned their trades, but are cast out to make room for fresh batches of boys.

568. I have taken the trouble to ascertain the proportions of boys to men employed in the trade in each office in the city. The *Times* has thirty-four men and twelve boys: apprentices are only allowed, according to union rules, on the *Witness* and in the jobbing-room—that is, there are twenty-four men employed on the newspaper for whom there is no equivalent in boys; it is only in the jobbing-room and in the *Witness* room that boys are employed. In the *Star* office there are twenty men and seven boys. In Munro, Hutchison, and Co.'s there is one man and seven boys. In the *Herald* office there are seven men and fifteen boys. In Fergusson and Mitchell's there are three men and two boys; in Wilkie and Co.'s there are three men and three boys; and in Mills, Dick, and Co.'s, one man and thirteen boys. The proportion in the *Tablet* office I have been unable to ascertain, as it is not an office under the jurisdiction of the Union: it is closed to the Union. The Caxton Company has four men and six boys.

569. Our union rule in union offices has not been strictly adhered to. The rule of the Union respecting apprentices is: "The number of apprentices shall be regulated as follows: One apprentice in any office, two where six members of the Association are permanently employed, and one for every additional six members; but not more than six apprentices in any office. No apprentices to be allowed on morning daily papers." We arranged that as being a fair proportion to keep the market supplied with competent men as time went on.

570. The worst office we have to deal with is Mills, Dick, and Co.'s. It is rather difficult to get evidence with regard to the actual state of affairs in such an office, but we have, with the assistance of one or two members, managed to get a few items. They have a code of rules in the office with regard to boys, one of which is that a boy is to work three months for nothing. He has to do all sorts of work—running messages, cleaning rollers, and odd jobs—and very frequently at the end of three months he is told he is too small or not suitable. We have come across several boys who had been treated in this manner. We got one, and managed to bring him here to-night, but he got frightened at the last minute, and ran off home. There is one rule that the boys there at present state is very objectionable, and it is that the watercloset is available to them only during one hour per day. It is open for them between 9 o'clock and 10 o'clock in the morning, and it is locked up all the rest of the day.

571. The rate of wages for boys is for the first fifteen months 5s. per week, and after that 2s. 6d. rise per week per annum.

572. In the *Herald* office they have one boy at 20s.—a small boy of about fourteen—an apprentice, I suppose; they have two at 17s. 6d., five at 12s., and two at 7s. 6d. per week. The hours are eight per day, and they have no particular rules.

573. I have a copy of the rules at Mills, Dick, and Co.'s, which I hand to you to look over. This is the first time I have ever known rules posted up with regard to the conduct of boys. I have been a journeyman ten years, and I never saw boys guilty of scribbling indecent lines, or anything of that sort. Whether the rules were framed to get revenue or not I do not know, but they are extraordinary. I never saw such a thing before. The foreman is generally capable of keeping order himself. One thing more with regard to Mills, Dick, and Co., and that is that under no circumstances during the last few years have they employed more than one man. In other offices where the proportion of boys to men is greater than our rules allow they frequently employ casual men, but in this office they employ but one man.

574. There are only three offices in town which are practically non-union offices, and they are the *Tablet* Company, Mills, Dick, and Co., and principally the *Times* office.

575. I do not know whether it is correct to make the remark, but the position of the manager of the *Times* office is a very inconsistent one. He has given very prominent support to unionism, recommended it for every other place, but will not have it in his own office.

576. Mills, Dick and Co.'s boys' hours are eight every day during the week except on Saturdays and Wednesdays. They make up on Wednesday night for the Saturday half-holiday, as they go back and work for three hours. It comes to eight hours per day for the week of six days. We do not find any fault with the hours, nor with the wages paid by the Union offices for the timework, but we certainly think that for night-work the rate ought to be better.

577. The *Times* office pays the lowest rate in town, and the time-hands only get £2 15s. a week instead of £3; but they sometimes employ Union men, and are then forced to give them £3 a