

week, or they could not get them. We have tried to get the men to join the Union, but the difficulty is that some of the men were members of the Union at the time of the strike, and instead of sticking to their colours they went over to the enemy, and the Union will not allow them to come back now except upon the payment of certain fines, in accordance with the general rules common to all other unions. As long as they are in that office they do not seem inclined to become members of the Union, because they consider they are right there, but as soon as they lose their places there they want to join the Union.

578. At the *Tablet* office girls are employed type-setting, but to what extent or what their wages are we have no means of knowing as a union.

579. I was two years in Christchurch. The wages there were the same as here—£3 a week or a shilling a thousand—and the conditions eight hours per day.

580. The sanitary arrangements in printing-offices vary very much; in the majority of cases they are excessively bad, both as to closets and ventilation.

581. Night-work is all done by gas, and the light is pretty fair; but in some offices in Dunedin—notably the one I work in myself—the light for day-work is exceedingly bad—it could not be worse—and the ventilation is also bad. I work in a long room about 60ft. long, with fixed windows at each end, a floor above, and no ventilation at all. We have complained frequently about the light, but cannot get it any better.

582. In our office we are allowed a stove. In the *Star* office the sanitary and warming arrangements are very good, but they are not in some other offices. I was for one year on the *Times*, and there was no means of warming the room there at night in the winter time.

583. The result of the employment of an excessive number of boys is that men are compelled to leave New Zealand for Australia in order to find employment, if they do not they flood the labour-market, and materially reduce the rate of wages.

584. The offices by employing boys are enabled to compete unfairly with those who pay journeymen's wages, and to cut down prices to the lowest.

585. I consider the employment of boys in large numbers to be a system of sweating in its very worst form.

586. The evidence I have given relates only to the composing departments of the various offices. Machinists, pressmen, &c., are not members of the Association.

ELLEN WILSON examined.

587. I am a shirt finisher, and work at ———. Things are very different from what they were twelve months since, when the agitation commenced.

588. There is very little to complain of now. Sixteen months since it was hardly possible to earn a living. The best week I had then, working hard, was 10s. 6d; that was working from 9 in the morning till 11 at night, with no hours off for meals. I got about ten minutes for dinner, and when I got home at night I used to take a short time to do a little extra cooking; but I could scarcely take time to get my meals. I can now make 12s. or 13s. a week; and a good finisher would make 18s. a week inside the eight hours per day. I can make 12s. per week now, working eight hours per day, whereas before it took me fourteen hours to make 1s. 10½d.

589. The Union has been a great boon to us. I would not for anything it was dissolved, because it has done away with taking work home at night. There are some who say they would rather take work home; but they have sisters, cousins, or women to help them. When you take home eight or nine shirts amongst four people that is nothing; but if you take half a dozen, and have to put in every stitch yourself it is a different matter.

590. The system of taking work home is bad. I do not approve of it.

591. The work affected my health. I have been nine years at it, and there are those who have been at it not a year who can do a third more than I can. I do not think there was ever a time when I could do more than now. I do more now in eight hours than I used to do in eight hours when I took the work home; I can finish four more shirts.

592. The long hours affected my health. I sat up late, and in the morning I really could not get up. This made it later going to work, and I never felt refreshed.

593. I do not complain of the wages now at all. Some make more than I do; but I am always content with 12s. a week. I know of some making 16s. and 18s. a week, and I have heard of one making 22s. in another place, but that depends a good deal on the kind of work done.

594. I think I could just live on from 8s. to 9s. a week; but I am a small eater. I can live and clothe myself on 12s. a week.

595. I think girls like their evenings to themselves, and that they do not like situations. I know big strong girls at this work, and I have often wondered why they should work for 12s. a week. I would not do so if I had been strong enough to go to service. I could not do that class of work or I would not have gone to the finishing, but would have gone to a situation. I have been in several situations, but had to give them up, as I was not strong enough for the work.

596. If I were laid up by illness I should have to go to the hospital, as I could not save anything from my earnings.

Mr. T. examined.

597. I am a butchers' assistant, working for ———. I have been a journeyman butcher for about twelve years, mostly in Dunedin.

598. The long hours is our grievance. I start at 7 in the morning, and my work lasts till 8, and sometimes till half-past 8, every night. On Friday night it is 9, and on Saturday night 10 or 11 o'clock, before I get away.

599. I drive one of the hawking-carts, and work about the place when I come in with it. My wages are £1 15s. a week, and for six days of the week I have my meals there.