

the trade. After a year or two they are discharged. They are not fit for the better class of work, and they must seek other employment. They come to the department asking work in all sorts of capacities. Half-trained printers, cabinet-makers, and others come to us for bush-felling, road-making, and, in fact, for anything they can get to do. As they are not properly-trained journeymen at the trade to which they served for a short time, they are glad to tackle anything for a living. The effect is that the labour market is overstocked. This inferior labour in many cases shuts out the skilled workman, then they too have to seek other work. Men of every branch of labour come to me with these complaints. I have been able to employ many of them in bush-felling, road-making, and other work. Young men of this sort come to me from nearly every trade with the exception of engineers. I find that engineers, in the majority of cases, do have indentured apprentices. In some cases premiums are paid to the employer with the indenture by the parent or guardian.

3. *Dr. Newman.*] How much?—From £20 to £50—that is, in Wellington. I therefore think it is better, as this Act intends that all apprentices going to learn any trade should be indentured for a number of years; they would then become skilful workmen. In the plumbing trade, in this town, boy-labour is very much to the front. I know of one place where seven boys, from fifteen to nineteen years of age, are employed to one man. As a rule, when these boys are two or three years at the trade they are discharged, and other boys taken on in their place. There are, however, some shops in this trade where they will not employ any other than properly-trained men. They will only have apprentices whom they train themselves for the proper period, and who have been indentured to them, or journeymen who have served the usual time under indenture elsewhere. These employers do not want to have anything to do with other than properly-trained men. They bind their apprentices for five years and treat them properly, sending them to technical schools. There is one shop in the city where the employer does everything he can to encourage his apprentices to learn their trade, setting apart one of his workshops so that they can come back in the evening to study the various branches of the trade.

4. *Hon. Mr. Reeves.*] You have been with the Labour Department about three years?—Yes; three years.

5. In your opinion, is the proportion of boy and girl labour to adult labour decreasing or increasing?—I think it is increasing. Talking about female labour in the large cities—in the dress-making trade especially—it is multiplying at a terrible rate. There are places in this town, Dunedin, Auckland, and Christchurch, and other places where they advertise for young girls as apprentices. The young girl answers one of these advertisements. She is taken on, and she finds she has to work six months for nothing. At the end of six months they give her 2s. 6d. a week; during the following year, or eighteen months, perhaps, they raise her wages to 3s., 5s., or 6s. a week.

6. *Captain Russell.*] In twelve or eighteen months?—If she asks, as she has every reason to do, for 8s., 10s., or 12s. a week she is discharged, some excuse being given. Some cases are worse than that, for immediately after the six months of service for nothing they are liable to be discharged, on the excuse that times are dull, or they are incompetent; and at the end of the six months during which they are employed at 2s. 6d. a week a great many of them are discharged. Thus we find continually girls floating about, from fourteen to sixteen and seventeen years of age, who, having served six months for nothing and six months for 2s. 6d. a week, are discharged, because they have wanted a little more money for their work: but, owing to the excessive competition, the employers say they cannot pay these girls any more. Thus we are getting on all sides an incompetent class of workers.

7. *Hon. Mr. Reeves.*] Do you know any establishment in which the average rate of wages of a large number of the women there employed, are from top to bottom very poor?—The tailoresses average wages are pretty good. Tailoresses work by a log; most of them are piece-workers, that is, so much for each garment. If they get plenty of work they make good wages. In some establishments in the dressmaking trade the women work for a weekly wage, but this weekly wage is very low. In one place I know, employing about twenty dressmakers, the average weekly wage might be about eight or nine shillings per week.

8. *Captain Russell.*] Any food included? No.

9. *Hon. Mr. Reeves.*] Are there any places in New Zealand where these logs are not strictly obeyed?—Well, employers say they work according to the log and get log-prices, but girls tell me privately that in some lines they do not.

10. About this looseness in working to the log, and obtaining log-prices: are there some places worse than others?—I suppose Auckland is about the worst place.

11. In the case of a girl, say from seventeen years old to adult age, have you any notion what it would cost for that girl's support?—If she were living by herself, and if she chose to take a furnished room (she could get a room at say from 5s. to 7s. a week), it would cost about 8s. a week to keep her in food. It might possibly be done at 7s. Then there is the matter of clothing in addition. I should say she could not keep herself for 15s. a week.

12. Then, beside clothes, there are trifles which everybody wants occasionally, and which must be paid for; even the most penurious persons must spend something outside the bare necessities of life?—I could not say what it might cost for clothing.

13. Supposing you had been informed by the experience of others who had much to do with this class of workers, or by the general experience you had obtained through your own observation, that it took 18s. a week for a female over seventeen to live all the year round in decent comfort, would you think that extravagant, or that such a statement was exaggerated?—It can be done for less; I know girls that live for 13s. a week, but that is not including clothing.

14. But I want an answer, including everything?—I would not say that 15s., 16s., or 18s. would be too much.

15. Do you know any establishment in which a large majority of the female workers of all ages