

excessive hours even where the wages are scarcely sufficient to support life?—That is the only way they can support it—by working all these hours.

51A. Do they work together in any number?—There are generally two or three. There may be a mother and daughter, or perhaps a mother and two daughters; perhaps one or both have been working in a factory all day at dressmaking, or other work; when they come home they start with the sewing-machine after they have had their tea. They rarely go out for exercise; and they work at the machine for a good number of hours.

52. *Dr. Newman.*] Will not the effect of a Bill like this be to increase this cottage industry unless some other conditions are added to control it; for instance, a master might have a number of girls apprenticed; would not the tendency be in such a case, that he might shut up his shop and have this work done at their home, which would tend to the sweating we sometimes hear of?—The new Factory Act would fix that up, for then all goods will be marked “Tenement Made”; public opinion, I should say, will be against purchasing “tenement made” goods.

53. *Hon. Mr. Reeves.*] How many under the new Act will constitute a factory—two, is it not?—Two; so that the mother and daughter, or mother and two daughters would come within the provisions of the Factory Act.

54. *Dr. Newman.*] Is it not the tendency of trades unions, instead of requiring apprenticeship, rather to provide a personal test of competency, so that any man can be a tradesman who chooses to qualify?—I do not think so; there are things in almost every trade which you cannot learn properly except by practice; mere examination will not do it; you must serve a practical apprenticeship to obtain a competent knowledge; many things occur in practice which you have not time to examine, and with which only a trained man can deal.

55. Take my own profession, for instance, in which apprentices have been entirely done away to the great advantage of the profession?—I cannot speak as to that.

56. Have you been connected with any trade?—In my youth I served part of my time as a plumber; I was afterwards employed at sea.

57. Then you speak with expert knowledge?—I have mingled with a great number of men, and have gathered information from almost every trade. In the position I now hold, I hear from almost every kind of workman the condition of nearly every kind of work.

58. Can you tell me what is the relative price now of this boy-labour and adult-labour?—You mean as between the skilled workman and the sums which are paid to improvers? In the printing-trade I know that employers in Wellington are paying some men 18s. and 20s. a week; these are young men whom I have already described, and are taking the place of skilled workmen, who should be receiving £3 a week.

59. That is less than one-half? Some may get 25s. or 30s. a week, but about a pound is the average of what they do get. It is the same in the plumbing-trade. I know of boys or young men who have a very imperfect knowledge of the trade, yet filling the places of journeymen who have been properly trained, for 3s. 6d. or 4s. a day, whereas the wages of a skilled workman is 9s. or 10s. a day.

60. *Captain Russell.*] How is the rate of percentage in the third schedule fixed; or, do you know why those rates were fixed? I could not say why they were so fixed.

61. Have you thought as to the necessity of paying wages at all to the apprentice during the first year: does the employer find him in material, and practically does the boy earn anything the first year? Oh, I think he does in most trades. There are few trades in which a boy cannot be of use to a man during the first year; in some trades he may be of great use even the first week. In most cases a boy works with a man and can be of use in various ways. In fact, if he only holds things for the workman, he is of use. I, therefore, think the boy would be entitled to something for the first year.

62. The improvers again, do they get paid the first year?—Yes.

62A. Can you tell me what is the practice in the other colonies?—I think it is very much the same as here. I hear of similar complaints in the other colonies made by those who have been driven out by the conditions of the labour market there. There are trades which have been almost ruined in consequence of boy-labour being unrestricted.

63. Have they no system of apprenticeship; do you know whether that is so or not?—No legal system to my knowledge.

64. What effect do you imagine this scale of percentage in the pay schedule is likely to have on the wages of adult labour?—I think, as I have said before, it is excessive in the first two rates; it is possible that if the employer looked on the rate as excessive he might reduce the wages of the adult labour.

65. Then you think it might have a tendency to reduce the wages of the adult workman?—I do not mean the ratio fixed for the later years; I was referring to the first two or three years. The further the youth advances in his apprenticeship the more valuable his services become to the master. An apprentice in the fifth or sixth year of his service is almost as good as the adult workman. I do not think the ratio fixed for those two periods at all excessive.

66. Can you give us some idea of the excess to which you refer?—Say, for the first three years it might be 10 per cent., 20 per cent., and 25 per cent., instead of 14 per cent., 25 per cent., and 35 per cent. For the later periods I do not think the rates at all excessive.

67. Will this compulsory apprenticeship have any effect on young people generally? If you compel handicraft labour to be worked in the manner provided in this Bill, will it not be likely to lead to a good deal of trouble?—It will be all the better for themselves.

68. Those who are not apprenticed?—If this Bill becomes law every handicraft person will have to be apprenticed; it will be only unskilled labour outside.

69. Do you think this will increase the number of young people in employment, or will it diminish the number?—I do not think it will either diminish or increase the number.