

48. *Dr. Newman.*] How much a day can a woman earn at £1 per thousand?—I do not know. The woman I asked only told me about the coarser bags.

49. Do you find that if you make suggestions to the factories they are accepted?—Yes, in the large majority, if you can show that it is necessary or good for the girls' health. As a rule they will meet you halfway and do what they can.

50. Do any number resent your going into the factories?—Only a few, and these are not the best-conditioned or large factories.

51. Those who have something to hide?—I suppose so.

52. How long do you think the apprenticeship should be in the dressmaking?—I think three years is quite enough, and should be the outside limit.

53. *Hon. Mr. Reeves.*] Have you any suggestions to make as to improvements in the Bill, outside of these two things—apprenticeship and schedule of wages?—I do not quite know how you will distinguish between handicraft and skilled labour. Take bag-making. Any girl can run a machine; and they all get 10s. a week. It is simply unskilled work. There is one factory in Wellington which employs nine or ten girls at this work, all getting 10s. a week.

54. *Mr. Buchanan.*] What are the hours?—Eight hours.

55. *Mr. Kelly.*] You could not inform the Committee as to whether it is a fact that a large number of girls are discharged after the first year?—I cannot say. I know it is the received opinion, but I cannot trace it down, though I have made careful inquiries.

56. What has been stated has come within my own knowledge—as bad, if not worse, than what Mrs. Neill stated. As to dressmakers, if they have not actually dismissed the girls they have adopted a system of giving them holidays, and then devising excuses for not wanting them back.

*Mrs. Neill:* I am only speaking as I find it New Zealand. I have seen the conditions so much blacker in other places. It is so utterly different here from the places where there is no Factory Act.

57. *Hon. Mr. Reeves.*] Is it your opinion that the Factory Act has had a marked and beneficial effect?—Undoubtedly it has.

58. *Mr. Buchanan.*] To what countries do you particularly refer, Mrs. Neill?—Queensland I know best; but I also know New South Wales, and London before the Factory Act came into existence. There is no Factory Act in Queensland. I was a member of a Royal Commission in, I think, 1891, and a terrible state of things was discovered. A girl could work till midnight, and no one thought it wrong. They had no protection whatever.

59. *Hon. Mr. Reeves.*] About what time would a girl take learning to be a tailoress? Three years?—That depends on the branch that is taken up. An employer told me that he considered that a girl could learn the different branches in three years.

60. If we fix the schedule to provide three years' apprenticeship, it would be sufficient?—I think it would be quite long enough.

61. *Mr. Kelly.*] Do I understand you to say that a girl can learn the "bespoke" trade in three years?—No; I referred to the slop trade.

62. *Hon. Mr. Reeves.*] How about women in boot factories? What is their condition? Good?—It is less favourable and worse. It is rougher, and I have, personally, an objection to see girls and men working in the same room. A few factories separate them, and have women foremen for the women, and a man for the men, but others have one foreman for both. There is not the slightest need to have them working in the same room—it is not good for the girls, as some of the men are very rough. They should be separated.

63. *Mr. Pinkerton.*] You have not met many factories where they work together—only in one branch?—Yes, the clickers.

64. *Hon. Mr. Reeves.*] What are called "house apprentices" are rare, I think?—I have not come across any yet.

65. Do you think a month of probation is insufficient time before a youngster must be apprenticed?—Some people say there should be a longer time, but if you had three months you would have a constant succession of probationers.

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WEDNESDAY, 12TH SEPTEMBER, 1894.

H. C. JONES examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] You have come to give evidence in regard to the Master and Apprentice Bill. Will you tell us your name, occupation, and particulars as to the body you represent?—I am a printer, and the secretary of the Federated Trades Union Council of Wellington.

2. You might tell us what opinion you have formed of the desirableness or otherwise of this Bill; or any suggested alterations which you think ought to be made in its provisions?—I may say that our Council has been very anxious for some time past to have such a Bill introduced. The Minister of Labour, eighteen months ago, was approached with reference to the introduction of a Bill of this description. At that time a private Bill was printed and circulated throughout the colony. In some quarters, however, this measure was considered to be rather drastic, and the Minister of Labour promised to bring down a measure which would suit all parties. This was not done in time for the annual conference of the Trades Council; but we went through our own Bill and sent it to the Minister, who promised if he saw any clauses which suited him he would adopt them and use them in his Bill. Since then he has brought down a Bill which I think is a step in the right direction. I do not propose to give evidence in regard to how the various trades are affected by boy labour, as it is our intention to ask you to hear one of each of the unions affiliated to our Council. We will ask you to hear the president or secretary of each of these unions. This boy labour is the biggest evil we have to contend with, and one which we cannot overcome by means of unions. It