

discretionary power should be given in the Bill to enable the Inspector to regulate the employment of boys as far as possible.

9. You say that the Inspector should find out how a man was situated, and thus regulate his power to bind apprentices. What opportunity would an Inspector have of knowing a master's position?—I take it he would make inquiries as to an employer's position in a district.

10. You think it would be quite easy to know if a man was or was not solvent?—I know there is a difficulty, but I think he would be able to gather certain information.

11. Should your trades unions not lay down some rule as to the question of a man being solvent or otherwise?—I do not think that possible, but I think the difficulty could be got over by the Inspector making inquiries. There is another thing: Supposing a man bound eight or nine boys, could he teach them their trade in a country printing-office?

12. Were you an indentured apprentice?—Yes.

13. Was there a clause in your indentures on which the employer, in the event of his failing in business, was obliged to find you a new employer till the end of your apprenticeship, being liable to a penalty if he failed to do so?—I do not remember that. There is nothing in the Bill—no penalty—that will affect him.

---

ALLAN WARD examined.

14. *The Chairman.*] You have come to give evidence on the Master and Apprentice Bill. Will you give us your name and occupation, and state particulars as to the body you represent?—My name is Allan Ward. I am a tailor by occupation, and president of the Trades Council, and also secretary of the Tailors' Society.

15. You have gone through the Bill?—I have gone through it, and think it very satisfactory. I have no objections or alterations to make in regard to the matter with the exception of limiting the proportion of boys to men, which the Bill does not touch. I wish to say that the workers are unanimous in wanting this Bill, which will give—must give—satisfaction to the fair employer, the parent, and the boys themselves. In some shops there are masters who will do their level best to employ such a large number of boys that it is impossible for them to be taught their trade. One man in Christchurch employs thirteen boys and only one man. There is a very small percentage of boys trained in their trade in establishments of this description. In one shop, in which I worked for two days only, there were seven boys, and I was engaged only because there was a particular job which none of the boys could do. I have met four of these boys since, and not one of them is a competent tradesman. Had they been bound, the master would have been compelled to teach them their trade thoroughly. I know a young man in Wellington who was working for a master, learning his trade, who left this employer when he was fairly proficient in one branch of the trade—trouser making. He has now gone to work for another employer, who pays him 25s. a week. It would be impossible for the employer who gives him this high rate to teach him the other branches of the trade. Whereas, if he had been bound to his first employer, he could not have left him until he had made himself proficient in all branches of the trade. I hold that this sort of thing is not conducive to morality, and, in proof of this, I might state that this same young man is keeping company with a young woman, but he will never be able to marry her unless his condition is improved, which I see no hope of; but in all probability the young woman in some weak moment will yield to his importunities, and end her days in degradation and poverty. In the interests of the boys and the community generally, a Bill of this description should be passed. It seems only to be the unscrupulous masters who want to take advantage of employing an enormous number of boys, who sacrifice these boys' welfare in order to enrich themselves. If boys are not properly bound and taught their trade it is an impossibility for them to demand the standard of wages, and consequently the class of work turned out deteriorates. In the tailoring trade a boy soon gets fairly proficient in making trousers, and when he has become an expert in this branch the master keeps him at that particular class of work in order to extract as much profit as possible out of him, instead of pushing him through the other branches of the trade. There is another shop I worked for in Christchurch where twelve men were employed, but the master gradually discharged the men and increased the number of boys, until he had seven in a separate room under one man, and not one of these were bound; and only kept three or four men to do the best class of work. I maintain that it is impossible for one man to teach such a large number of boys their trade properly. I have since seen three of the boys, and not one of them is a proficient tradesman. So far as I have read the Bill I find it very satisfactory; the only thing is that it does not go far enough, especially in regard to regulating the proportion of boys to men—that is the only suggestion I should like to see embodied in the Bill. Otherwise you have to trust to the trades-unions, who find it an impossibility to regulate this matter.

16. You mentioned the fact that boys should be taught their trade outright, otherwise they would not be able to earn a decent living?—Yes; at present, if a boy, after working a number of years for a master, asks for wages approximating those of a journeyman, the master says he cannot give it to him: he dismisses him, and moves the next boy up a step, and puts on a new beginner. In New Zealand everything seems to be diverging to boy-labour.

17. Do you not find this state of things demoralizing? Does it tend to larrikinism?—That is my experience. Young men, I know, in Wellington cannot earn a decent living at their trade, owing to their incompetency, and can make a better living at "spieling." They have got extravagant tastes, and do not want to go to the country, so they give over work, and live a life of idleness in town. Of course, the question will be asked, If the proportion of boys is limited to the number of men, what are we going to do with the great number who are unable to obtain work at trades? We are always wishing to have a country population: I would suggest that agricultural colleges be started, where the tuition fees would be so small that they would be open to the