

23. That has simply to be shown and the master will receive a complete acquittance?—But the matter rests entirely with the apprentice. Take a case where a boy considers that he has not been properly treated, &c., and does not choose to pass; we cannot force him to pass.

24. You cannot punish the master for not teaching a boy, unless it is shown that it is the master's fault.

25. *The Chairman.*] Have you any further objection to the Bill itself?—These are the principal objections I have got to it.

26. What is your opinion about the Bill generally—is it desirable or not?—Most undesirable, as far as our trade is concerned.

27. It should not become law at all?—No. We have been working very amicably with our apprentices—we have had only to discharge one during sixteen years. We have had to deal with obstreperous apprentices, and, with this Act in force, we should be in the Magistrate's Court every week.

28. *Hon. W. P. Reeves.*] Do you know the law at present with regard to indentured apprentices?—Not exactly, Sir.

29. I do not think you do; because what you object to is the law of the time with regard to apprentices indentured?—I am speaking of those not indentured. We have found out that the boys not indentured get on equally well—in fact, in some cases, better.

30. *The Chairman.*] What is the usual length of an apprentice's time?—Five years.

31. And you say you have from eighteen to twenty boys steadily going?—Yes.

32. How many continue in the trade?—I think they all continue. Most of our boys go home to the Old Country. We obtain for them a cheap trip, and they find work in England and Scotland, or go to sea.

33. I imagine you speak of engineers?—Engineers, fitters, and turners.

34. Do fitters go to sea?—Yes, and boiler-makers.

35. It is a common practice here to take lads, to keep them until their time is up, and when they should be getting men's wages to turn them adrift, and they seldom get employed at all?—We have little of that in our trade. Many of the men go to sea, or are employed in our works.

36. *Hon. W. P. Reeves.*] I suppose most of your journeymen have been with you for years past?—Practically; they have served their time with us.

37. *Mr. Millar.*] Have you any experience outside of New Zealand?—No, Sir.

38. I suppose you are aware there is some trade objection on the Clyde, and in England, that indentures are pretty nearly compulsory?—No; there is no objection to apprenticing the boys, if we are properly considered in the matter. We have no objection to having the boys bound down.

39. Have you an average of boys of about eighteen or twenty?—About that; I did not count them.

40. During eighteen years you have completed a hundred boys?—Between a hundred and a hundred and fifty. I took it as an average for five years.

41. Taking the present as an average number, that would leave one hundred and fifty boys who have been turned adrift unfinished?—Oh, no. You take five years' apprentices; that is twenty for every five years.

42. I ask you if you are keeping your average number?—We have put through a hundred to a hundred and fifty apprentices during the last eighteen years.

43. The other boys have been turned adrift without completing their time?—No.

44. Eighteen years at twenty would be three hundred?—Divide that by five.

45. That will leave sixty?—They have to serve an apprenticeship of five years. There are twenty coming in every five years.

46. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You said in the first part of your evidence that it was only in the last two or three years that you got any profit out of the boys, on account of the breakage of tools, and that they do much better work in the last than they do in the earlier days of their apprenticeship. If that is so, would it not be against the interests of the trade to send them away unfinished, seeing that the latter part of their years would be the most profitable to the employers?—That is our ambition—to keep our apprentices when they are remunerative to us. During the last two years they are about 100 per cent. better than during the previous time. In trades where there is a speciality boys might be proficient enough before that to be of use.

47. *The Chairman.*] You think it is of benefit to the firm to keep the lads the full time?—Certainly.

48. In that case indenturing would be of benefit?—Yes; there is no objection whatever to indenturing, so long as we are not tied down to too stiff rules and get a consideration.

49. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Has your trade been profitable for several years past? Has it been in a flourishing condition?—The trade itself has been under great depression lately, especially during the last few years, and I may say the profits have been somewhere about $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. during the last three years.

50. From what cause generally have your difficulties arisen. From imported machinery?—I could not say. It is the want of trade all round. It is because there is no inquiry, no machinery being asked for.

51. Is imported machinery to a greater extent taking the place of what you had previously been doing?—Well, the machinery we can manufacture, and which is most used, comes in free, such as dairy and small freezing machinery. They are all imported from England.

52. Will the effect of the Bill be to increase the expense and increase the difficulty of competing with imported machinery?—Yes, it will practically cripple any competition with outside people altogether.

53. *The Chairman.*] In what way?—In having to pay higher wages to the apprentices.

54. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Do you make machinery for freezing companies, dairy factories, soap