

particular kind of work to enable the employer to fulfil his orders, the journeyman have either to submit to a considerable reduction in wages, or are compelled to leave their work. I would especially respectfully draw the attention of the Committee to this fact: the requirements of the bookbinding trade in this colony and that of older countries are very dissimilar; for whereas in England, for instance, it is largely of an export character, which exposes them to the keenest competition. In this colony, the production is for purely local purposes; there cannot be the same necessity to employ such a large percentage of boys to men. The above remarks are not made in any antagonistic spirit to the boys, for this evil is felt as keenly by them when they arrive at manhood as by the men, for they, as has been pointed out, are totally unfit to compete with skilled workmen. I have been as brief as I possibly could, but the cases quoted are not exaggerated, but unfortunately only too true. I have avoided giving individual instances. There are other reasons which you are aware of.

6. *The Chairman.*] What you complain of chiefly is, that the number of boys employed is in excess of the number regarded as fair by the trade, and that when they arrive at a certain stage there is no work for them, and they have to find something else to do?—Yes. I might assure you that that is one of the reasons why so many men in our trade leave this colony. We have had instances here within the last twelve months, where fully twenty or thirty members of our trade have had to go away to seek work, and, were it not that the trade which properly belongs to them has been handed over to boys, the men would have stayed in the colony. There is no doubt about it.

7. How does this Bill, as at present drafted, suit the requirements of the trade?—I think it is a very good Bill as far as it goes. I think it should go further.

8. In what direction?—In limiting the number of boys to men. That is done in larger cities by the combination of the men themselves, as you are no doubt aware; but they are not able to do that in this colony, owing to the scattered nature of the work. The cities being so far separated there is no such combination here, and there is no possibility of an organization strong enough to resist and regulate the number of boys.

9. In your opinion, it would be very much to the benefit of boys if they were not induced to go into trades in which they cannot earn their living after having served what is called an apprenticeship?—There is no objection to a certain number being taught; but generally the boys are only taught a part of their trade, just a little. The Bill, I take it, aims at the teaching of boys properly, so that they can compete with men when they are out of their apprenticeship. At present a boy is only kept on for the reason that his wages are low, and because he can do a portion of the work. If taught his trade properly he would be in an independent position. In this way he would be able to work alongside men, and do the work that they can do; but, as it is, when he goes out he cannot do that; he does not know enough. It is an injury to the boy just as much as it is to the men.

10. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Am I right in assuming that the reason why what you call the excessive number of boys in the trade are put in by the employers in order that they can get their work more cheaply done?—Yes, Sir.

11. Then, supposing the master-bookbinders find the competition outside so keen that they have no room at all for cutting down profits below the present scale, whatever that may be, how would you propose that they should make a fair living profit if the expenses of production were increased by reducing the number of boys to the proportion which you think would be a reasonable one, to enable the employers to compete here with the book production that comes in from abroad?—The competition in the bookbinding trade is very small in this country; in fact, it is known that the work which is imported is not able to compete with the work done here, or the price—not after paying the freight; because I might point out that the price of products at Home is almost as great as it is here, owing to the combination of workmen necessitating the payment of a fair wage, and the employment of a reasonable number of boys in proportion to the number of men employed. That is the case in London, and I take it that you allude to importations from Great Britain.

12. Am I to understand from you that none of the goods that come in from outside the colony compete with the class of work done in your trade here; that the cheaper production of men working here has shut out the importation of similar products from outside altogether?—I do not say that it has shut them out altogether; but I believe this, that the importation in our line is less than in any other line. I believe it is done owing to the employers here employing so many boys in proportion to the number of men that has enabled them to do it.

13. To bring in the same goods from the outside?—No, to keep down the importation of this class of work.

14. What I have in my mind is this: that if you increase the cost to the employer of competing with outside goods, then they would be less able to compete with the importations from abroad, and therefore the employment to be found would be decreased. Would that not be the inevitable result?—I doubt that. I do not think so; because why do you give protection to industries? Is it not to protect them against the very low prices prevailing on the Continent and in other places? Do you not protect your workmen, or your industries here, so as to enable them to compete with places where they work twelve, fourteen, sixteen, and eighteen hours a day? You do not suppose the colonists here would be able to compete with the people, say, in Germany or France?

15. I do not think you understand me. I am not raising that question. Supposing the employers, with the number of boys that they now employ, make only a living profit, and cannot do with less profit, you must shut them up if they get less profit. How then do you propose to employ fewer boys and enable the manufacturer to continue his work?—I take it that it is very simple. It is in the hands of the employers themselves. They have only to agree to a certain scale of charges, and they would be then enabled to command the trade pretty well. I would point out to you that this question was quite a burning one in London, and the employers in the bookbinding trade there