

13. No doubt he is the person who pays them, but they can be paid by his agent?—There are always people ready to take advantage of omissions. I might be in Dunedin, or absent somewhere else, on pay-day. The intention may be right, but while the thing is there we are under the lash.

14. Subsection (a) and (b): "Savings-bank deposits"?—Of course, that is a most objectionable clause. In the first place, my experience of apprentices that we have had is that their parents, as a rule, as soon as the boys are bound, put in an appearance and obtain goods in place of their wages, and they are always £1 or £2 in our debt. Of course we give them the goods, so far as we are justified, and we stop the amount of one or two shillings a week, by special arrangements with the parents. And at the expiration of the term of apprenticeship what use will this sum be to the apprentice? It might be the means of providing him with his passage-money to some other part.

15. Clause 15: "Master failing to make deposits liable to penalty"?—That is another very objectionable clause. That means, as I stated before, that it will entail the keeping of a special clerk to keep a set of books for our apprentices.

16. So, practically, you object to clauses 12 to 15, inclusive, dealing with the payments and holding back of certain moneys?—Yes.

17. Clause 16: "Hours of labour of non-handicraft apprentice"?—Of course, that is provided for by the Factories Act. The penalty in subsection (3) I consider rather severe.

18. Section 17: "No young person to be employed at handicraft unless duly apprenticed"?—I think that is a very important clause. That, of course, refers to what I objected to in the first instance. We could not, and would not think of indenturing that class of people.

19. You object to indenturing altogether, then?—I do.

20. Subsection (3) of clause 17: "Deed to be executed by employer"?—That follows the other, as a matter of course.

21. Subsection (4) of clause 17: "Previous service and skill may be taken into account"?—Of course that is not admissible in certain trades, and ours in particular. We cannot accept that. The apprentices have to serve five years before they can be admitted to the trade union.

22. And you prefer the present system, as now conducted in the boot trade, to this?—I do.

23. Clause 18: "Probationers in handicraft"?—I suppose that is taken from one of our rules. It is a very fair clause, that the apprentice should have a fair trial.

24. One of the witnesses has suggested that the term should be changed to three months?—One is not long enough; but, of course, that is the contention the men took up, and we did not think it worth our while to object. A month is not sufficient; but at the same time this clause was arranged at a time when the members of our trade on both sides were not so familiar with the requirements of the trade as they are at the present moment.

25. Clause 19: "Apprentice entitled to certificate of service"?—Of course, there is nothing objectionable there.

26. Clause 20: "Examination into tuition of apprentices"?—Now, this is an important one. In the first place, the Inspector, I may state, is universally objected to by the trade. An Inspector must take the power out of the master's hand, and, of course, where an apprentice has the slightest idea that the power is taken away from the master he can make himself very objectionable. I know I would not have an apprentice on my premises on any consideration if there was any third party to interfere outside the parents. There are ample provisions made for such cases in the old Apprentices Act.

27. It is an assumption that the parent or guardians, being reasonable people, would only take advantage of this clause when the boy was neglected, and the employer could take advantage of it when the boy would not do anything?—But the Magistrate has more power than any Inspector is likely to have, and that is provided for in the old Act.

28. Then, you would have the Magistrate alone in this case?—Yes; that is provided for in the old Act. And apart from that, as you will understand, it would be impossible for any clause to be inserted which could comply with the requirements of the various trades. In our trade an Inspector might be well up in one department, but would be no authority in another. Now, we can mention five departments in our trade, and they would, of course, require five experts to be an authority. I say the Inspector there has no power. The Magistrate, parent, or guardian should be provided for. Referring to the Inspector: as you know, as a rule it is always the best man who is put over the apprentices, and you pay him a good salary. In some instances, you have got some very peculiar boys to deal with; and if one of those boys felt disposed, although an Inspector might be standing over him for three days in succession, he could spoil a portion of all the goods put in his hands. Of course, what we have to guard against is giving a boy such power. If we know a boy can do the work, and will not do so, it is our place to use our power to meet the case, but not the Inspector.

29. The clause provides for that: "If the expert's report shows that the apprentice has been properly taught and trained, the applicant for such inquiry shall pay the expenses of such examination." Of course, if a lad wilfully destroys work, there is another law apart from that?—The Inspector is what we distinctly object to. When the boys know that we can take them before the Magistrate if they go away or neglect their work, it has a good effect; but if that power is taken away, and given to an Inspector, I know from my past experience that they will adopt any course to get away if they wish to go, and this would enable them to do so.

30. Clause 21, subsection (2): "Ill-usage of apprentice"?—I had some trouble in previous years with some of my apprentices, and I had a clause inserted in the indentures, and I found it very effective.

31. What was the nature of it?—The nature of it was that if the apprentice misconducts himself in any way we hold the right to cancel his indentures.

32. Would that not cut both ways—would the lad not have similar power?—Certainly; but my experience has been that it has always been one-sided. With regard to the ill-treatment of apprentices, I have travelled over the world, and up to the present time I have never known a boy