

preserved fruits, condensed milk, fish, jam, syrup, spice, &c., boys are required to feed the various processes the tins go through. I have erected a plant costing over £2,000, the most complete in New Zealand; this has been of great service to many rising industries by being able to get tins cheaply; all this greatly helps. Take butter in tins, for export, one customer used something like 200,000 one- and two-pound tins, and, when I tell you I am making about 30,000 small tins weekly, you can see how this has grown. Now, as all this kind of work is principally boy labour, and cannot be classed as skilled labour; to do so would simply mean a greatly increased cost, if men had to do it, so much that I am sure it would prevent many of these tins being used, and what would be used would be imported, even in face of a high duty. As mail is just closing, I will refer again to a few matters, but would just say 90 per cent. of my business is making these small tins. If I had to bind boys to learn a trade, it would be impossible for me to do so. In my tinsmith branch we have no boys employed, as the class of work is too heavy. What I think you might instill would be to have skilled labour clearly defined, without injury. Of one thing I am sure: if the proposed Act is passed, it will stop enterprise in every direction.

I remain, &c.,

The Hon. E. Mitchelson.

ALEX. HARVEY, Auckland.

APPENDIX E.

DEAR SIR,—

Auckland, 30th August, 1894.

I have read carefully over the Master and Apprentice Bill, and I must say I am surprised that such a measure could be seriously entertained. I will endeavour briefly to state my objections.

Clause 2: "But it does not include occupations that wholly or in part involve unskilled labour." Now, to me, clause 11, clause 16, and in deed of apprenticeship, where it mentions in brackets, "or, if not a handicraft, occupation or calling, as the case may be," would infer that all employes under eighteen years of age must be bound, whether the labour is skilled or unskilled. I think it would be a serious injustice to any boy to bind him for six years to a job that any child could do.

This binding of apprentices is very objectionable, as I have previously experienced. Take my own case: as no doubt you are aware, I have busy seasons, when fruit, butter, honey, vegetables, &c., are plentiful, I require three times the number of hands that can be employed all the year round; am I to be compelled to pay these hands when there is nothing for them to do? Also, every one knows the fluctuating nature of a business in a young colony, which makes it impossible for an employer to see six years ahead; besides the Bill is so very one-sided, an employer is bound even at death; also, many employers go into other businesses, or give up altogether from many causes, but, according to this Bill, an employer or his executors would be compelled to stick to the deed of apprenticeship: not so the apprentice or his guardian; of course, death would release them. Surely a law to be just must be equitable.

Savings-bank deposits is most ridiculous. I cannot see who this is going to benefit; it will be no benefit to the boy during his apprenticeship, and certainly a very serious matter to his parents; besides, I do not see how this should be saddled on an employer, surely one has enough to do with all the worry attending to one's own business.

Clauses 4 and 5 would be a serious injustice to the unfortunate ones mentioned. I am afraid it would altogether prevent them getting employment anywhere.

I have had several conversations with both parents and masters, all of whom condemn the injurious interference contemplated, and we all wonder what it means. I really begin to think it is quite criminal to be an employer. I am certain of one thing, however, that this Bill will defeat its aim. No employer would attempt to launch out in any degree to extend his business. Instead of so doing he will rather become an importer. Had I time, I might touch on other matters in the Bill. It is very evident this Bill has been drafted by the labour agitators, who played such havoc a few years ago.

I would like to point to another very objectionable clause—namely, that the Governor in Council may decide this, that, and the other. I hold, it would be impossible to do this fairly with any political body.

Please send a wire on receipt when this Bill is likely to come before the House. I would like to be present to hear it discussed, if I can possibly get away from business.

I remain, &c.,

Hon. E. Mitchelson.

ALEX. HARVEY.

APPENDIX F.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 28th September, 1894.

I have been requested by the Executive of the New Zealand Boot Manufacturers' Association to lay before the Labour Bills Committee their views on the question of the Master and Apprentice Bill, feeling that as they represent one side of an important colonial industry they are thus justified in claiming the attention of your Committee on this important subject.

1. We submit that the old Act now in force fully meets the reasonable requirements of both the interested parties.

2. That the new Bill is a partial measure, and does not protect equally the interests of both.

3. That the general tenor of the Bill is likely to, in many instances, encourage a spirit of disobedience on the part of the apprentice towards the master, as the inspector practically holds the position the master should occupy, but without any responsibility.

4. That in the past the manufacturers have not charged any premium for teaching the apprentice any branch of the trade; but if the proposed Bill becomes law, the effect will be to cause manufacturers to consider the advisability of demanding a premium, to compensate them for the