

182. I might tell you that the cost of Kanaka labour in Queensland is 18s. per head per week, and of Chinese labour £1 per week?—Yes.

183. That does not include the cost of bringing them from the islands and of taking them back. The skilled wages are very much higher than we think?—I am surprised.

184. *Mr. Millar.*] You have been speaking purely from a worker's point of view on the question of federation. In Victoria are not the workers in your trade more highly paid than they are in New South Wales?—I would rather work in Victoria than in Sydney, because the Victorians manufacture a different article.

185. Can you give me any idea which is the largest factory in Victoria?—Bedgegood is about the largest, employing six years ago about four hundred hands. With the other factories, there were quite four or five thousand hands employed.

186. In your opinion, if the Victorian bootmakers worked full time this year to their full capacity their output would be sufficient for the whole of Australia?—Yes.

187. And the inevitable result would be, under free-trade here, the whole of these factories in Australia would have to find some other outlet for their surplus?—After providing for their local requirements we would be the scapegoat for them.

188. In respect to the boot trade, wages are remarkably low for a skilled trade, are they not, which I understand is largely due to competition from America?—A great deal of it.

189. Do you not think, if there is going to be a Federal tariff, the probability is that the tariff will be lower than the existing one? Now, Victoria has a high protected tariff, and if that is to be reduced there will be great competition from other countries?—Yes, that would be the inevitable result.

190. Therefore our only chance of keeping our manufacturers going is to bring the hours of labour down to the same level as theirs, and to make the other conditions also equal?—That is so.

191. Have you met anything in the shape of Chinese cabinetmaking?—Any amount. In Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, there is hardly a European cabinetmaker.

192. Under federation our market is to be thrown open to these Chinese cabinetmakers: would our men be able to compete with them?—No; they could not do it and pay the same wages and work the same hours.

193. *Mr. Beauchamp.*] You have told us that New Zealand would be the dumping-ground for surplus manufactures of Australia, and if federation were accomplished there would be rings formed amongst manufacturers in Australia by which prices would be maintained: is there not a conflict of opinion there?—I mean the rings that would be formed there would operate here. If I were in the Old Country I would be a Free-trader; but I am not there, and the circumstances are different here. Protection is a monopoly, I admit, but it is a monopoly that allows every manufacturer to go into it freely.

194. *Mr. Leys.*] The franchise under the Commonwealth is manhood suffrage: do you not think the federation of the States will result in federation of labour in the long-run, and therefore in a uniform wage?—I do not dispute it; but it will be guided to a very great extent by the climatic conditions and natural productions of the country.

195. Do you not think the tendency in Australia amongst the working-classes will be to establish a similar system to our own, under which a uniform wage will be paid?—Theoretically, but not in practice. Here we have the practical control; but, supposing New Zealand wishes to take a step further, and the people there are against us, we cannot carry out what we like. Here we can say to our legislators, "We want so-and-so, and if you do not do it in three years we will put some one else in your place."

196. That is to say, you feel more secure without federation?—I reckon this is the best country in the world, and that we ought to be able to carry out our own destiny in our own way.

197. What do the Victorian bootmakers do with their surplus? They do not send it here?—No; but they could do so if there were no tariff against them.

198. Do the Victorians export largely to New South Wales, where there is no duty?—In manufactured articles.

199. And should we be in a worse position in regard to Victoria than New South Wales is at present with regard to manufactures?—That is where a great many people make the big mistake, because New South Wales is the terminus of the great shipping countries, and that gives employment to the people in that colony. It is not the factories. If you remove that terminus to Melbourne, Sydney could shut up.

200. Is the manufacture of boots in New South Wales a considerable one?—In certain lines, yes, but nothing like it is in Victoria.

201. You state, with regard to agricultural produce, that you do not think New Zealand could benefit in any way by federation, because Victoria will be able to supply all the adjacent markets: if we federated, should we not be in as good a position as now? Why does not the factory supply those markets now?—Because New South Wales, for instance, could not depend upon the supply from Victoria.

202. And that non-reliance would always continue?—Yes; there will be exactly the same market as now.

203. Excepting if New South Wales put on a duty against us, then would it not pay the Victorians to send their produce there, because they would be in a very much better position than us?—If they like to put on a duty the steamers would have to pay it. Supposing they supplied themselves in Southland from Victoria, then, of course, we could send our produce Home. They only give you in Sydney the same price as at Home.

204. I see that Sir Robert Stout, in an article on federation, says that "factory-workers can do from 5 to 10 per cent. more work in New Zealand than during the summer months in Australia": is that a fact?—I have worked under both conditions, and I very much question that.