

22. As a general principle, is it not a bad thing to start teaching people a trade at twenty years of age?—We know nothing about apprentices in our trade.

23. But would that not be detrimental to the interests of the younger people?—Well, there would be trouble in getting girls to offer themselves. We take them on sometimes at twenty when we want girls, and we have to put them on at the elementary stage of our business, such as packing caramels. We cannot put them on at anything else.

24. (To Mr. Cable). How many youths have you employed after they are twenty years of age?—The greater part of them come on when they are fifteen or sixteen, but there is a proportion that comes in after they are over twenty.

25. As a tradesman yourself, when you went through your apprenticeship what would you have said to a young fellow coming along at twenty or twenty-one to learn the trade of an engine-fitter?—Well, engineering is a very popular trade with the public, and young fellows come into it at all ages. In the Old Country necessity was the mother of invention, and we had to start young. My apprenticeship was out when I was nineteen years old.

26. The point is this: that a great lump of a fellow of twenty is able to do more than a young lad of sixteen?—Well, he gets double or treble the wages that the lad gets. Our general start is at 6s. a week, while we should start the older lad at 12s. or 15s.

27. You recognise the value of the service by giving a better wage to the adult than to the lad who is going to serve his time?—Yes, within reason. Before I came up this morning I had an application from a young fellow of nineteen who has been attending a technical college, but I would not start him if I had to pay him 17s. a week.

28. Is there any case of putting these youths to work after they have gone through their course at less wages than they received before?—No; generally their wages are trebled, or doubled, anyhow.

29. That is, in your particular business?—Yes.

30. To Mrs. Penlington). You are keeping a dressmaking establishment?—Yes.

31. How many girls have you employed at over twenty to give them their first start?—I do not like to have them if possible. I like to have them young, and to pay them the ordinary wages as laid down by the Act.

32. If that is the case, and Parliament made the Act perfect by passing the Bill, it would not hurt you?—No; but I think it is very unfair to the young people who commence at 5s. a week and have their wages increased 3s. a week every year. In her twentieth year a girl gets £1 a week if she has served her time and gone through the routine of the workroom, and it would not be fair to her if an inexperienced girl had to be paid 17s. a week. No one employing labour would do it; I am positive of that.

33. Have you known cases where girls have gone through their course, with 5s. at the start and three-shilling rises yearly, and when they have come out of their time they have got no more?—Never. When they are out of their time they are worth from £1 to £1 10s. a week, if they have been taught their trade properly.

34. You suggest that if girls start at fifteen years of age, and get 5s. a week with three-shilling rises, the Act should not interfere with them?—Yes. I think it would be quite unworkable and unbusinesslike. A girl, if she has worked steadily, is worth £1 a week when she is twenty.

35. Do you do any part of your business by piecework?—No.

36. Have you heard of some places where they do their work by piecework—the shirtmaking, for instance?—Yes; but dressmaking you could scarcely do by piecework, because it is all bespoke work.

37. But there are certain classes of work done by piecework?—Yes. I have suggested that when girls have been for a certain time working at a trade—say tailoring and shirtmaking—they should get what they earn. If the article is taken by the dozen they should be told the price paid, and their wages would be according to what they earned.

38. I suppose you served your time as a dressmaker?—Yes.

39. Would you consider it fair, after you had gone through the inconvenience and irksomeness of learning a trade, if your employer had brought in girls of twenty years of age and got them to work against you?—Certainly not.

40. Then, you support the Bill?—No; I say it would be unfair to take on girls at twenty and pay them more than the younger ones.

41. I understood you to say it would be unfair to bring a girl of twenty into competition. When you bring women in to serve their time you bring a larger number to compete with those who started earlier. Supposing you bring in women of twenty, twenty-two, or twenty-five to learn dressmaking, are you bringing them in to compete with others?—It would be unfair to the girls. I do not think any just person would say it would be fair.

42. *Mr. Taylor* (to *Mr Jones*).] Have you any women employed at all over twenty years of age?—Yes.

43. What are they earning?—£1 a week, and there is one at £1 2s. 6d., I think. We started one recently at 15s.

44. What is the age of the one getting 15s.?—Twenty-two.

45. Do you know whether she is living with her people or on what she earns?—We always ask the question, whether they are living with their parents at the time.

46. Are any of them living alone?—Yes; I think there are two sisters who are living together.

47. What are they earning?—One at £1 a week, and the other at 17s. 6d., I think.

48. They are keeping a house of their own?—Yes.

49. What proportion of your workpeople do you take on, then, that start at 5s. a week?—We never start them at 5s.; we start them at 7s.

50. What proportion of your workpeople have you taken on when they are nearing twenty years of age?—Very few, because we never take them on if possible. When over twenty they are not tractable, and do not get into the business so readily.