

They are not apprenticed, as a rule. I have only two or three apprentices. Some as old as sixteen or seventeen are taken for a limited time. Perhaps nearly half are under eighteen; but I have no idea as to how many are between seventeen and twenty. I should calculate by appearance over one-half. I do not take their ages. I object to take very young ones, and will not, as a rule, take any under fourteen. They are never taken in Melbourne under fourteen. I have no notice under the Act posted up in the factory, not having been aware of the Act until lately. The rules I have had here have been precisely those carried out in Melbourne. These rules are posted up in the factory. We commence at half-past 8 in the morning, and close at half-past 5 in the evening. The time allowed for dinner is from 1 to half-past 1, and close on Saturdays at 2 p.m. Some take their meal in the factory, others go home. In exceptional cases an hour is allowed for dinner. It is sought as far as possible to get forty-eight hours of labour a week. Fully seven-eighths of the hands are employed by the piece. Work is taken home by them. Those who bring their dinner with them can warm it at the stove, or boil water for making tea. The wages which the young women earn vary considerably. Some get from 10s. to 15s. a week, others 20s. to 30s. The machinists, who are paid by the day, get from 15s. to 27s. 6d. There are only five machinists. We also employ five men and two lads. In reply to the question, whether any of the females support their parents, I think I have only one girl, about eighteen or nineteen who does so, with the assistance of two or three sisters similarly employed in other places. There is a widow, with her daughter, working in the place, and another mother with two or three daughters working with her. In all cases the parents are working themselves. With regard to holidays: we do not, as a rule, give any, for this reason: that fully seven-eighths are pieceworkers, and I always think that if we give a holiday to dayworkers it is only fair to give it to pieceworkers also. As the machinists are paid by the day, the others object, because if they do not work they do not get paid, and you could not determine at what ratio they should be paid, being pieceworkers.

124. *Mr. Strode.*] The question is, whether they work in your factory, whether piece-work or day-work, on any of the days mentioned in the Act?—I am not yet acquainted with the New Zealand Factory Act. I only commenced here in September last. On referring to the Act, we do not work on any of the days mentioned.

124A. Are any besides the machinists employed upon daywork?—Only two apprentices (two young girls). Their engagement is for eighteen months. They are paid 2s. 6d. per week for the first six months, 5s. for the second, and 7s. 6d. for the third. At that rate they are bound. At the termination of the eighteen months they become pieceworkers. Prior to becoming pieceworkers they are paid for every day in the year.

Inspector FREDERICK MALLARD examined.

125. *By the Chairman.*] I am an Inspector of Police, stationed at Dunedin. I have the inspection of factories under the Employment of Females Act, and was nominated for that purpose by the Resident Magistrate.

126. Would you be good enough to state, for the information of the Commissioners, your experience with regard to the working of the Act?—My experience is confined to the City of Dunedin, and as far as that goes, I think the employers of female labour seem desirous to comply with the requirements of the Act, though sometimes they complain that the headwomen will have certain work in hand completed, and the girls are sometimes kept longer than would otherwise be the case. Such has been the excuse on two or three occasions by some of the proprietors of establishments I have visited.

127. Have you often been called upon to lay an information for infringement of the Act?—I have laid four informations since I had the inspection. The first was laid on the 14th May, 1875. It included four charges against Messrs. Kirkpatrick, Glendining, and Co.—the first was dismissed, the second withdrawn, the third withdrawn without prejudice, and the fourth was withdrawn. As it was the first case under the Act, that course was deemed advisable. The second information was against Messrs. Thomson, Strang, and Co., on the 3rd November, 1876. They were fined 1s., and costs. The third was against Messrs. Brown, Ewing, and Co., on the 29th October, 1877. They also were fined 1s., and costs. The last information was against the proprietors of the City Steam Laundry, who were also fined 1s., and costs.

128. Do you know what number of persons are employed in the Steam Laundry?—There were from fifteen to twenty, I think, when I inspected the premises on the Saturday afternoon.

129. *Mr. Strode.*] Were all the informations for working on the Saturday afternoon?—Yes.

130. You have not laid any information for working beyond the specified hours on ordinary days?—No. I have visited several places after 6 o'clock, and, although I have never found any one working, I have good reason to believe that the Act has been infringed in this respect.

131. *The Chairman.*] When did you last inspect Messrs. Hallenstein Bros.' New Zealand Clothing Factory?—I think about six months ago, but I cannot say for certain. I have always found them willing to comply with the Act, and generally they have complied with it. The Act compels me, when I find a breach, to report to the Resident Magistrate. I recommend whether an information should be laid or not, and in all cases he acquiesces.

132. Have you no discretion?—I have used none. When I have found a fair breach of the Act I have reported to the Resident Magistrate, and he has said, "Lay an information;" and it was done.

133. The offences, then, against the Act for which informations have been laid have been confined to the employment of females on over-hours on Saturdays?—Yes; for, although I am thoroughly satisfied that the Act is infringed with regard to the ages of children, it is thought that I cannot prove the ages, and that it would be useless to lay an information.

134. You mean those between ten and fourteen for the half-day?—Yes, that I believe is generally broken. Some time ago I visited Herman's factory, in Stafford Street, and found on inquiry that some of those under fourteen were working whole time. The difficulty of proving the age is one thing that has occurred to me in the working of the Act.

135. *Mr. Bradshaw.*] You have no way of determining the age of a child?—No.