

THOMAS PRESTON examined.

1448. I am a journeyman tailor, President of the Tailors' Society, and delegate to the Trades and Labour Council.

1449. The hours worked by the trade are nine a day, and there is no breach of this.

1450. We complain of the great number of boys that have come into the trade of late years.

1451. The best tailors' prices for making, exclusive of material, are—trousers, 6s. 6d. ; vests, 6s. ; coats, 19s. : total, £1 11s. 6d. Manufacturers of slops pay for trousers 9d., vests 4d., coats 1s. 2d. : total, 2s. 3d.

1452. The influx of female labour has driven away all the men over to the other side—that is, cheap slops have checked the importation of English slops.

1453. The tailors have nothing to complain of except the boy-labour.

1454. The establishment of factories and cheap shops getting private orders has reduced our wages 10s. or 15s.

GEORGE MCBRIDE examined.

1455. I am a merchant-tailor and clothing-manufacturer. I introduced clothing-manufacture in New Zealand.

1456. I employ about a hundred males and females, chiefly on weekly wages. The majority are women.

1457. By the tailors' log apprentices receive at first 2s. 6d., which is the minimum, to 12s. My log for apprentices is—girls start at 5s. to £1 ; boys start at 7s. 6d. to £1 10s. I have had hands with me for fifteen years. I have only been six years in Auckland, and I have the majority with me still, that I started with in Auckland.

1458. I do not let out work outside by own hands, and I think this sort of thing ought to be put a stop to by Act of Parliament. I can get my work done £1 to £2 10s. cheaper by outside work. I am very particular about the age of my apprentices when starting. All my hands are indentured at first. I refuse to teach any one the trade unless they are properly apprenticed—four years for a girl without previous experience, and two years for a girl with experience ; four years for a boy. This has only come in the last six months. I have great difficulty in getting good female labour. Wages are not considered when we get a real good hand. A girl can earn £1 10s. a week. I could beat the imported article out of the market. It is the want of knowledge on the part of the consumer. We can make the clothing cheaper under protection than without it. It has cheapened the clothing 20 per cent., and the consumer ought to get the benefit. The employes get the benefit by having constant work. In some cases the rate of wages has come down.

1459. About one-eighth of the work is done by piecework.

1460. I work my hands the factory hours.

1461. I have not had time to go through the log prices yet, but so far, I think, it has reduced the apprentices wages about 100 per cent.

1462. All my weekly wages are above the log wages.

1463. The Factory Act is generally very suitable. It is hardly fair to apply it to only part of a trade.

1464. I have never known a tailoress to be out of work in Auckland. I get all my girls from Dunedin : that is where I was before. I find that more work can be got out of them. I think it must be the climate.

1465. I was once fined for a boy walking across the factory to get a glass of water. Girls can for a lark get their employer into trouble by going into the shop at meal-hours ; and if the Inspector sees them I have no redress.

1466. It is better for the employers to have well-ventilated factories, as they can get more work out of their employes.

1467. We have one closet for men and one for women, and each have different access.

1468. We have a retail shop, and always close it at 6 o'clock, and 9 o'clock on Saturdays. Would like to close at 2 on Saturdays if it became general. I think it is too long to 9 on Saturdays.

1469. With regard to overtime, I think permits should be granted to allow overtime.

1470. Taking work home and doing it out of the shop by strange hands has brought down the price of overalls from 18s. to 7s. 6d. We do not object to our own hands taking work home. We do not give permission, but we know that it is done. We do not give work to people who are not in the shop. I know that it is a violation of the spirit of the Act.

1471. I pay some girls £1 10s. per week, but if they were paid by piecework they would receive £2 10s. The girls as a rule object to work piecework.

1472. No one has ever been " sacked " after serving their apprenticeship.

RICHARD MILLS examined.

1473. I am a journeyman tailor—President of the Tailoresses' Union, delegate to the Trades and Labour Council. I work in Hallenstein's.

1474. The Union is just starting. We are accepting the Dunedin log, which comes into operation next Monday.

1475. I find from inquiries and from personal knowledge—I was working in a factory for two years—that there is a great deal of work given out.

1476. In reply to the evidence given by Mr. McBride, I wish to confute some of his statements. I was one of a deputation from our society to Mr. McBride with reference to the Dunedin log for his approval. He said that his own scale of pay was higher than that of the log, but he declined the right of the society to overlook his work or scale of wages. He also said if any one inside his establishment gave evidence of what goes on they would be instantly dismissed. He said his girls