

110. I have never worked at piecework except for a short time, when I worked at one of the factories. They worked overtime in the factories in order to make a bare living. Some work in their meal-hours. They worked at home till about 12 o'clock at night.

111. Working ordinary hours in the factory, the girls earn 2s. 6d. per day, take the average all through. When they take work home, perhaps they could make an extra shilling. Including both day and night work, they could earn 3s. 4d., not including Saturday. This was previous to the establishment of the Union. It has stopped entirely the taking of work home. Since the formation of the Union I have made it my business to inquire strictly, and keep a very strict watch. I have others to watch too, for me, with the exception of one or two instances which have been done away with since.

112. The tendency of the wages before the establishment of the Union was always downward. Since the establishment of the Union the workers are enabled to make a fair wage—about 19s.—which is about the average for the other factories. This applies to young women between the ages of sixteen and thirty. Some few make a larger wage, but they overwork themselves. I have known many cases of illness through this overwork. This is in mole machining. Both piecework and wages obtain in the factories, and the overwork is among the pieceworkers.

113. The sanitation is good—nothing to complain of. No complaints have come to me with reference to ventilation.

114. I have not officially visited the factories. There is only one factory in which the manager objects to my visiting his establishment; but I do not think his employer objects. It is part of my duty as Secretary to the Union to visit these places.

115. I know both past and present about the stocking-makers and the hosiery. I know many cases where the girls have been overworked and illness brought on by it.

116. The factory-hours are regular—eight hours. The hands are obliged to take work home in order to make a living. For instance, their average wage in the hosiery branch—that is, a fair worker—is about 9s. a week, working very hard in the regular hours. The girls have to take work home in order to supplement their small income. About 5s. is the minimum.

117. In my opinion it is the reckless competition of the manufacturers that has brought down the wages so low. Out of these wages all breakages in connection with the machines have to be paid. One case is before me—it is not an extreme case—a salary of 8s. 6d., and 1s. 3d. is taken from that amount. The average amount is 9d. to 1s. that is deducted from the salary. I will supply the Commission with a list of the wages paid to the workers in the factories.

118. An average worker could make 9s. before the log was formed; an average worker can earn 14s. to 15s. a week now. The workers are not satisfied with this.

119. I estimate that a girl's board costs 13s. to 14s.

120. Before the Union a girl had to pay 10s. and give a fortnight's work to learn the machine. It would take her a month to earn 10s. They would get on better after that.

121. There is no lack of girls applying for employment.

122. There are several small factories not joined the Union yet. I do not know the reason why.

123. I can give you a list of all the factories, with the number of persons that are employed, approximately.

124. The Union prohibits the taking-home of work. Supposing a widow could not attend during the day, the Union would favourably consider her application; but no more than a day's work would be given her. If more than a day's work were given it might tend to sweating.

125. The log and Union have remedied most of the evils, except in the hosiery branch. The log wants to be revised in that respect.

126. One difficulty I find is that numbers of persons who are in the shirt trade go to retail shops and offer to make shirts at a lesser rate than the manufacturers get from the warehousemen, and the consequence is that the latter are crippled. It wants to be nipped in the bud. I do not know how the Union can deal with it.

127. All the factories are not registered. It has not been considered by the Union, but I have thought the matter out, and I do not think the Union can interfere.

128. We have had complaints from the manufacturers that their work is crippled—that is, those that have joined the Union.

129. There are not many that have not joined the Union. I am speaking of the tailoresses, which includes the shirt, hosiers, and clothing. We have not had anything to do with the bag-trade. The bag-making is very unhealthy. I am making inquiries. I cannot give any information about it as yet.

130. This log is not in force outside of Dunedin.

131. Our Union does not embrace dressmakers.

132. It is a practice in the stocking trade for the apprentices to go for one year for nothing, after that they receive 2s. 6d. to 5s. a week, and then they are allowed to leave and others take their place. A number in the room would be getting £1 5s. a week. The forewoman would get £3 15s., the room being filled with a lot of apprentices. This has come under my own personal notice.

133. These apprentices that have left do what they can to earn a living. There are a considerable number of these apprentices that have been thrown out at the end of two years. I cannot say whether they are competent dressmakers.

134. The girls are not very anxious to enter domestic service. I believe the wages are pretty low in domestic service; also, the girls wish to be near their homes, with their own people.

Miss ELIZABETH BURROWS examined.

135. I am a stocking-knitter. I am working at home now. I worked for a number of years at Mrs. C's factory. About thirty worked there when I went there first; when I left, about