

82. And you think that if they were precluded by law it would be prejudicial to your business?—No, not to my business.

83. It would be the employee who would suffer?—Yes, certainly.

84. (To Mr. Cooper). You consider that young people of twenty years and over employed in any capacity in a factory should be entitled to 17s. a week under the Act?—Yes.

85. Do you consider that the wages of all employees working in a factory should be fixed by Act of Parliament?—No.

86. Why?—Because it is impossible. The wages of adult workers vary considerably, even amongst qualified journeymen.

87. Do they not also in respect of persons of twenty years and over?—Yes. I take it that a young fellow just out of his time at twenty years of age would be worth possibly £3 a week, but if he only started to work at that time I consider his services would be worth 17s. a week at least. He could not get decent board and lodging in Wellington even at that price.

88. Do you think the wage to be fixed for the employee, who has had no experience, should be that which would pay for his board?—I think a reasonable living-wage should be insured by the statute, and that that should be the minimum from which the employees should be graded up.

89. You consider that wage should be 17s. a week?—Yes, as the lowest possible amount that should be paid in all cases.

90. Is that one of the chief grounds on which you advocate the passing of this Bill?—Yes, it is one of the grounds.

91. Assuming that there was a young fellow of twenty who had had no previous experience of engineering and could not earn for his employer 17s. a week, would you say that in that case the employer should pay that amount when he could not earn it?—I would not suggest that he should employ him; but that young fellow might be able to get more in some other occupation—in driving a cart, for instance.

92. Then you would say to that young fellow, "You shall not be permitted to acquire a trade because you did not go to it earlier in life"?—I would not say that. It would be the employer who would say that.

93. You would be advocating a law that would prevent the young fellow from learning a trade?—I do not think so.

94. Mr. Cable says that if this amending Bill were made law it would have the effect of precluding employers from taking on young men or workers of twenty years of age and over, because if they had not had previous experience the employers could not pay them 17s. a week?—I do not admit that.

95. Then, you know better than Mr. Cable?—As far as Mr. Cable is concerned it might be so; but to my own knowledge there are employers in this city who are taking on employees of twenty-one years of age and paying them £1 5s. and providing board, and that is equivalent to £2 5s. a week, and these young men have had no previous experience.

96. Does that not prove that an employer pays the wages he can afford to pay?—I admit that the man is worth that wage to his employer, otherwise it would not be paid.

97. (To Mr. Collins). You advocate that every person shall get a living-wage?—Yes.

98. Is 17s. a week a living-wage?—To my mind, no; not in Wellington, at all events.

99. Then, why advocate 17s. a week?—We put that down as the minimum. We do not say it is a living-wage.

100. Then, is 17s. a week, in your opinion, the minimum amount a person can live on?—I do not know how they would live on that in Wellington. Say, a young fellow pays 16s. a week for his board and lodging, where would his clothing, his tobacco, or his beer come from, if he drinks beer?

101. You say that every employer should be compelled to pay 17s. a week?—Yes.

102. And now you say that 17s. is not sufficient to expect any one to live on?—Yes, but that is the minimum I think they should receive.

103. Although it is not a living-wage?—Yes; it is far from it.

104. Do you consider a man or woman should be paid a living-wage whether he or she is capable or earning it?—We always leave that point to the employer.

105. But you are going to fix this by Act of Parliament?—It is for the employer to say whether he requires the services.

106. Do you suggest that all the employees' wages should be fixed by Act of Parliament?—No; but we say that if it is fixed by Act of Parliament in this particular instance of Mr. Taylor's, 17s. a week shall be the minimum.

107. Would the Trades and Labour Council advocate an amendment of the Factories Act on the lines stated by Mr. Taylor?—Yes; and, as stated by Mr. Cooper, although other Councils have not been communicated with on this matter, we know that they uphold our action.

108. Have you conferred with them?—No.

109. Then you are here simply representing the Trades and Labour Council of Wellington?—Yes, actually speaking.

110. Did you use any influence, as a Trades and Labour Council, with Mr. Taylor to bring down this Bill?—Not that I am aware of. *Mr. Cooper:* The Wellington Council did not.

111. Do you know whether the Christchurch Council did?—I do not.

112. Did you approve of the views of Mr. Taylor in the matter?—Yes.

113. *Right Hon. R. J. Seddon* (to Mr. Cable).] With regard to boys or youths going to learn engineering at twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four, or twenty-five, I suppose it is not a question of wages at all with them?—No, it is the desire to learn the trade.

114. I suppose there are many of such cases where they actually pay a premium?—Not nowadays.

115. No premiums are paid nowadays?—No, those days are gone.