

be prescribed by regulations." We have no difficulty at all with regard to that matter in the larger centres and where there are regular Inspectors, but the difficulty would be in the smaller centres, where perhaps there is an officious gentleman who might deem he had the right to walk in at any time, and it is not necessary that he should have that right. The clause, apart from the laundry clause, to which the great objection is taken is section 4—in regard to the branding of certain articles as having been made in New Zealand. We ask that that clause be deleted altogether.

*Mr Luke* With all its subsections?

*Witness* The whole thing. It is just as well to say what we want to point out, and there is no use in beating about the bush. We say that the requirements would be found to be impracticable in some cases, and would be found to have exactly the opposite effect to what is intended. We take it that the intention is to encourage and increase the sale of those New-Zealand-made articles, and to foster a patriotic feeling in connection with those articles. The clause provides that they should be branded as "made in New Zealand." There is no question that in connection with some of the goods mentioned you are going to destroy the sale to a very serious extent, and, as a matter of fact, hurt both the employers and the workers. Mr Hannah is here to speak in regard to the boot trade. With regard to clothing and textile goods, the woollen people, while they have not got the same objection as the boot people, and while they do advertise their business largely as New Zealand goods—but in wools New Zealand has made a name for herself, and it would not do any harm. I do not want to go through all the details of this clause, but we submit that if they have a parcel of hosiery with a label on, that would not be sufficient to meet the requirements. What good is this proposed enactment going to do? The man who buys a pair of socks or the woman who buys a pair of stockings does not look at the label on the parcel. If it is going to have any effect the brand would have to be woven in, and that would increase the cost of production; and we consider that it is neither practicable nor necessary so far as we are concerned. I have consulted with Mr Donne, and I got Mr Scott in Dunedin to get hold of the Mosgiel people, and I found that to enable the brand to be inserted on the selvage, it would mean the importing of very expensive machinery, while they inform me that the output was not sufficient to warrant that. They advertise their goods, and if it were commercially practicable the woollen people would be glad to do it in regard to rugs and worsted articles, but in some cases it would be impracticable, and compliance in other cases would not be effective. With regard to clothing, there are many men who are wearing suits of New Zealand stuff, but think they are wearing imported goods, and if they were to be told that definitely when buying their clothing they would want the imported goods. Then, in regard to canned and preserved foods for human consumption, I do not know how that is practicable. The brand would have to be embossed on the tins, and I question whether it is good business—from the point of view of increasing the demand for New-Zealand-made articles—that this should be enforced. This is already done in many cases. Even if the brand "Made in New Zealand" is desirable, the time has not come in New Zealand when such a law should be put into operation. We are not yet sufficiently educated, and I am perfectly satisfied that if it is put into operation it is going to have a very ill effect upon the industries dealt with under the clause, and from every point of view. If it is deemed desirable that legislation of some sort should be made, then we should suggest that the simple expedient adopted by England, Victoria, and other countries, of insisting that the imported article should bear the mark of the manufacturing country, should be adopted here. In that way you would get the same advantage that is now sought for. Where it is policy to brand New Zealand articles by the manufacturers, they will very soon find it out, and make it a business proposal. I have nothing further with regard to the main clauses. Coming to the schedule, I desire to draw attention to the proposed amendment to section 27 of the principal Act. That amendment is restricting the powers of Inspector regarding the granting of permits to young boys and girls. The proposal is that all the words of paragraph (a) after the word "authorization" shall be omitted, and the words "shall be given only in the case of boys over thirteen years of age who are the holders of certificates of exemption as prescribed by regulations under the authority of paragraph (e) of section one hundred and fifty of the Education Act, 1908" Provided that no boy or girl whose employment is so authorized shall be employed in any workroom in which machinery is used" shall be inserted in lieu thereof. That means that a permit will not be given under any circumstances to a boy under sixteen who is not the holder of an examination certificate that he has passed the Fourth Standard and it is proposed to make it the Fifth Standard. We suggest that permission should be given to grant permits to boys who have not passed either the Fourth or Fifth Standard. We only ask for discretionary power for the Inspector. You are doing an absolute cruelty to those who cannot pass the Fourth Standard, but yet are able to work in factories. I had a case in Dunedin of a young fellow of twenty-two who was able to work, but had never been able to pass the Second Standard. He had not the mental power to do it. There are many others who from circumstances beyond their own control have not had the opportunities of passing the Fourth or Fifth Standard. Why should they be prevented from getting employment? We say, do not make it open to all, but give the discretionary power. The request is a reasonable one, I submit, from a humanitarian point of view. The proviso in this clause, as proposed in the amendment, is going to prevent these boys from going into a boot-factory, a clothing-factory, or any factory where machinery is used at all. I am not asking that he should be put on the machinery, but he may be there getting some acquaintance with the surroundings, so that he could get work on the machines when he is sixteen, and we ask that provision should be made to give the Inspector the discretionary power to grant permits in exceptional cases to persons under sixteen who have not passed the Fourth Standard. We also ask that the proviso should be altered to permit boys and girls so authorized to be employed in workrooms where machinery is used, so long as they are not employed on the machine. In regard to section 32 of the principal Act, a proposed amend-