

REPORT

FROM THE

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

HOME WORK,

TOGETHER WITH THE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,

AND APPENDIX.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be printed 22nd July, 1908.

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1908.

ORDER OF REFERENCE.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON HOME WORK.

[11th February, 1908].—*Ordered*.—That a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report upon the conditions of labour in trades in which Home Work is prevalent and the proposals, including those for the establishment of wages boards and the licensing of work places, which have been made for the remedying of existing abuses.

Ordered.—That the Committee do consist of Twenty-one Members.

Committee accordingly *nominated* of,—Mr. Arkwright, Mr. Bridgeman, Sir William Bull, Mr. Boland, Mr. Brunner, Mr. Chiozza Money, Mr. Joseph Devlin, Mr. Arthur Dewar, Mr. Fell, Mr. Gooch, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Ernest Lamb, Mr. Hugh Law, Mr. Massie, Mr. Masterman, Mr. Parkes, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Stuart Samuel, Mr. Trevelyan, and Sir Thomas Whittaker.

Ordered.—That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered.—That Seven be a Quorum.—(Mr. Whiteley.)

[19th February, 1908].—*Ordered*.—That the Minutes of the Evidence taken before the Select Committee on Home Work in the last Session of Parliament be referred to the Select Committee on Home Work.—(Sir Thomas Whittaker.)

[21st February, 1908].—Sweated Industries Bill, Bill committed to the Select Committee on Home Work.—(Mr. Toulmin.)

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REPORT.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE who were appointed to consider and report upon the conditions of labour in trades in which HOME WORK is prevalent and the proposals, including those for the establishment of Wages Boards and the licensing of work places, which have been made for the remedying of existing abuses—and to whom the Sweated Industries Bill was committed :—HAVE considered the matters to them referred, and have agreed to the following REPORT :—

1. Your Committee have confined their inquiry almost entirely to the rates of payment which Home Workers receive, the weekly earnings which those rates yield, the conditions under which the people live and work, and the proposals which have been made for improving their position, and removing or modifying the evils which exist. In accordance with the directions of our reference, we have also considered such matters connected with labour in factories and workshops, in trades in which Home Work is prevalent, as seemed to be connected with and bear upon the purpose of our inquiry. In addition to the evidence which we have heard from very capable officials of the Home Office, and the Labour Department of the Board of Trade, from members of organisations which exist for the purpose of directing attention to, and suggesting remedies for, what is commonly known as the “sweating” evil, from representative employers and workpeople who are engaged in some of the industries, the conditions of which have been considered, and from the promoters of the Sweated Industries Bill, your Committee have had the further advantage of supplementing Mr. Aves’s valuable Report on the working of the Labour Laws of Australia and New Zealand by perusing a number of Official Reports which were very courteously supplied by the Governments of the States of the Australian Commonwealth and of the Dominion of New Zealand, and such information as the Foreign Office could obtain regarding the legislation of other countries upon the subject of their inquiries. The Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords, which was appointed on the motion of Lord Dunraven in 1888, and reported in 1890, has also received our careful attention.

2. If the term “sweating” is understood to mean that the employer “grinds the face of the poor” by making an altogether inadequate payment for work upon which he obtains a large and quite disproportionate profit, your Committee are of opinion that, although there are cases of this kind, sweating of this description is not the most important factor in the problem which they have had to consider.

3. On the other hand, if “sweating” is understood to mean that work is paid for at a rate which, in the conditions under which many of the workers do it, yields to them an income which is quite insufficient to enable an adult person to obtain anything like proper food, clothing, and house accommodation, there is no doubt that sweating does prevail extensively. We have had quite sufficient evidence to convince us (indeed, it is almost common knowledge) that the earnings of a large number of people—mainly women who work in their homes—are so small as alone to be insufficient to sustain life in the most meagre manner, even when they toil hard for extremely long hours. The consequence is that, when those earnings are their sole source of income, the conditions under which they live are often not only crowded and insanitary, but altogether pitiable and distressing; and we have evidence that many are compelled to have recourse to Poor Law or charitable “relief.” Lord Dunraven’s Committee, after hearing evidence from as many as 291 witnesses, drawn from many different trades and localities, recorded their opinion in 1890 that the evils of sweating “can hardly be exaggerated.” In the almost complete absence of statistics on the subject it is impossible for your Committee to decide whether the volume of sweating is at the present time more or less than in 1890, either actually or relatively to population, but sufficient evidence has been put before them to show that sweating still exists in such a degree as to call urgently for the interference of Parliament. While it is impossible to measure the number of sweated individuals, there is, unfortunately, no doubt whatever that it is very large, and that it is still true that the evils of sweating are very great. While our evidence has been chiefly concerned with Home Workers, it has been shown that very low rates of remuneration are by no means confined to them, but are not infrequently the lot of factory workers also in the trades in which Home Work is prevalent. It is, however, satisfactory to record the opinion of so experienced and competent an observer as Miss Squire, of the Home Office, that there has been considerable improvement since Lord Dunraven’s Committee reported, though a contrary opinion was expressed by a large number of witnesses.

4. The problem which is presented by the fact that a very large number of people are unable to, or, at any rate, do not, earn more than a mere pittance, and consequently live under conditions which are conducive to anything but social, material, and moral well-being, is admittedly a many-sided and very difficult one. More or less similar conditions prevail, not only in all the great countries on the Continent of Europe, but also in the United States of America, and even in Australasia, where the proportion of women to men is so different from that which obtains here as to render some of the fundamental conditions which affect women's work and wages scarcely comparable with those with which we have to deal. The evidence which your Committee have taken, and the appendices which accompany it, indicate that all the countries to which reference has been made have either already attempted to deal with the question in some way or other, by legislation, or are considering the best way in which they can do so.

HOME WORKERS.

5. There are three main groups of Home Workers :—

(1.) The employer who works in his own home, and employs there persons from the outside. Such a home is a "Workshop" under the Factory and Workshop Act, and it must be registered as such.

(2.) The employer who works in his own home, and employs only members of his own family. Such a home is a "domestic workshop" under the Factory and Workshop Act, and it must be registered as such.

(3.) Persons who do not employ any other person, but who undertake work for others, and do it in their own homes. They are outside the protection of the Factory and Workshop Act, save in regard to the "particulars" section, hereinafter referred to.

It is with the third of these groups that your Committee are mainly concerned. Those who form this group consist chiefly of three classes :—

(1.) Single women, widows, wives deserted by or separated from their husbands, and wives whose husbands are ill or unable to work. These are usually regular workers. They vary much in age, skill and efficiency, in the class of the work they do, and the amount they are able to earn.

(2.) Wives who obtain work when their husbands are out of employment. They are more or less casual workers; some of them have not had any real training, and are unskilled. They have to take such work as is available at the moment, on such terms as are offered to them.

(3.) Wives and daughters of men in regular employment, who wish to increase the family income. They usually select pleasant work, and do not ordinarily work very long hours.

6. The circumstances and earnings of Home Workers vary very considerably. Great caution is required in receiving statements as to rates of payment, net receipts, and number of hours worked. The evidence which your Committee have received has sometimes been conflicting. The price paid for doing part of the work required to produce an article or garment may be thought to be the payment for the whole of the work, unless the various sub-divisions of it be understood, and it be clearly stated that only one of the processes is referred to. There is also often great uncertainty as to the number of hours worked per day in cases where the worker is a wife or daughter, who has her household and family to look after, and, in some cases, an invalid husband or father to attend to. A week's earnings may or may not represent a full week's work. In some cases it represents only such time as can be spared from other duties. In others it represents almost ceaseless toil during all the hours the workers are awake from Monday morning to Saturday night.

7. Mere statements of the amount earned per week, even when it is added that long hours are worked, are not sufficient and conclusive. Sometimes the workers are old or crippled, or in feeble health, and quite incapable of reasonably rapid and efficient work. In other cases they are inexperienced, slow, and incompetent. Many are, from one cause or another, industrial, physical, and social wrecks. If cases be investigated with the assistance of a relieving officer, a very different impression will be created than the one that will result from visiting those to whom any large employer of home workers will introduce an inquirer. By one method the most exceptional, pitiable, and distressing cases, and, incidentally, usually the least capable, and less regularly and fully employed

workers, will be discovered. By the other, the most reliable, satisfactory, efficient and constantly employed will be met with. Neither group of cases will represent the average. The conditions and earnings of the great majority will be found to lie between the two.

8. Miss Vines, of the Home Office, gave particulars of some extremely distressing cases of aged and feeble workers, which were obviously very special and quite exceptional. Miss Squire and Miss Vines both gave instances of small earnings, and what appeared to be exceedingly low payments. Miss Squire thinks that the number of people who earn a livelihood by the work is "very few indeed." She expressed the opinion that those who appear to do so will "generally be found to be in receipt of poor relief or pensions or charitable assistance of some kind." She considers that the remuneration obtained by most of them "could hardly be found sufficient in any circumstances to support a person." On the other hand, Miss Collett, Senior Investigator of Women's Industries to the Board of Trade, told your Committee that a large proportion of the home workers are fairly comfortably situated married women, who add to the family income in this way. She gave particulars of the earnings of a number of full time workers who earned an average of 14s. per week. She expressed the opinion that the distressing cases, where the earnings are very small, and the conditions are pitiable, are a minority of the home workers, and are largely old people "who are really past efficient work," or married women who only work when their husbands are out of employment. Miss Collett's views, however, were not shared by the majority of witnesses.

9. A great diversity in the rate of actual earnings per week will be found amongst persons who are receiving the same rate of pay per article or per process. Some are much quicker than others. There is a considerable difference in the extent to which workers have the most efficient tools and appliances. Sewing machines vary considerably in speed and time-saving fittings. Workers vary in the speed at which they can continuously drive them. The class of work also varies. Low class work at low rates often gives larger earnings than better work at higher rates. Some articles or garments are, so to speak, "blown together." Others of the same kind, but different quality, have to be carefully made and finished. That one rate is lower than another does not by any means necessarily prove that it is a less remunerative rate.

WHY THEIR EARNINGS ARE SMALL.

10. The reasons why the earnings of many home workers are pitiable small are various and, to some extent, cumulative. Among them are the facts that:—

(1.) Much of the work is sewing, and requires no or very little previous training and experience. It is consequently work to which almost any woman who is able to sew can turn at once, when the necessity of earning her livelihood is forced upon her, or employment in any other occupation to which she has been accustomed fails her.

(2.) As the work can be done at home, it is desired by a large number of women, whose circumstances, household duties, feeble health, age, invalid husband, parents, or children, render it impossible or difficult for them to undertake regular work in factories. It is preferred by others who dislike domestic service or regular work for fixed hours under supervision in factories or workshops. It is also sought after by the daughters of men in work and their wives who have no family, or who have time on their hands, and desire to augment the family income by doing work in their spare time.

(3.) As the payment for home work is necessarily at piece rates, those who are slow, owing to age, feeble health, inexperience, incompetence, or lack of power, energy, or disposition to work, and those who for any reason find it difficult to secure and retain employment elsewhere, find it more easy to obtain this kind of work than any other, and they drift into it and settle down to it as a method of earning a livelihood. Although at piece rates the payment per article is the same, whether the worker be slow or quick, employers give the preference in selecting factory or workshop workers to those who are quickest, most regular, and most reliable, because they thereby economise space, machinery, and working expenses.

(4.) These conditions and influences tend to make the supply of home workers very large and elastic.

(5.) A large proportion of home workers are engaged in the production of articles in competition with machinery, and the cost of making the articles by machinery fixes the rate which can be paid to them. Powerful sewing machines, with the latest improvements, specially adapted for each particular class of work, driven by steam power will turn out four times as much work, in an hour, as can be done by an ordinary treadle machine, and with far less physical strain upon the worker. If the same rate per article be paid to the two classes of workers, the home worker will be able to earn only one-fourth as much per hour as the factory worker. The weekly earnings of the home worker may be pitifully small, while those of the factory worker may be fairly good. In such cases, the trouble is not that the rate of pay is unduly low, but that the home worker is handicapped by her conditions and appliances. It is very largely a repetition of the old difficulty of the hand loom weaver in his room at home, competing with the power loom in the factory. Clearly, the rate of payment per article cannot be increased substantially beyond the price paid for doing the same work under superior conditions in the factory. Either the whole of the work must be done in well-equipped factories, or the earnings of home workers who make the same articles, must remain much lower than those of factory workers. These remarks apply especially to the ready-made tailoring and the box making trades.

(6.) Another large section of home workers have to meet competition of a different kind. They are makers of baby-linen and ladies' blouses and underclothing—articles which a very large number of those who require them can make for themselves. Unless the price at which these articles are sold to the wives and daughters of the better paid working men and the small middle class people is low, those who would otherwise be purchasers will buy the materials, and make the articles at home.

(7.) The competition of foreign-made articles was stated by several witnesses to be an important factor contributing to depress the prices paid for the Home Work in certain trades, of which the Irish lace trade and the hook-and-eye trade were adduced as examples.

(8.) Home workers, though not exclusively, are almost entirely women. The earnings of women are usually much lower than those of men, and the earnings of men in casual, low-grade occupations in which little or no special training or skill is required, are extremely small.

(9.) Women home workers, because they are very poor and helpless, and work separately, are unorganised, and cannot act together to promote common interests and secure better and uniform rates of payment. They have to bear more than their share of the consequences of uncertainty and irregularity in the trades in which they are engaged; and they are powerless to resist the tendency to reduce rates, which is caused by the keen competition of employers to undersell each other.

(10.) The intervention of the middleman between the employer and the worker occurs in many trades. Cases are numerous where the person who obtains the work from the warehouse or factory distributes it to and collects it from the Home Worker, and makes a profit or charge, so that the worker does not obtain even the low price paid by the warehouse.

(11.) Fierce competition exists among the employers in some of the most sweated trades. The cutting of prices in contract work follows as a natural consequence, the less reputable employers underbidding their competitors and seeking to recoup themselves by reducing the remuneration of the workers. Your Committee have had evidence that material differences exist in the rates of payment usually paid by different employers in the same town at the same moment for the same work.

Your Committee endorse the opinion which was expressed in the following extract from the Report of the Labour Commission in 1894 :—

“ The natural difficulty, in not highly skilled occupations, of organising persons who work at home, or are dispersed through numerous small workshops, even if it can be overcome in the case of men, would seem almost insuperable in that of women. In the absence of organisation, and in the face of the unlimited competition for the cheaper and less skilled kind of sempstress and similar work, there seems to be little to prevent wages from sinking to the point at which, in the words of one witness, ‘ it is easier to starve without the work.’ So long as there is abundance of cheap labour, without any minimum wage affixed by the action of trade organisations or

otherwise, it seems to be beyond the power of small employers and contractors, wholly unorganised themselves, and keenly competing with each other for the custom of wholesale houses, and for small profits, to give women more for their work than the lowest pay at which it can be obtained."

11. There is another class of considerations which must not be overlooked. The imposition by law of conditions and obligations upon owners and occupiers of factories and workshops tends to encourage employers to resort to Home Work in order to avoid compliance with the requirements of Parliament and the visits and supervision of the inspectors who are appointed to enforce them. The more numerous and stringent those regulations become the greater is the temptation to evade them by employing persons who work under conditions to which they do not apply. As the cost of providing premises, machinery, and plant is also largely avoided, and there is far less liability to strikes and trade disputes, the disadvantages, from an employer's point of view, which attend the employment of Home Workers are counterbalanced in many trades, especially in those which are subject to great seasonal fluctuations, and to employers whose capital is small. On the other hand, the existence of a large supply of low-priced home labour tends to reduce the apparent necessity for, and to check the introduction of, improvements in methods of production in factories; while, when improvements which lower the cost of the production are made, they tend to reduce the piece rates which can be paid for Home Work on the same class of goods. It is one of the difficulties of the problem that the more efficient machinery, factories, and the organisation of work in them become, the more hopeless is rendered the struggle of the Home Worker to compete with them. These aspects of the question suggest that the principles which underlie our factory and workshop legislation should be applied to the conditions under which work is done elsewhere than in what are technically known as factories and workshops, not only because improvement in those conditions is desirable, and Home Workers require the protection of the law to an increasing extent, but also in order to discourage a method of evading the operation of the present law, which tends to increase Home Work and aggravate some of its most unsatisfactory phases.

PROVISIONS OF THE EXISTING LAW WITH REGARD TO HOME WORK.

12. At the present time Home Workers' premises come under the operation of the provisions of the general law of public health which relate to the sanitation, &c., of dwellings. In addition to these, some special provisions on the subject of Home Work are contained in the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901. The most important—for the purposes of the present inquiry—is that contained in Section 108, which gives to the District Council power, in the case of trades specified by Order of the Secretary of State, to prohibit any person from giving out work to be done in premises which are injurious or dangerous to the health of the persons employed therein. The classes of work to which the section has been applied by the Order at present in force are numerous.

13. This provision only came into operation on the 1st January, 1902, and the statistics published annually by the Home Office of the action of local authorities under the section show, up to the present, that a small though increasing use is being made by local authorities of their powers under the section. In 1906, 1,201 cases of outwork in unwholesome premises were detected, 816 notices were served, and in three cases prosecutions were taken for non-compliance with the notice of the local authority.

14. Section 108 gives the only general power of control in regard to the conditions under which Home Work is done that is possessed by any authority, outside the sanitary provisions of the Public Health Acts. Cases, however, where the Home Worker regularly employs members of his or her own family on the work come under additional regulations as "domestic factories" or "domestic workshops." (An exception is made in the case of three industries, viz., straw plaiting, pillow-lace making, and glove making.) These regulations are contained in Sections 111 to 115 of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901. They apply chiefly to the hours of work of young persons and children. There are other provisions in Sections 109 and 110 of the Factory Act with regard to Home Work in premises in which infectious disease exists, which are for the protection of the public health, not of the Home Worker, and need not be described in detail.

15. For the purpose of furnishing the local authority with the information necessary to enable them effectively to exercise their powers, persons giving out work are required by Section 107 of the Act to keep a list of all persons to whom work is given out by them, and to send copies of these lists twice in the year to the local authority. These lists are tabulated each year at the request of the Home Office by the officers of the local

authority, and a summary of them is issued by the Home Office. As far as experience of the working of this section of the Act has gone, these outworkers' lists are usually incomplete and incorrect, and furnish no sufficient indication of the number of outworkers in any trade.

16. An important provision for the protection of the Home Worker in connection with the payment for the work done is that which is contained in the "Particulars" section of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901. That section provides that, in industries to which it is applied by Order of the Secretary of State, persons to whom work is given out to be done shall receive from the employer sufficient particulars of the rate of wages applicable to the work to be done and of the work to which that rate is to be applied to enable the worker to compute the total amount of wages payable in respect of the work. This provision, the enforcement of which is placed upon the Inspectors of Factories, is intended to secure to the out-worker information beforehand as to the price he is to get for the work, and to protect him against arbitrary alterations or reductions when the work is brought in. The provision has been extended by Orders of the Secretary of State to the outworkers in a number of trades.

17. The protection which is given by the Truck Act, 1896, to workers in regard to deductions for supply of materials, bad work, &c., only applies very partially to Home Workers. A series of judicial decisions have laid it down that unless there is a contract between the out-worker and the employer for the work to be done by the out-worker personally, the provisions of that Act do not apply. The only other statutory provision in regard to Home Work that need be noticed here is the power given to local authorities by the Employment of Children Act, 1903, to regulate the employment of children in work at home.

18. The Government Departments and various local authorities have inserted a clause, usually known as the "fair wages" clause, as well as schedules of prices to be paid to the workers, in the form of tender made by their contractors, with a view to securing a fair rate of wage. Your Committee are of opinion that the excellent intentions of these authorities are often frustrated in practice.

19. Your Committee are of opinion that these provisions of the existing law have failed to produce any real amelioration of the condition of Home Workers, and that legislation of a far-reaching character is required.

AUSTRALASIAN EXPERIMENTS AND EXPERIENCE.

20. During the discussion, in recent years, of the subjects which form the reference to your Committee, the legislation of the States of the Australian Commonwealth and of the Dominion of New Zealand with regard to Wages Boards and Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Acts has attracted much attention, and some of it has formed the basis of one of the proposals which has been specifically referred to the Committee. Careful attention has, therefore, been given to the interesting and valuable Report (recently presented to Parliament) of Mr. Ernest Aves, who was appointed last year, by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, a Commissioner to investigate the working of the systems there adopted. Your Committee had the advantage of taking Mr. Aves's evidence as a witness with regard to the results of his inquiries.

21. The legislation of Australia and New Zealand on the matters under consideration may be grouped under three heads—Factory Acts, Wages Boards, and Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Acts. So far as there are differences of principle and method, the legislation of Victoria on the one hand, and of New Zealand on the other, may be regarded as respectively representative. On the wider questions of fixing wages, and adjusting or deciding disputes as to wages and conditions of work, the experiments and experience of both the Commonwealth and the Dominion are extremely useful and interesting, notwithstanding the fact, upon which Mr. Aves dwells, that in neither case has the system yet been put to the test which a time of prolonged depression, and a serious fall in prices, would impose, when demands would be made for, and decisions possibly be given in favour of, substantial reductions in wages and rates of payment. As the more experimental portions of the legislation were enacted in order to deal with the conditions which characterised the period of extreme and exceptional depression in trade, and scarcity of employment, and consequent reduction in wages, through which the Australasian Colonies passed some twenty years ago, and as that legislation has run and been developed and extended concurrently with the steady and remarkable recovery which has been experienced during the last 10 years, it is obvious that the new laws have been working under extremely favourable conditions, and it is not always easy to determine how much if any

of some improved conditions are the results of the legislation on labour questions, or are due to economic and social causes, and would have been brought about even if there had been no change in the law. Nevertheless, it appears to be quite clear that, so far as the experience which has been had of the new departures has gone, they are very largely and generally, if not universally, approved by the people of Australia, and the large majority are of opinion that they have proved to be distinctly beneficial and useful.

22. So far as the limited field of inquiry—the conditions of labour in trades in which Home Work is prevalent, and the proposals which have been made for the remedying of existing abuses—which has been referred to your Committee, is concerned, Mr. Aves's Report makes it clear that, apart from the valuable suggestions which are to be derived even from the application of general principles and novel legislation to widely different conditions, there is not much information or guidance with regard to the difficulties which surround the problem of Home Work, as it presents itself here, to be derived from the conditions, legislation, and experience of Australia and New Zealand. In the first place, there the Home Worker is a very small element of the population. In the second place, the demand for women workers exceeds the supply, and the natural result is that, apart from exceptional cases, their position as to earnings and conditions of work is very different from that which prevails here. Lastly, the various Wages and other Boards have left the Home Workers almost entirely untouched, and consequently the effect of their operations upon the wages of these workers has been *nil*, or inconsiderable, except in so far as they have indirectly benefited from the improvement which has occurred in industrial conditions generally.

Referring to Victoria, Mr. Aves says :—

“There is a wide exemption from the operation of the Act of those working at home on their own account, and taking in work from private employers or from retail shops unregistered as factories.”

“Alike in administration and in the records, the place of very secondary importance that the home workers occupy is one of the striking features of the industrial situation.”

“In many trades, especially women's trades, the effect upon wages appears to be inconsiderable.”

“There is in Melbourne an unusual scarcity of labour. This indeed is the bottom fact of the situation to which, so far as female labour is concerned, we are always driven back.”

With regard to New Zealand, Mr. Aves reports :—

“The home worker presents no great problem in the sense of being the basis upon which any considerable proportion of a trade, under-rate or over, rests.”

“The home worker is, I think, hardly a factor, much less a problem in New Zealand.”

“The Conciliation and Arbitration Act . . . directly, save as regards tailoring, . . . has little effect on the employment of women.”

23. On the other hand, it appears to be beyond question that, in factories and workshops, and among out-workers, other than Home Workers in Australia, where unsatisfactory rates of payment and conditions of work were being established fifteen or twenty years ago, and seemed likely to spread, the legislation which has from time to time been passed, has been useful. Opinions vary as to the extent to which this is due to increasing prosperity and better times generally, or to Wages Board and Factory Acts. In Victoria in 1902, after the Act of 1896 (which gave power to establish Wages Boards in certain trades) had been in force six years, a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into its operation. The general conclusion arrived at was that Conciliation Boards were preferable to Wages Boards, which “have committed serious errors in the course of their work,” and as regards “the prospects of methods of conciliation in a dispute, are almost hopeless.” Nevertheless, the references of the Commissioners' Report to the work of the Wages Boards in those branches of industry where the conditions as regards under-payment most nearly approach those with which your Committee have to deal, were distinctly to the effect that good work had been done, and advantage to the workers had resulted. For example, in the midst of the statement of the reasons for preferring Conciliation Boards to Wages Boards, the Commissioners say :—

“But it must be remembered the Wages Boards were at first constituted to deal with industries in which sweating was rampant, such as the clothing, under-clothing, and shirt-making trades. They unquestionably did good work in these, and the fact will always stand to the credit of the system.”

24. Reporting upon the Clothing Board, which dealt with an industry in which under-payment and unsatisfactory resulting conditions were prevalent, especially during the period of financial and commercial depression, the Commissioners say:—

“In the stress of competition, a system prevailed under which large City warehouses let the making-up of clothing to small contractors or middlemen at rates so low that there was very little, if any, profit left to the latter if fair wages were paid. Some of these contractors had small factories, others took over factories and warehouses, but many of them had no registered place of business, and were mere parasites of labour, doing no work themselves, and making their livelihood out of the necessities of, perhaps, the poorest class in the community.

* * * * *

“Both employers and workers agreed that sweating had practically disappeared with the conditions which had produced the evil—the excessive competition of out-workers who had been pitted against each other.”

Again, referring to the shirt-makers, they say:—

“It will be admitted as a fact beyond dispute that, in this trade, the factory law has broken down a hideous form of sweating, and protected in no small degree an industrious and deserving class of women.”

25. It is interesting to note that the opinion that the Wages Boards of Victoria have been useful in dealing with sweating still prevails. Mr. Aves, in his Report, this year, says:—

“There is also a very widely spread belief that the Boards have been instrumental, some say in abolishing, and others in modifying the evils of “sweating,” and, from complex motives, there is in Victoria a great preponderance of opinion amongst all classes in favour of the retention of the Boards.”

26. In view of the proposals for dealing with the problem in this country which have been referred to your Committee, it is important that it should be noted that the rates of payment which have been fixed by Wages Boards in Australia, and by Conciliation and Arbitration Boards there and in New Zealand, have, to a large extent, been minimum time rates, and when minimum piece rates have been fixed, they almost always have been fixed with the time rate as the basis, and when comparisons or records are given, they almost invariably take the form of a statement of the amount earned per week. In the Report of the Victorian Royal Commission of 1902-3, there are several passages similar to the following:—

“Any Board [in Victoria] may rule that manufacturérers may be allowed to fix piece-work rates based on the minimum wage.”

“The Shirt-makers’ Board [Victoria] fixed the rates for making shirts, shirt fronts, collars, cuffs, and pyjamas. The minimum wage is fixed at 4d. per hour, or 16s. per week of 48 hours. Piece-work rates are also fixed on a basis which will allow an average worker to earn 4d., 4½d., or 5d. an hour, according to the class of work done.”

“The minimum wage is fixed [by the Underclothing Board] at 4d. an hour, or 16s. per week. Owing to the great variety of garments dealt with in this trade, and the frequent alterations made in patterns and designs, the Board decided that it would be impracticable to fix piece-work rates properly, and therefore, by the determination, employers are permitted to adjust such rates themselves, subject to the proviso that the average worker is enabled to earn 4d. per hour under the scale adopted. The employer is required to supply, free of charge, cotton, and all other materials which are requisite for piece-workers, so that the earnings on this basis shall be met.”

Mr. Aves, also referring to Victoria, says:—

“In the under-clothing, dressmaking, milliners, and waterproof clothing trades, no schedule of piece-work was, or, in the opinion of the Board, could be attempted, but the average worker employed upon piece-work is to be able to earn not less than

the statutory 4d. or 5d. per hour. Should piece-work rates be proved to represent less than this equivalent time-rate, they would be illegal."

27. A further point of importance is that, in New Zealand, as a matter of practical working, the problem of the underpayment of women has been dealt with, not by the Conciliation and Arbitration Boards, but by the direct action of Parliament in fixing a minimum wage in its Factory Act, in which the following clause appears:—

"Every person who is employed in any capacity in a factory shall be entitled to receive from the occupier payment for the work at such rate as is agreed on, in no case less than five shillings per week for boys and girls under sixteen years of age, and thereafter an annual increase of not less than three shillings weekly till twenty years of age."

Commenting upon this clause, Mr. Aves says:—

"This clause was passed in order to prevent persons being employed in factories without 'reasonable remuneration in money.' Payment is to be made in every case irrespective of overtime, and premiums are forbidden.

"The above clause has a very important effect upon the scope of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, inasmuch as by legal enactment the ground for most of those very trades that are chiefly liable to the evils of under-payment is covered by the direct action of Parliament. One result is seen in the fact that no award has been given for women in any branch of the clothing trade in New Zealand, except in tailoring, Thus, dressmaking, shirt-making, millinery, white work, &c., if not always considered to be satisfactorily provided for by the above clause, at any rate remain outside the Arbitration Act. And through the whole series of awards there is, I think, apart from the tailoring trade, hardly any special provision made for females, save for the small body of match factory employees and in an unimportant reference in the rates fixed for apprentices in the printing trades and in woollen mills. The practical importance of the Factories Act in this connection is perhaps sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that, in the awards in the boot-making trade, in which the proportion of females is large, there is no reference to them whatsoever."

REMEDIES WHICH HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED.

28. Your Committee have carefully considered the proposals which have been made for further legislation. The broad outlines of the two which have attracted the most attention are:—

1. The proposal that it should be rendered illegal to give work to any outworker in certain specified trades, unless the worker had previously obtained a licence from a Government Factory Inspector which authorises the holder of the licence to do work for a specified time in the premises named in the licence. The licences would require renewal every six months, and the conditions for obtaining them would be that the premises in which the work was to be done were clean and wholesome, adequately lighted and ventilated, and not overcrowded.

2. The proposal that, in certain specified trades, a Wages Board, consisting of representatives of employers and working people and a neutral Chairman, should be established, with power to fix the minimum rate of wages to be paid to workers in those trades. The payment of a lower rate than that thus fixed to be a punishable offence.

29. Your Committee approached the consideration of this portion of their task with the conviction that it is not desirable to prohibit or to attempt to stamp out Home Work. There are a number of people who, for various reasons, cannot go to factories and workshops and undertake the continuous attendance and work which are there required. There are others to whom it would involve serious inconvenience, and, indeed, hardship. They are glad to work at home. They earn an extremely welcome addition to the family income. To prevent them from so doing would be indefensible, unless it were shown that such drastic action was absolutely essential in order to secure a great public advantage. In our judgment this has not been proved. On the other hand, we are of opinion that, by means of legislation, some earnest effort should be made to remedy the evils which undoubtedly exist.

LICENSING.

30. As to the proposal that Home Workers, in certain trades, should be required to obtain a licence to work in specified premises, your Committee are of opinion that it is very desirable that, in every locality, there should be a far more complete and accurate list of Home Workers than is obtained at the present time, and also that some provision should be made for securing greater cleanliness and better sanitary conditions than are to be found in too many of the houses in which people work and live. We are not convinced, however, that it is necessary that legislation need be carried to the full extent of the proposals which have been submitted to us. There are two substantial practical difficulties. One is, the number of inspectors that would be required would be very large. The house of every Home Worker would have to be visited twice a year—the proposal is that the licence should be renewed every six months. This would be a great task, and would involve an enormous addition to the present staff. The other difficulty is the obstacles which it would place in the way of an exceptionally poor and helpless section of the community earning a livelihood. It would be hard upon the occasional worker, the wife who desired to step into the breach and earn something to enable the family to keep the home together when the husband is thrown out of work. The difficulty which persons of this class would experience in communicating with the Inspector, discovering his address, writing to him, or finding him, and the delay which would take place before he could be got to their home, and consequently, before they could begin to earn the much-needed income, would be very serious, and, in trying circumstances, quite intolerable, unless there were a small army of Inspectors. The difficulty and trouble would be repeated every six months.

31. Much might be accomplished by far less drastic measures. Complete lists of Home Workers might be obtained by requiring that every Home Worker must register her name, occupation, and address with the Local Authority, and obtain a certificate of such registration before receiving work to do at home for the first time, such certificate to remain valid until any change of residence. It could be made an offence for any employer to give out work to be done at home unless a certificate of registration were produced. No conditions as to cleanliness of person or dwelling need be required as a condition of registration. Consequently there would not be any necessity for inspection and report upon the condition of the premises. The certificate of registration should be issued immediately the application was made, and no fee of any sort should be charged either for registration or certification. As the offices of the local authority would be the place of registration, everyone would know where they were, and they would always be accessible without delay or serious inconvenience. The aim would be to obtain complete and accurate registration. This should not supersede, but supplement, the keeping of lists of outworkers by employers.

If the provision of Section 9 of the Public Health Act, 1875, with respect to factories and workshops which are not kept in a cleanly state, or are ill-ventilated or overcrowded, were extended to rooms in which Home Work is done, much good would be done. If these provisions were accompanied by power being given to the Inspectors of the Local Authority and the Factory Inspector to inspect rooms in which Home Work is done, a great improvement in structural and domestic cleanliness would be brought about. It is desirable that the responsibility of supervision in these matters, in these cases, should rest primarily with the Local Authority, inasmuch as they are sanitary regulations and refer to dwelling-houses; but power should be given to the Factory Inspector to secure the enforcement of the law if the Local Authority failed in the performance of their duties.

Your Committee recommend the adoption of these suggestions.

WAGES BOARDS.

32. In the opinion of your Committee, the second proposal—for the establishment of Wages Boards—goes to the root of the matter, in so far as the object aimed at is an increase in the wages of Home Workers. No proposals which fail to increase the income of these people can have any appreciable effect in ameliorating their condition. Improved sanitary conditions are important, and necessary; greater personal and domestic cleanliness in many cases is very desirable; but the poverty, the miserably inadequate income, of so many of the Home Workers is the great difficulty of the situation. With an increase in their earnings many of the other undesirable conditions which intensify and in turn are aggravated by the ever-present burden of grinding poverty would be very appreciably modified and improved. Miss Squire told us that, during recent years

the general sanitary condition of the houses of Home Workers has been improved considerably, but that there has been no corresponding improvement in domestic cleanliness.

33. Is there any prospect that these people, with the aid of such voluntary and philanthropic assistance and co-operation as is, or would be, available, will materially improve their own condition, and, to any appreciable extent, extricate themselves from the quagmire of endless toil and almost ceaseless misery in which some of them are involved? On the other hand, can legislation help them? Your Committee are of opinion that, unless Parliament steps in and gives them the protection and support which legislation alone can supply, the prospects of any real and substantial improvement in their position and condition being brought about are very small and remote. We are further of opinion that carefully considered legislation would aid them materially; and, that being so, we cannot doubt that it is desirable that an attempt should be made, and an experiment be tried. At the same time we recognise that legislation which will affect the well-being and may interfere to some extent with the livelihood of a number of extremely poor and helpless persons must be considered with the utmost care, and be entered upon with great caution.

34. Are Wages Boards practicable, and would they prove to be effective as a remedy for the evils with which they are designed to cope? The fact that the payment for Home Work is necessarily always at piece rates complicates the problem and increases the difficulty. If the payments were made by time wages, everything would be far simpler and easier. In the first place, there is in some trades an enormous number and complication of articles, processes, sub-divisions, and patterns. Then there are the constant changes, especially in those trades where fashion is the dominating factor, and different employers have a vast number of different methods and designs. Any attempt to fix prices for every process of every article, of every size, of every pattern, and every variation of every manufacturer of some classes of goods would appear to be almost interminable. In the next place, there is the difficulty of submitting new ideas, designs, and patterns to rival and competing employers who are members of the Wages Board; while, if prices are not promptly fixed for new articles and patterns, there would appear to be the risk of leaving a loophole through which ingenious persons would contrive to escape and perpetuate under-payment by making slight variations from a pattern for which a price has been fixed.

35. Another important phase is indicated by the question: Is the piece rate to be based upon the time in which a worker of average skill can complete the article or process in a factory, under favourable conditions, with the most modern machinery and appliances, or is it to be based upon the time taken by the worker in the conditions and with the appliances in and with which he actually works? Can a higher piece rate be paid to Home Workers than is paid to factory workers who work under conditions which render far more rapid production easy? The issues which these questions raise are far-reaching, they indicate some of the reasons why the problem which has been referred to your Committee has proved to be so difficult to solve.

36. Your Committee have already pointed out that a rate of payment which may yield a tolerable earning with up-to-date machinery and adequate facilities may give meagre results if the machinery or appliances are slow, inconvenient, and antiquated, and the results may be altogether inadequate if the workers have little or no machinery or appliances, or if what there is has to be driven by them instead of by steam or other power. If the minimum rate of payment fixed be one which would be a suitable minimum for those who work under the best conditions, or the medium, or the worst, it must be an unsatisfactory rate for that portion of the trade which is carried on under conditions different from those for which the rate is a reasonable one. Further, if the rate of payment be the same whether machinery and appliances be modern and rapid or antiquated and slow, the inducement to employers to provide the newest machinery and plant and the most improved conditions will be reduced considerably, and in the long run some of the consequences of not providing them will fall upon those whom he employs. In the case of the Home Worker it may be contended that as the employer does not supply machinery or appliances, but gives out the work to be done by the person under conditions and with appliances which the worker provides, the lack of efficient machinery and appliances is not the fault of the employer who gives out the work. Under better conditions, where the persons concerned were able to organise and secure equitable payment, such a position would adjust itself, and the employer who avoided the cost of providing premises and

plant would have to pay more to those to whom he gave out work than he would if he provided the appliances and premises. It is just here that the special position of the Home Workers and the conditions which render their earnings low apply; and it is because their position and those conditions are exceptional that the intervention and assistance of Parliament have been invited.

37. Your Committee attach importance to the experience and opinion of Mr. Askwith, of the Board of Trade, who for many years has, from time to time, rendered most valuable service by acting as Arbitrator and Conciliator in trade disputes of various kinds. He has settled piece-work rates in industries where the complication and diversity of patterns, &c., is great, and the results have been arrived at without excessive difficulty, and afterwards have worked satisfactorily. He is of opinion that "Wages Boards are workable and practicable, and would be beneficial, and ought to be tried." After making full allowance for the fact that these settlements have been made in trades where the employees were organised and had trained members of their trades unions to represent them, and where the whole of the conditions were much more favourable than would be the case when piece-work rates for Home Workers had to be fixed, your Committee agree that the experiment ought to be tried.

38. Upon the question of the general policy of Parliament fixing or providing for the fixing of a minimum rate of payment for work, below which it should be illegal to employ people, your Committee are of opinion that it is quite as legitimate to establish by legislation a minimum standard of remuneration as it is to establish such a standard of sanitation, cleanliness, ventilation, air space, and hours of work. If it be said that there may be industries which cannot be carried on if such a standard of payment be enforced, it may be replied that this was said when the enactment of many of the provisions of the Factory and other similar Acts were proposed, and public opinion supported Parliament in deciding that, if the prognostication were an accurate one, it would be better that any trade which could not exist if such a minimum of decent and humane conditions were insisted upon should cease. Parliament, with the full approval of the nation, has practically so decided again and again, when enactments have been passed forbidding the carrying on of specified industries, unless certain minimum conditions as to health, safety, and comfort are complied with. It is doubtful whether there is any more important condition of individual and general well-being than the possibility of obtaining an income sufficient to enable those who earn it to secure, at any rate, the necessaries of life. If a trade will not yield such an income to average industrious workers engaged in it, it is a parasite industry, and it is contrary to the general well-being that it should continue. Experience, however, teaches that the usual result of legislation of the nature referred to is not to kill the industry, but to reform it. Low-priced labour is a great obstacle to improvement. It discourages invention, and removes or prevents the growth of a great stimulus to progress and efficiency. The direct and early result of prohibiting unsatisfactory conditions in industrial life is almost invariably to direct the attention of the most competent minds in and about the trade to the production and introduction of such improvements in machinery, methods, and processes as will enable the industry to continue under greatly improved conditions, and be carried on with greater success than before. In our judgment there is no reason to doubt that similar beneficial results to all concerned—employers, workpeople, and the general public—to those which have followed the establishing of minimum conditions of other kinds in various departments of industrial life, would follow the establishing by law of minimum rates of payment for such classes of workers as experience has shown are unable to secure for themselves rates of payment for work which may reasonably be regarded as even the lowest upon which an average worker can exist.

RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO WAGES BOARDS.

39. With regard to this portion of their inquiry, the conclusion at which your Committee have arrived is that the general principle should be adopted of establishing Wages Boards for Home Workers, each Board to fix—

(1) A general minimum rate of time payment for an average Home Worker in the particular trade for which it acts, and also for any branch of or process in the trade for which a different rate might seem to be desirable, such other rate to be not less than the general minimum rate.

(2) Minimum piece rates for any work done by Home Workers, those piece rates to be such as would enable an average worker to earn not less than the equivalent of the minimum time rate.

In this way the great practical difficulty of fixing piece rates for every variation in size, pattern, and class of every article would be avoided. Piece rates could be fixed for everything which was to any extent of a standard size, pattern, or character, while the minimum time rate would ensure that articles, or patterns, or sizes which were not covered by the minimum piece rates already fixed could not be paid for at a lower piece rate than would yield to an average worker the equivalent minimum time rate. It should be compulsory for the Wages Board, as its first duty, to fix a minimum time rate of payment for the trade for which it was appointed, for the district for which it acted. The gradual building up of lists of piece rates based on the minimum time rate would follow. If these Wages Boards were found to be successful they might be extended to other workers in the trades in which Home Work is prevalent.

40. In view of the fact that this proposal represents a very considerable new departure in industrial legislation, and fully realising the many difficulties that surround it, your Committee are of opinion that it is desirable that Parliament should proceed at first somewhat experimentally, and apply these general principles to one or two trades, in which the necessity for some legislation is great, and where experience could be gained without running any serious risk of dislocating an important industry. We, therefore, recommend :—

That Wages Boards be established for certain specified trades. The Boards should consist of representatives of the employers and the employed Home Workers in equal numbers, with a Chairman chosen by the members ; or, failing agreement upon one, by the Home Secretary. The Boards should have power to fix minimum piece rates of payment in those trades for all workers, who, in a private house, room, or place which is used as a dwelling house, work for any other person at the production or making or preparation of any articles for sale by another person. They should fix such minimum rates of payment, when called upon to do so by any employer or seven workers ; or by the whole of the representatives on the Board of either the workpeople or the employers ; or by the Chairman or the Home Secretary.

41. Each Board should be required to fix a general minimum time wage for its district for the whole of the workers in the trade for which it acts, and should have power to fix a special minimum time wage for any class of work or process in the trade in its district, such minimum to be not less than the general minimum for the trade in the district. When this was done, the piece rates paid for work in those trades would have to be at least such as would enable an average Home Worker to earn not less than the minimum wage for that trade in that district.

42. In order to avoid the fixing of rates of payment which would be likely to prove unreasonable and inadvisable in special cases, and to give those who would be affected by them an opportunity of securing their reconsideration, if a substantial case for so doing could be made out, it would be desirable to give the Home Secretary power to suspend for a specified time any determination of a Board and refer it to them for further consideration.

43. It should be an offence for any person to pay or offer to a Home Worker a lower rate of payment for work than the minimum fixed by the Board for that particular work. The duty of enforcing the Act and the determinations of the Board should be entrusted to the Factory Inspectors, and the Board itself, which, in this respect, would act through its Secretary.

44. The election of representatives of the workers in each district would be facilitated by the existence in the offices of the Local Authority of a complete register of them and the trades in which they were engaged. It would probably be desirable that the Local Authority be required to provide a suitable room for the Board to meet in, that a Factory Inspector should be the Secretary to the Board, and that a moderate payment should be made, either by the locality or the Treasury, to the representatives of the workers on the Board.

45. The trades for which your Committee suggest that Wages Boards should be established, in the first instance, are tailoring and the making of shirts, underclothing, and baby linen, and the finishing processes of machine-made lace. Power should be given to the Home Secretary, on application being made to him by such responsible representative or interested persons as may be specified, and after he has caused an

inquiry to be made, to direct that a Wages Board should be established for these trades or for any other trade in any district.

46. It might be left to the Home Secretary to define, enlarge or diminish the district over which the jurisdiction of each Board should extend. It has been suggested that difficulty would arise through different districts fixing different rates of payment. We think this would not be found to be of practical importance. The rates of payment in all trades now vary in different towns and in different parts of the country, and it is not probable that they would do so to any greater extent under the operation of the proposals which are now made. But if real difficulty did arise, it would be possible to arrange for the appointment of supervising or co-ordinating Boards, which might also develop into Boards of Appeal.

47. The fact that payment for Home Work must be at piece rates relieves your Committee of the very great difficulty that would attend any attempt to adjust a time rate of payment to the capacity of the slow, the infirm, the inefficient, and the aged. As the payment for Home Work is according to the amount of work a person is able to get through, those who are below the average in output earn an amount which is in proportion to their ability, power, and industry. The earnings of those who are slow and inefficient cannot be raised by giving them a rate of payment above that which is made to the average worker, even though it yield a very poor income to those whose output is small. What can be secured is that a minimum rate per article or per process shall be paid to all workers for the same amount, character, and quality of work.

48. One difficulty which has to be considered in connection with all legislation of the kind which is now suggested is the risk of evasion, especially where the possibility of collusion between the employer and the employed has also to be allowed for. In this respect the difference between dealing with a strong combination of well-organised workers and such a peculiarly helpless and powerless body of people, whose circumstances seem to render anything like effective combination and organisation for mutual support and protection quite impracticable, as Home Workers are, is very great, and for practical purposes really fundamental. The importance of this will be seen if the question of enforcing decisions of the Boards as to piece rates be considered. When a piece rate for making a given article has been fixed, it might be easy for an employer who wished to evade payment of that rate to so alter the pattern by omitting or changing some trivial details as to make it difficult to prove in Court that the lower rate which he was paying was, in fact, a payment for precisely the article and work for which the Board had fixed a higher rate. If the workers were represented by a strong organisation of their own, such attempts at evasion would not be tolerated, but Home Workers have no such power behind them, and must rely on what can be proved definitely and conclusively in Court. It is in this connection that the difficulty, indeed the practical impossibility, of a Board fixing piece rates for every variation of every detail of every article and pattern in trades where the changes are constant and the variations are almost innumerable, brings into prominence an important difference between the case of the Home Workers and those adjustments of rates of payments in organised trades where the services of arbitrators and conciliators like Mr. Askwith have been so valuable and successful. Under the recommendations which your Committee make, the fact that a minimum time rate of payment, below the equivalent of which any piece rates must not fall, is to be fixed, will provide an exceedingly useful supplement to such piece rates as are fixed by the Boards. We attach the greatest importance to the fixing of a minimum time rate and its application as the standard by which piece rates other than those fixed by the Boards may be tested.

49. The cost to Home Workers which is involved in the intervention of the middleman between the employer and the worker is a matter to which your Committee have directed their attention. There are cases where the person who obtains the work from the warehouse or factory and distributes it to and collects it from the Home Worker renders a distinct and valuable service. Indeed, one of the most unsatisfactory phases of Home Work is often the time which is lost and the expense incurred in fetching and returning work. In many cases the cost of tram fares and the loss of time in the journeys and waiting at the warehouse are together equivalent to a reduction of from 20 to 25 per cent. in the amount which could be earned if there were no such deductions of time or expense. Where another person undertakes this, the saving to the worker is very appreciable, and where the intervening person does not obtain more than a reasonable remuneration for the service rendered and the responsibility undertaken, the arrangement is a beneficial one.

It is obvious, however, that it is one which places the worker very much at the mercy of the middleman or middlewoman, as the case may be, and opens the door to a system of real "sweating." It is very desirable that, wherever practicable, work which is given out to be done by workers at their homes should be delivered and collected by persons in the direct employ and pay of the employer. An incidental advantage of the arrangement would be that the employer could be kept informed as to the condition of the house in which the work was done. It would tend to facilitate the adoption of this arrangement if it were provided that, in ascertaining whether the piece rates paid were such as would yield an average worker not less than the fixed minimum wage, allowance should be made for the time occupied in obtaining and returning the materials and articles. That is to say, the time so occupied should be regarded as part of the average worker's week.

50. The full protection of the Truck Act should be secured to Home Workers. Provision should also be made to ensure that at least the full amount of the fixed minimum rate of payment should be paid to the worker in cash. We are of opinion that the Employment of Children Act should be adopted by all local authorities, and enforced for the protection of children working at home and elsewhere.

51. It has been suggested to us in the course of our inquiry that in some industries there is no room for any appreciable increase in the payment of the employees owing to the low prices at which foreign competitors produce the articles. Even if it were found that some branches of industry which are now carried on in this country under conditions of excessive toil and miserably inadequate earnings for the workpeople had to be abandoned, the benefits which would result from improving the condition of the great mass of the poorest workers in our midst, and diverting British industry and capital, in the exceptional cases, into other channels which are far more suitable for them, would abundantly counterbalance any temporary inconvenience which might be caused. Competition must be met by increased efficiency, not by low wages. The increasing facilities of communication and the opening up of countries with immense populations of industrious people will more and more bring into the field of industrial competition the low-priced labour not only of some parts of Europe, but also of India, China, and Japan. If we attempt to compete with these peoples on their own lines of low wages we shall tend towards their level of subsistence and then be beaten, because in the climate of their countries, where nature is prolific in its provision of food, and far less of it is required than is necessary here, people can live far more cheaply than we can. Experience teaches that healthy and well-educated and highly-trained men and women living and working under satisfactory conditions provide the industrial army with which thoroughly capable, alert, and enterprising employers can most successfully meet any competition which they may have to encounter. The conditions of work and the rates of payment which it is sometimes suggested are essential to the retention of some of the trades in which extremely lowly-paid people work are precisely those which are, in our judgment, not only not conducive to, but really incompatible with, the highest efficiency and the cheapest production.

52. Again we may quote Mr. Aves :—

" This question of cost is so fundamental that when the view is accepted that increased wages must lead to increased cost, and when circumstances appear to leave no margin for such an increase, any change that involves higher wages comes to be regarded as impracticable. Some of the fallacies, mainly traceable to an assumed fixity in the determining conditions—personal and economic—which underlie this assumption in its application to certain industries are recalled by Victorian experience, and the extent to which the combined view is held that Special Boards have increased wages and have not increased cost is of practical significance, since it is found to prevail in several of those trades in which the evil of under-payment is apt to be most prevalent. The Special Boards themselves may or may not have sent wages up to the extent often assumed or even at all. The fact remains that in several trades in which wages have tended upwards there is much testimony to the fact that neither cost nor price have been similarly affected, and in some instances it has been admitted that they have tended in the opposite direction."

53. One safeguard against most, if not all, the conceivable harm which could possibly result from the unwise use by Wages Boards of the powers which your Committee suggest should be conferred upon them will be found in the fact that the proposal is that the Boards should be composed of employers and employed who are engaged in the trades with regard to which they would fix rates of payment. No one could be more deeply concerned than

they would be that every precaution should be taken that nothing be done that would really curtail the trade with which all their interests were so closely allied. No one would more speedily perceive and feel the effects of an imprudent decision, and it would be within their power to amend it promptly. We believe that the members of these Boards would approach the discharge of their duties in a spirit of moderation, with a strong sense of fairness, and a full appreciation of the importance of the issues which would be submitted to them. There is no reason why they should not be able to decide what are the lowest rates of payment which may reasonably and equitably be made for work done under specified conditions in selected industries. They could at least secure the levelling up of the rates of payment in their respective trades to those adopted by the best employers in those trades. We have been impressed by the testimony we have received to the effect that most, if not indeed all, employers would be glad to have fixed a minimum rate of payment and conditions below which neither they nor their competitors should be allowed to go. If nothing more than this were accomplished by the adoption of the recommendations which we make, a substantial step would be taken in the improvement of the position of that portion of our people whose special circumstances we have been considering.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS.

54. The conclusions at which your Committee have arrived may now be summarised. They are that it is desirable :—

(1.) That there should be legislation with regard to the rates of payment made to Home Workers who are employed in the production or preparation of articles for sale by other persons.

(2.) That such legislation should at first be tentative and experimental, and be limited in its scope to Home Workers engaged in the tailoring, shirtmaking, underclothing, and baby linen trades, and in the finishing processes of machine-made lace. The Home Secretary should be empowered after inquiry made, to establish Wages Boards for any other trades.

(3.) That Wages Boards should be established in selected trades to fix minimum time and piece rates of payment for Home Workers in those trades.

(4.) That it should be an offence to pay or offer lower rates of payment to Home Workers in those trades than the minimum rates which had been fixed for that district by the Wages Board.

(5.) That the delivery and collection of work done at home should be done by persons in the direct employ and pay of the employer. Where that was not done, the amount which a worker could earn in a specified time should be calculated on a basis which included the time spent in fetching and returning the work as time occupied in doing the work.

(6.) That all Home Workers who are employed by other persons in producing or preparing articles for sale should be required to register their name, address, and class of work at, and receive a certificate of such registration from, the offices of the Local Authority, and that the keeping of accurate outworkers' lists by employers should be strictly enforced.

(7.) That it should be an offence for any person to employ any Home Worker to produce or prepare any articles for sale by another person unless the worker produce a certificate of registration.

(8.) That the provisions of Section 9 of the Public Health Act, 1875, with regard to factories and workshops which are not kept clean or are ill-ventilated or overcrowded should be extended to rooms in which Home Work is done, and power should be given to Sanitary and Factory Inspectors to inspect them and secure the enforcement of the law.

(9.) That the full protection of the Truck Act should be secured to Home Workers.

55. A Bill introduced by Mr. Toulmin, which has been read a second time, and referred to your Committee, has been duly taken into consideration by them; but in view of the opinions expressed in their Report, your Committee do not think it necessary to examine in detail the clauses of this Bill. They, therefore, report it, without amendment, to the House. They wish, however, to express the opinion that it is extremely desirable that the subject of the reference to your Committee and their Report thereon should be dealt with by legislation at an early date.

REPORT.

ON THE SWEATED INDUSTRIES BILL.

**THE SELECT COMMITTEE to whom the SWEATED INDUSTRIES BILL was referred
have agreed to Report the same without amendment.**

 PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE.

Wednesday, 19th February, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Fell.	Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.	Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.	Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Ernest Lamb.	Mr. Trevelyan.
Mr. Hugh Law.	Sir Thomas Whittaker.
Mr. Massie.	

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER was called to the Chair.

The Committee deliberated.

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, 26th February, at 11.45.]

Wednesday, 26th February, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Arkwright.	Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Boland.	Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Bridgeman.	Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Brunner.	Mr. Richardson.
Sir William Bull.	Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.	Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Fell.	Mr. Trevelyan.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.	

Mr. *D. Sholto Douglas* and Mr. *Thomas Holmes* were examined.

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, 4th March, at 11.45.]

Wednesday, 4th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Boland.	Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Bridgeman.	Mr. Massie.
Mr. Brunner.	Mr. Parkes.
Sir William Bull.	Mr. Richardson.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.	Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Fell.	Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.	Mr. Trevelyan.
Mr. Ernest Lamb.	

Mr. *E. G. Howarth* and Mr. *George Shann* were examined.

[Adjourned till to-morrow, Thursday, 5th March, at 11.45.]

Thursday, 5th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Arkwright.	Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Boland.	Mr. Ernest Lamb.
Mr. Bridgeman.	Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Brunner.	Mr. Massie.
Sir William Bull.	Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.	Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Fell.	Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.	Mr. Trevelyan.

In the absence of Sir Thomas Whittaker, Mr. TREVELYAN acted as Chairman.

Mr. *W. J. D. Walker* was examined.

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, 11th March, at 11.45.]

Wednesday, 11th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Bridgeman.	Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Brunner.	Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Fell.	Mr. Richardson.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.	Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Ernest Lamb.	Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Hugh Law.	Mr. Trevelyan.

Mr. *Alfred Smith* and Mr. *Abraham Levi* were examined.

[Adjourned till to-morrow, Thursday, 12th March, at 11.45.]

Thursday, 12th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Bridgeman.	Mr. Massie.
Mr. Brunner.	Mr. Richardson.
Sir William Bull.	Mr. Robinson.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.	Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.	Mr. Trevelyan.

Mr. *Morris Cohen* was examined.

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, 18th March, at 11.45.]

Wednesday, 18th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Bridgeman.	Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Brunner.	Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.	Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Fell.	Mr. Trevelyan.

Mr. *William Bridgett* was examined.

[Adjourned till to-morrow, Thursday, 19th March, at 11.45.]

Thursday, 19th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Bridgeman.	Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Brunner.	Mr. Chiozza Money.
Sir William Bull.	Mr. Richardson.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.	Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Fell.	Mr. Trevelyan.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.	

Miss *Mary R. Macarthur* was examined, and seven other witnesses who were permitted to give their evidence anonymously as Mrs. *A.*, Miss *B.*, Miss *C.*, Miss *D.*, Mrs. *E.*, Mrs. *F.*, and Miss *G.*

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, 25th March, at 11.45.]

Wednesday, 25th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Bridgeman.	Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.	Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Fell.	Mr. Richardson.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.	Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.	Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Ernest Lamb.	Mr. Trevelyan.

Mr. *Charles Edwin Watts* and Mr. *N. Buckner* were examined.

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, 1st April, at 11.45.]

Wednesday, 1st April, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Bridgeman.	Mr. Massie.
Sir William Bull.	Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.	Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Fell.	Mr. Richardson.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.	Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.	Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Hugh Law.	Mr. Trevelyan.

In the absence of Sir Thomas Whittaker, Mr. TREVELYAN acted as Chairman.

Miss *Vynne*, Miss *Eliza Cooper*, Mrs. *Brophy*, Mrs. *Somerset*, Miss *Rose Bamford*, Mrs. *Mitchell*, Mrs. *King*, Mrs. *Cole* and Miss *Edith Lawson* were examined.

[Adjourned till to-morrow, Thursday, 2nd April, at 11.45.]

Thursday, 2nd April, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Fell.	Mr. Masterman.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.	Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.	Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Massie.	Mr. Trevelyan.

Mr. *J. G. Newey* was examined.

[Adjourned till Wednesday, 29th April, at 11.45.]

Wednesday, 29th April, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Brunner. Mr. Fell. Mr. G. P. Gooch. Mr. Arthur Henderson.		Mr. Massie. Mr. Parkes. Mr. Robinson. Mr. Stuart Samuel.
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Mr. *W. A. Appleton* and Mr. *F. W. Fugeman* were examined.

[Adjourned till to-morrow, Thursday, 30th April, at One o'clock.]

Thursday, 30th April, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Brunner. Mr. Fell. Mr. G. P. Gooch. Mr. Arthur Henderson. Mr. Massie.		Mr. Chiozza Money. Mr. Parkes. Mr. Robinson. Mr. Stuart Samuel.
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In the absence of Sir Thomas Whittaker, Mr. STUART SAMUEL acted as Chairman.

Miss *Holder* was examined.

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, 6th May, at 11.45.]

Wednesday, 6th May, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Brunner. Mr. Arthur Dewar. Mr. Fell. Mr. G. P. Gooch. Mr. Massie.		Mr. Chiozza Money. Mr. Parkes. Mr. Robinson. Mr. Stuart Samuel. Mr. Trevelyan.
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Mr. *Ernest Aves* was examined.

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, 13th May, at 11.45.]

Wednesday, 13th May, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Boland. Mr. Brunner. Sir William Bull. Mr. Arthur Dewar. Mr. Fell. Mr. G. P. Gooch. Mr. Arthur Henderson.		Mr. Hugh Law. Mr. Massie. Mr. Chiozza Money. Mr. Parkes. Mr. Richardson. Mr. Robinson. Mr. Trevelyan.
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The Right Hon. Sir *Charles Dilke*, a Member of the House, was examined.

[Adjourned till to-morrow, Thursday, 14th May, at 11.45.]

Thursday, 14th May, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Brunner.	Mr. Massie.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.	Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Fell.	Mr. Robinson.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.	Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.	Mr. Trevelyan.
Mr. Hugh Law.	

Mr. *Guy B. Morrish* was examined.

The Committee deliberated.

[Adjourned till Wednesday, 1st July, at Twelve o'clock.]

Wednesday, 1st July, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Arkwright.	Mr. Ernest Lamb.
Mr. Boland.	Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Bridgeman.	Mr. Massie.
Mr. Brunner.	Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.	Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Fell.	Mr. Richardson.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.	Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.	Mr. Stuart Samuel.

The Committee deliberated.

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, 8th July, at Twelve o'clock.]

Wednesday, 8th July, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Boland.	Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Bridgeman.	Mr. Massie.
Mr. Brunner.	Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Fell.	Mr. Parkes.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.	Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.	Mr. Stuart Samuel.

DRAFT REPORT, proposed by the *Chairman*, brought up and read the first time, as follows :—

1. Your Committee have confined their inquiry almost entirely to the rates of payment which Home Workers receive, the weekly earnings which those rates yield, the conditions under which the people live and work, and the proposals which have been made for improving their position, and removing or modifying the evils which exist. In accordance with the directions of our reference, we have also considered such matters connected with labour in factories and workshops, in trades

in which Home Work is prevalent, as seemed to be connected with and bear upon the purpose of our inquiry. In addition to the evidence which we have heard from very capable officials of the Home Office, and the Labour Department of the Board of Trade, from members of organisations which exist for the purpose of directing attention to, and suggesting remedies for, what is commonly known as the "sweating" evil, from representative employers and workpeople who are engaged in some of the industries, the conditions of which have been considered, and from the promoters of the Sweated Industries Bill, your Committee have had the further advantage of supplementing Mr. Aves's valuable Report on the working of the Labour Laws of Australia and New Zealand by perusing a number of Official Reports which were very courteously supplied by the Governments of the Colonies of Australia and New Zealand, and such information as the Foreign Office could obtain regarding the legislation of other countries upon the subject of their inquiries. The Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords, which was appointed on the motion of Lord Dunraven in 1888, and reported in 1890, has also received our careful attention.

2. If the term "sweating" is understood to mean that the employer "grinds the face of the poor" by making an altogether inadequate payment for work upon which he obtains a large and quite disproportionate profit, your Committee are of opinion that, although doubtless there are cases of this kind, sweating of this description does not exist to any such wide-spread extent as would justify them in regarding it as the important factor in the problem which they have had to consider. It can only be in very special and exceptional cases and circumstances that the operation of the ordinary laws of business competition will fail to reduce the profits of manufacturers, merchants, contractors, dealers, and shopkeepers to an average percentage, which experience has shown to be usual and reasonable, when all the conditions under which the business is carried on are taken into consideration.

3. On the other hand, if "sweating" is understood to mean that work is paid for at a rate which, in the conditions under which many of the workers do it, yields to them an income which is quite insufficient to enable an adult person to obtain anything like proper food, clothing, and house accommodation, there is no doubt that sweating does prevail extensively. We have had quite sufficient evidence to convince us (indeed, it is almost common knowledge) that the earnings of a large number of people—mainly women who work in their homes—are so small as alone to be barely sufficient to sustain life in the most meagre manner, even when they toil hard for extremely long hours. The consequence is that, when those earnings are their sole source of income, the conditions under which they live are not only crowded and insanitary, but altogether pitiable and distressing. It is, however, satisfactory to record the opinion of so experienced and competent an observer as Miss Squire, of the Home Office, that there has been considerable improvement since Lord Dunraven's Committee reported in 1890.

4. The problem which is presented by the fact that a very large number of people are unable to, or, at any rate, do not, earn more than a mere pittance, and consequently live under conditions which are conducive to anything but social, material, and moral well-being, is admittedly a many-sided and very difficult one. More or less similar conditions prevail, not only in all the great countries on the Continent of Europe, but also in the United States of America, and even in Australasia, where the proportion of women to men is so different from that which obtains here as to render some of the fundamental conditions which affect women's work and wages scarcely comparable with those with which we have to deal. The evidence which your Committee have taken, and the appendices which accompany it, indicate that all the countries to which reference has been made have either already attempted to deal with the question in some way or other, by legislation, or are considering the best way in which they can do so.

HOME WORKERS.

5. There are three main groups of Home Workers:—

(1.) The employer who works in his own home, and employs there persons from the outside.

(2.) The employer who works in his own home, and employs only members of his own family.

(3.) Persons who do not employ any other person, but who undertake work for others, and do it in their own homes.

It is with the third of these groups that your Committee are mainly concerned. Those who form this group consist chiefly of three classes:—

(1.) Single women, widows, wives deserted by or separated from their husbands, and wives whose husbands are ill or unable to work. These are usually regular workers. They vary much in age, skill and efficiency, in the class of the work they do, and the amount they are able to earn.

(2.) Wives who obtain work when their husbands are out of employment. They are more or less casual workers; some of them have not had any real training, and are unskilled. They have to take such work as is available at the moment, on such terms as are offered to them.

(3.) Wives and daughters of men in regular employment, who wish to increase the family income. They usually select pleasant work, and do not ordinarily work very long hours.

6. The circumstances and earnings of Home Workers vary very considerably. Great caution is required in receiving statements as to rates of payment, net receipts, and number of hours worked. The evidence which your Committee have received has sometimes been conflicting. The price paid for doing part of the work required to produce an article or garment may be thought to be the payment for the whole of the work, unless the various sub-divisions of it be understood, and it be clearly stated that only one of the processes is referred to. There is also often great uncertainty as to the number of hours worked per day in cases where the worker is a wife or daughter, who has her household and family to look after, and, in some cases, an invalid husband or father to attend to. A week's earnings may or may not represent a full week's work. In some cases it represents only such time as can be spared from other duties. In others it represents almost ceaseless toil during all the hours the workers are awake from Monday morning to Saturday night.

7. Mere statements of the amount earned per week, even when it is added that long hours are worked, are not sufficient and conclusive. Sometimes the workers are old or crippled, or in feeble health, and quite incapable of reasonably rapid and efficient work. In other cases they are inexperienced, slow, and incompetent. Many are, from one cause or another, industrial, physical, and social wrecks. If cases be investigated with the assistance of a relieving officer, a very different impression will be created than the one that will result from visiting those to whom any large employer of Home Workers will introduce an inquirer. By one method the most exceptional, pitiable, and distressing cases, and, incidentally, usually the least capable, and less regularly and fully employed workers, will be discovered. By the other, the most reliable, satisfactory, efficient, and constantly employed will be met with. Neither group of cases will represent the average. The conditions and earnings of the great majority will be found to lie between the two.

8. Miss Vines, of the Home Office, gave particulars of some extremely distressing cases of aged and feeble workers, which were obviously very special and quite exceptional. Miss Squire and Miss Vines both gave instances of small earnings, and what appeared to be exceedingly low payments. Miss Squire thinks that the number of people who earn a livelihood by the work is "very few indeed." She expressed the opinion that those who appear to do so will "generally be found to be in receipt of poor relief or pensions or charitable assistance of some kind." She considers that the remuneration obtained by most of them "could hardly be found sufficient in any circumstances to support a person." On the other hand, Miss Collett, Senior Investigator of Women's Industries to the Board of Trade, told your Committee that a large proportion of the Home Workers are fairly comfortably situated married women, who add to the family income in this way. She gave particulars of the earnings of a number of full time workers who earned an average of 14s. per week. She expressed the opinion that the distressing cases, where the earnings are very small, and the conditions are pitiable, are a minority of the Home Workers, and are largely old people "who are really past efficient work," or married women who only work when their husbands are out of employment.

9. A great diversity in the rate of actual earnings per week will be found amongst persons who are receiving the same rate of pay per article or per process. Some are much quicker than others. There is a considerable difference in the extent to which workers have the most efficient tools and appliances. Sewing machines vary considerably in speed and time-saving fittings. Workers vary in the speed at which they can continuously drive them. The class of work also varies. Low class work at low rates often gives larger earnings than better work at higher rates. Some articles or garments are, so to speak, "blown together." Others of the same kind, but different quality, have to be carefully made and finished. That one rate is lower than another does not by any means necessarily prove that it is a less remunerative rate.

WHY THEIR EARNINGS ARE SMALL.

10. The reasons why the earnings of many Home Workers are pitifully small are various and, to some extent, cumulative. Among them are the facts that:—

(1.) Much of the work is sewing, and requires no or very little previous training and experience. It is consequently work to which almost any woman who is able to sew can turn at once, when the necessity of earning her livelihood is forced upon her, or employment in any other occupation to which she has been accustomed fails her.

(2.) As the work can be done at home, it is desired by a large number of women, whose circumstances, household duties, feeble health, age, invalid husband, parents, or children, render it impossible or difficult for them to undertake regular work in factories. It is preferred by others who dislike domestic service or regular work for fixed hours under supervision in factories or workshops. It is also sought after by wives of working men who have no family, or who have time on their hands, and desire to augment the family income by doing work in their spare time.

(3.) As the payment for Home Work is necessarily at piece rates, those who are slow, owing to age, feeble health, inexperience, incompetence, or lack of power, energy, or disposition to work, and those who for any reason find it difficult to secure and retain employment elsewhere, find it more easy to obtain this kind of work than any other, and they drift into it and settle down to it as a method of earning a livelihood. Although at piece rates the payment per article is the same, whether the worker be slow or quick, employers give the preference in selecting factory or workshop workers to those who are quickest, most regular, and most reliable, because they thereby economise space, machinery, and working expenses.

(4.) These conditions and influences tend to make the supply of Home Workers very large and elastic.

(5.) A large proportion of Home Workers are engaged in the production of articles in competition with machinery, and the cost of making the articles by machinery fixes the rate which can be paid to them. Powerful sewing machines, with the latest improvements, specially adapted for each particular class of work, driven by steam power will turn out four times as much work, in an hour, as can be done by an ordinary treadle machine, and with far less physical strain upon the worker. If the same rate per article be paid to the two classes of workers, the Home Worker will be able to earn only one-fourth as much per hour as the factory worker. The weekly earnings of the Home Worker may be pitifully small, while those of the factory worker may be fairly good. In such cases, the trouble is not that the rate of pay is unduly low, but that the Home Worker is handicapped by her conditions and appliances. It is very largely a repetition of the old difficulty of the hand loom weaver in his room at home, competing with the power loom in the factory. Clearly, the rate of payment per article cannot be increased substantially beyond the price paid for doing the same work under superior conditions in the factory. Either the whole of the work must be done in well-equipped factories, or the earnings of Home Workers who make the same articles, must remain much lower than those of factory workers. These remarks apply especially to the ready-made tailoring and the box making trades.

(6.) Another large section of Home Workers have to meet competition of a different kind. They are makers of baby-linen and ladies' blouses and underclothing—articles which a very large number of those who require them can make for themselves. Unless the price at which these articles are sold to the wives and daughters of the better paid working men and the small middle class people is low, those who would otherwise be purchasers will buy the materials, and make the articles at home.

(7.) Home Workers, though not exclusively, are almost entirely women. The earnings of women are usually much lower than those of men, and the earnings of men in casual, low-grade occupations in which little or no special training or skill is required, are extremely small.

(8.) Women Home Workers, because they are very poor and helpless, and work separately, are unorganised, and cannot act together to promote common interests and secure better and uniform rates of payment. They have to bear more than their share of the consequences of uncertainty and irregularity in the trades in which they are engaged; and they are powerless to resist the tendency to reduce rates, which is caused by the keen competition of employers to undersell each other.

11. Your Committee endorse the opinion which was expressed in the following extract from the Report of the Labour Commission in 1894:—

“The natural difficulty, in not highly skilled occupations, of organising persons who work at home, or are dispersed through numerous small workshops, even if it can be overcome in the case of men, would seem almost insuperable in that of women. In the absence of organisation, and in the face of the unlimited competition for the cheaper and less skilled kind of sempstress and similar work, there seems to be little to prevent wages from sinking to the point at which, in the words of one witness, ‘it is easier to starve without the work.’ So long as there is abundance of cheap labour, without any minimum wage affixed by the action of trade organisations or otherwise, it seems to be beyond the power of small employers and contractors, wholly unorganised themselves, and keenly competing with each other for the custom of wholesale houses, and for small profits, to give women more for their work than the lowest pay at which it can be obtained.”

12. There is another class of considerations which must not be overlooked. The imposition by law of conditions and obligations upon owners and occupiers of factories and workshops tends to encourage employers to resort to Home Work in order to avoid compliance with the requirements of Parliament and the visits and supervision of the inspectors who are appointed to enforce them. The more numerous and stringent those regulations become the greater is the temptation to evade them by employing persons who work under conditions to which they do not apply. As the cost of providing premises, machinery, and plant is also largely avoided, and there is far less liability to strikes and trade disputes, the disadvantages, from an employer's point of view, which attend the employment of Home Workers are counterbalanced in many trades, especially in those which are subject to great seasonal fluctuations, and to employers whose capital is small. On the other hand, the existence of a large supply of low-priced home labour tends to reduce the apparent necessity for and to check the introduction of, improvements in methods of production in factories; while, when improvements which lower the cost of the production are made, they tend to reduce the piece rates which can be paid for Home Work on the same class of goods. It is one of the difficulties of the problem that the more efficient machinery, factories, and the organisation of work in them become, the more hopeless is rendered the struggle of the Home Worker to compete with them. These aspects of the question suggest that the principles which underlie our factory and workshop legislation should be applied to the conditions under which work is done elsewhere than in what are technically known as factories and workshops, not only because improvement in those conditions is desirable, and Home Workers require the protection of the law to an increasing extent, but also in order to discourage a method of evading the operation of the present law, which tends to increase Home Work and aggravate some of its most unsatisfactory phases.

PROVISIONS OF THE EXISTING LAW WITH REGARD TO HOME WORK.

13. At the present time Home Workers' premises come under the operation of the provisions of the general law of public health which relate to the sanitation, &c., of dwellings. In addition to these, some special provisions on the subject of Home Work are contained in the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901. The most important—for the purposes of the present inquiry—is that contained in Section 108, which gives to the District Council power, in the case of trades specified by Order of the Secretary of State, to prohibit any person from giving out work to be done in premises which are injurious or dangerous to the health of the persons employed therein. The classes of work to which the section has been applied by the Order at present in force are numerous.

14. This provision only came into operation on the 1st January, 1902, and the statistics published annually by the Home Office of the action of local authorities under the section show, up to the present, that a small though increasing use is being made by local authorities of their powers under the section. In 1906, 1,201 cases of outwork in unwholesome premises were detected, 816 notices were served, and in three cases prosecutions were taken for non-compliance with the notice of the local authority.

15. Section 108 gives the only general power of control in regard to the conditions under which Home Work is done that is possessed by any authority, outside the sanitary provisions of the Public Health Acts. Cases, however, where the Home Worker regularly employs members of his or her own family on the work come under additional regulations as "domestic factories" or "domestic workshops." (An exception is made in the case of three industries, viz., straw plaiting, pillow-lace making, and glove making.) These regulations are contained in Sections 111 to 115 of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901. They apply chiefly to the hours of work of young persons and children. There are other provisions in Sections 109 and 110 of the Factory Act with regard to Home Work in premises in which infectious disease exists, which are for the protection of the public health, not of the Home Worker, and need not be described in detail.

16. For the purpose of furnishing the local authority with the information necessary to enable them effectively to exercise their powers, persons giving out work are required by Section 107 of the Act to keep a list of all persons to whom work is given out by them, and to send copies of these lists twice in the year to the local authority. These lists are tabulated each year at the request of the Home Office by the officers of the local authority, and a summary of them is issued by the Home Office.

17. An important provision for the protection of the Home Worker in connection with the payment for the work done is that which is contained in the "Particulars" section of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901. That section provides that, in industries to which it is applied by Order of the Secretary of State, persons to whom work is given out to be done shall receive from the employer sufficient particulars of the rate of wages applicable to the work to be done and of the work to which that rate is to be applied to enable the worker to compute the total amount of wages payable in respect of the work. This provision, the enforcement of which is placed upon the Inspectors of Factories, is intended to secure to the out-worker information beforehand as to the price he is to get for the work, and to protect him against arbitrary alterations or reductions when the work is brought in. The provision has been extended by Orders of the Secretary of State to the out-workers in a number of trades.

18. The protection which is given by the Truck Act, 1896, to workers in regard to deductions for supply of materials, bad work, &c., only applies very partially to Home Workers. A series of judicial decisions have laid it down that unless there is a contract between the out-worker and the employer for the work to be done by the out-worker personally, the provisions of that Act do not apply. The only other statutory provision in regard to Home Work that need be noticed here is the power given to local authorities by the Employment of Children Act, 1903, to regulate the employment of children in work at home.

AUSTRALASIAN EXPERIMENTS AND EXPERIENCE.

19. During the discussion, in recent years, of the subjects which form the reference to your Committee, the legislation of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand with regard to Wages Boards and Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Acts has attracted much attention, and some of it has formed the basis of one of the proposals which has been specifically referred to the Committee. Careful attention has, therefore, been given to the interesting and valuable Report of Mr. Ernest Aves, who was appointed last year, by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, a Commissioner to investigate the working of the systems there adopted. Your Committee had the advantage of taking Mr. Aves's evidence as a witness with regard to the results of his inquiries so far as they bore upon the subject of Home Work.

20. The legislation of Australia and New Zealand on the matters under consideration may be grouped under three heads—Factory Acts, Wages Boards, and Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Acts. So far as there are differences of principle and method, the legislation of Victoria on the one hand, and of New Zealand on the other, may be regarded as respectively representative. On the wider questions of fixing wages, and adjusting or deciding disputes as to wages and conditions of work, the experiments and experience of both the Commonwealth and the Dominion are extremely useful and interesting, notwithstanding the fact, upon which Mr. Aves dwells, that in neither case

has the system yet been put to the test which a time of prolonged depression, and a serious fall in prices, would impose, when demands would be made for, and decisions possibly be given in favour of, substantial reductions in wages and rates of payment. As the more experimental portions of the legislation were enacted in order to deal with the conditions which characterised the period of extreme and exceptional depression in trade, and scarcity of employment, and consequent reduction in wages, through which the Australasian Colonies passed some twenty years ago, and as that legislation has run and been developed and extended concurrently with the steady and remarkable recovery which has been experienced during the last 10 years, it is obvious that the new laws have been working under extremely favourable conditions, and it is not always easy to determine how much if any of some improved conditions are the results of the legislation on labour questions, or are due to economic and social causes, and would have been brought about even if there had been no change in the law. Nevertheless, it appears to be quite clear that, so far as the experience which has been had of the new departures has gone, they are very largely and generally, if not universally, approved by the people of Australia, and the large majority are of opinion that they have proved to be distinctly beneficial and useful.

21. So far as the limited field of inquiry—the conditions of labour in trades in which Home Work is prevalent, and the proposals which have been made for the remedying of existing abuses—which has been referred to your Committee, is concerned, Mr. Aves's Report makes it clear that, apart from the valuable suggestions which are to be derived even from the application of general principles and novel legislation to widely different conditions, there is not much information or guidance with regard to the difficulties which surround the problem of Home Work, as it presents itself here, to be derived from the conditions, legislation, and experience of Australia and New Zealand. In the first place, there the Home Worker is a very small element of the population. In the second place, the demand for women workers exceeds the supply, and the natural result is that, apart from exceptional cases, their position as to earnings and conditions of work is very different from that which prevails here. Lastly, the various Wages and other Boards have left the Home Workers almost entirely untouched, and consequently the effect of their operations upon the wages of these workers has been *nil*, or inconsiderable, except in so far as they have indirectly benefited from the improvement which has occurred in industrial conditions generally.

Referring to Victoria, Mr. Aves says:—

“There is a wide exemption from the operation of the Act of those working at home on their own account, and taking in work from private employers or from retail shops unregistered as factories.”

“Alike in administration and in the records, the place of very secondary importance that the home workers occupy is one of the striking features of the industrial situation.”

“In many trades, especially women's trades, the effect upon wages appears to be inconsiderable.”

“There is in Melbourne an unusual scarcity of labour. This indeed is the bottom fact of the situation to which, so far as female labour is concerned, we are always driven back.”

With regard to New Zealand, Mr. Aves reports:—

“The home worker presents no great problem, in the sense of being the basis upon which any considerable proportion of a trade, under-rate or over, rests.”

“The home worker is, I think, hardly a factor, much less a problem in New Zealand.”

“The Conciliation and Arbitration Act . . . directly, save as regards tailoring . . . has little effect on the employment of women.”

22. On the other hand, it appears to be beyond question that, in factories and workshops, and among out-workers, other than Home Workers in Australia, where unsatisfactory rates of payment and conditions of work were being established fifteen or twenty years ago, and seemed likely to spread, the legislation which has from time to time been passed, has been useful. Opinions vary as to the extent to which this is due to increasing prosperity and better times generally, or to Wages Board and Factory Acts. In Victoria in 1902, after the Act of 1896 (which gave power to establish Wages Boards in certain trades) had been in force six years, a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into its operation. The general conclusion arrived at was that Conciliation Boards were preferable to Wages Boards, which “have committed serious errors in the course of their work,” and as regards “the prospects of methods of conciliation in a dispute, are almost hopeless.”

Nevertheless, the references of the Report to the work of the Wages Boards in those branches of industry where the conditions as regards under-payment most nearly approach those with which your Committee have to deal, were distinctly to the effect that good work had been done, and advantage to the workers had resulted. For example, in the midst of the statement of the reasons for preferring Conciliation Boards to Wages Boards, the Report says:—

“But it must be remembered the Wages Boards were at first constituted to deal with industries in which sweating was rampant, such as the clothing, underclothing, and shirt-making trades. They unquestionably did good work in these, and the fact will always stand to the credit of the system.”

23. Reporting upon the Clothing Board, which dealt with an industry in which under-payment and unsatisfactory resulting conditions were prevalent, especially during the period of financial and commercial depression, the Commissioners say:—

“In the stress of competition, a system prevailed under which large city warehouses

let the making-up of clothing to small contractors or middlemen at rates so low that there was very little, if any, profit left to the latter if fair wages were paid. Some of these contractors had small factories, others took over factories and warehouses, but many of them had no registered place of business, and were mere parasites of labour, doing no work themselves, and making their livelihood out of the necessities of, perhaps, the poorest class in the community.

* * * * *

“Both employers and workers agreed that sweating had practically disappeared with the conditions which had produced the evil—the excessive competition of out-workers who had been pitted against each other.”

Again, referring to the shirt-makers, they say :—

“It will be admitted as a fact beyond dispute that, in this trade, the factory law has broken down a hideous form of sweating, and protected in no small degree an industrious and deserving class of women.”

24. It is quite possible that Conciliation Boards may be preferable to Wages Boards for trades where there are well-organised bodies of workpeople, but that, when workers are so poor, helpless, and unorganised, and consequently practically incapable of combined, determined, and effective action, as Home Workers are, a mere Conciliation Board would almost certainly be useless.

25. It is interesting to note that the opinion that the Wages Boards of Victoria have been useful in dealing with sweating still prevails. Mr. Aves, in his Report, this year, says :—

“There is also a very widely spread belief that the Boards have been instrumental, some say in abolishing, and others in modifying the evils of “sweating,” and, from complex motives, there is in Victoria a great preponderance of opinion amongst all classes in favour of the retention of the Boards.”

26. In view of the proposals for dealing with the problem in this country which have been referred to your Committee, it is important that it should be noted that the rates of payment which have been fixed by Wages Boards in Australia, and by Conciliation and Arbitration Boards there and in New Zealand, have, to a large extent, been minimum time rates, and when minimum piece rates have been fixed, they almost always have been fixed with the time rate as the basis, and when comparisons or records are given, they almost invariably take the form of a statement of the amount earned per week. In the Report of the Victorian Royal Commission of 1902-3, there are several passages similar to the following :—

“Any Board [in Victoria] may rule that manufacturers may be allowed to fix piece-work rates based on the minimum wage.”

“The Shirt-makers’ Board [Victoria] fixed the rates for making shirts, shirt fronts, collars, cuffs, and pyjamas. The minimum wage is fixed at 4d. per hour, or 16s. per week of 48 hours. Piece-work rates are also fixed on a basis which will allow an average worker to earn 4d., 4½d., or 5d. an hour, according to the class of work done.”

“The minimum wage is fixed [by the Underclothing Board] at 4d. an hour, or 16s. per week. Owing to the great variety of garments dealt with in this trade, and the frequent alterations made in patterns and designs, the Board decided that it would be impracticable to fix piece-work rates properly, and therefore, by the determination, employers are permitted to adjust such rates themselves, subject to the proviso that the average worker is enabled to earn 4d. per hour under the scale adopted. The employer is required to supply, free of charge, cotton, and all other materials which are requisite for piece-workers, so that the earnings on this basis shall be met.”

Mr. Aves, also referring to Victoria, says :—

“In the underclothing, dressmaking, milliners, and waterproof clothing trades, no schedule of piece-work was, or, in the opinion of the Board, could be attempted, but the average worker employed upon piece-work is to be able to earn not less than the statutory 4d. or 5d. per hour. Should piece-work rates be proved to represent less than this equivalent time rate, they would be illegal.”

27. A further point of importance is that in New Zealand, as a matter of practical working, the problem of the underpayment of women has been dealt with, not by the Conciliation and Arbitration Boards, but by the direct action of Parliament in fixing a minimum wage in its Factory Act, in which the following clause appears :—

“Every person who is employed in any capacity in a factory shall be entitled to receive from the occupier payment for the work at such rate as is agreed on, in no case less than five shillings per week for boys and girls under sixteen years of age, and thereafter an annual increase of not less than three shillings weekly till twenty years of age.”

Commenting upon this clause, Mr. Aves says :—

“This clause was passed in order to prevent persons being employed in factories without reasonable remuneration in money. Payment is to be made in every case irrespective of overtime, and premiums are forbidden.

“The above clause has a very important effect upon the scope of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, inasmuch as by legal enactment the ground for most of those very trades that are chiefly liable to the evils of under-payment is covered by the direct action of Parliament. One result is seen in the fact that no award has been given for women in any branch of the clothing trade in New Zealand, except in tailoring. Thus, dressmaking, shirt-making, millinery, white work, &c., if not always considered to be satisfactorily provided for by the above clause, at any rate remain outside the Arbitration Act. And through the whole series of awards there is, I think, apart from the tailoring trade, hardly any special provision made for females, save for the small body of match-factory employees and in an unimportant reference in the rates fixed for apprentices in the printing trades and in woollen mills. The practical importance of the Factories Act in this connection is perhaps sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that, in the awards in the boot-making trade, in which the proportion of females is large, there is no reference to them whatsoever.”

SUGGESTED REMEDIES.

28. Your Committee have carefully considered the proposals which have been made for further legislation by Parliament. The broad outlines of the two which have attracted the most attention are:—

1. The proposal that it should be rendered illegal to give work to any out-worker in certain specified trades, unless the worker had previously obtained a licence from a Government Factory Inspector which authorises the holder of the licence to do work for a specified time in the premises named in the licence. The licences would require renewal every six months, and the conditions for obtaining them would be that the premises in which the work was to be done were clean and wholesome, adequately lighted and ventilated, and not overcrowded.

2. The proposal that, in certain specified trades, a Wages Board, consisting of representatives of employers and working people and a neutral Chairman, should be established, with power to fix the minimum rate of wages to be paid to workers in those trades. The payment of a lower rate than that thus fixed to be a punishable offence.

29. Your Committee approached the consideration of this portion of their task with the conviction that it is not desirable to prohibit or to attempt to stamp out Home Work. There are a number of people who, for various reasons, cannot go to factories and workshops and undertake the continuous attendance and work which are there required. There are others to whom it would involve serious inconvenience, and, indeed, hardship. They are glad to work at home. They earn an extremely welcome addition to the family income. To prevent them from so doing would be indefensible, unless it were shown that such drastic action was absolutely essential in order to secure a great public advantage. In our judgment this has not been proved. On the other hand, we are of opinion that, by means of legislation, some earnest effort should be made to remedy the evils which undoubtedly exist.

LICENSING.

30. As to the proposal that Home Workers, in certain trades, should be required to obtain a licence to work in specified premises, your Committee are of opinion that it is very desirable that, in every locality, there should be a far more complete and accurate list of Home Workers than is obtained at the present time, and also that some provision should be made for securing greater cleanliness and better sanitary conditions than are to be found in too many of the houses in which people work and live. We are not convinced, however, that it is necessary that legislation need be carried to the full extent of the proposals which have been submitted to us. There are two substantial practical difficulties. One is, the number of inspectors that would be required would be very large. The house of every Home Worker would have to be visited twice a year—the proposal is that the licence should be renewed every six months. This would be a great task, and would involve an enormous addition to the present staff. The other difficulty is the obstacles which it would place in the way of an exceptionally poor and helpless section of the community earning a livelihood. It would be hard upon the occasional worker, the wife who desired to step into the breach and earn something to enable the family to keep the home together when the husband is thrown out of work. The difficulty which persons of this class would experience in communicating with the Inspector, discovering his address, writing to him, or finding him, and the delay which would take place before he could be got to their home, and consequently, before they could begin to earn the much-needed income, would be very serious, and, in trying circumstances, quite intolerable, unless there were a small army of Inspectors. The difficulty and trouble would be repeated every six months.

31. Much might be accomplished by far less drastic measures. Complete lists of Home Workers might be obtained by requiring that every Home Worker must register her name, occupation, and address with the Local Authority, and obtain a certificate of such registration before receiving work to do at home. It could be made an offence for any employer to give out work to be done at home unless a certificate of registration were produced. No conditions as to cleanliness of person or dwelling need be required as a condition of registration. Consequently there would not be any necessity for inspection and report upon the condition of the premises. The certificate of registration should be issued immediately the application was made. As the offices of the Local

Authority would be the place of registration, everyone would know where they were, and they would always be accessible without delay or serious inconvenience. The aim would be to obtain complete and accurate registration. This should not supersede, but supplement, the keeping of lists of out-workers by employers.

32. If the provision of Section 9 of the Public Health Act, 1875, with respect to factories and workshops which are not kept in a cleanly state, or are ill-ventilated or over-crowded, were extended to rooms in which Home Work is done, much good would be done. If these provisions were accompanied by power being given to the Inspectors of the Local Authority and the Factory Inspector to inspect rooms in which Home Work is done, a great improvement in structural and domestic cleanliness would be brought about. It is desirable that the responsibility of supervision in these matters, in these cases, should rest primarily with the Local Authority, inasmuch as they are sanitary regulations and refer to dwelling-houses; but power should be given to the Factory Inspector to secure the enforcement of the law, if the Local Authority failed in the performance of their duties. Your Committee recommend the adoption of these suggestions.

WAGES BOARDS.

33. In the opinion of your Committee, the second proposal—for the establishment of Wages Boards—goes to the root of the matter, in so far as the object aimed at is an increase in the wages of Home Workers. No proposals which fail to increase the income of these people can have any appreciable effect in ameliorating their condition. Improved sanitary conditions are important, and necessary; greater personal and domestic cleanliness in many cases is very desirable; but the poverty, the miserably inadequate income, of so many of the Home Workers is the great difficulty of the situation. With an increase in their earnings many of the other undesirable conditions which intensify and in turn are aggravated by the ever-present burden of grinding poverty would be very appreciably modified and improved. Miss Squire told us that, during recent years, the general sanitary condition of the houses of Home Workers has been improved considerably, but there has been no corresponding improvement in personal or domestic cleanliness.

34. Is there any prospect that these people, with the aid of such voluntary and philanthropic assistance and co-operation as is, or would be, available, will materially improve their own condition, and, to any appreciable extent, extricate themselves from the quagmire of endless toil and almost ceaseless misery in which some of them are involved? On the other hand, can legislation help them? Your Committee are of opinion that, unless Parliament steps in and gives them the protection and support which legislation alone can supply, the prospects of any real and substantial improvement in their position and condition being brought about are very small and remote. We are further of opinion that carefully considered legislation would aid them materially; and, that being so, we cannot doubt that it is desirable that an attempt should be made, and an experiment be tried. At the same time we recognise that legislation which will affect the well-being and may interfere to some extent with the livelihood of a number of extremely poor and helpless persons must be considered with the utmost care, and be entered upon with great caution.

35. Are Wages Boards practicable, and would they prove to be effective as a remedy for the evils with which they are designed to cope? The fact that the payment for Home Work is necessarily always at piece rates complicates the problem and increases the difficulty. If the payments were made by time wages, everything would be far simpler and easier. In the first place, there is the enormous number and complication of articles, processes, sub-divisions, and patterns. Then there are the constant changes, especially in those trades where fashion is the dominating factor, and different employers have a vast number of different methods and designs. Any attempt to fix prices for every process of every article, of every size, of every pattern, and every variation of every manufacturer of some classes of goods would appear to be almost interminable. In the next place there is the difficulty of submitting new ideas, designs, and patterns to rival and competing employers who are members of the Wages Board; while, if prices are not promptly fixed for new articles and patterns, there would appear to be the risk of leaving a loophole through which ingenious persons would contrive to escape and perpetuate under-payment by making slight variations from a pattern for which a price has been fixed.

36. Another important phase is indicated by the question: Is the piece rate to be based upon the time in which a worker of average skill can complete the article or process in a factory, under favourable conditions, with the most modern machinery and appliances, or is it to be based upon the time taken by the worker in the conditions and with the appliances in and with which he actually works? Can a higher piece rate be paid to Home Workers than is paid to factory workers who work under conditions which render far more rapid production easy? The issues which these questions raise are far-reaching, they indicate some of the reasons why the problem which has been referred to your Committee has proved to be so difficult to solve.

37. Your Committee have already pointed out that a rate of payment which may yield a tolerable earning with up-to-date machinery and adequate facilities may give meagre results if the machinery or appliances are slow, inconvenient, and antiquated, and the results may be altogether inadequate if the workers have little or no machinery or appliances, or if what there is has to be driven by them instead of by steam or other power. If the minimum rate of payment fixed be one which would be a suitable minimum for those who work under the best conditions, or the medium, or the worst, it must be an unsatisfactory rate for that portion of the trade which is carried on under

conditions different from those for which the rate is a reasonable one. Further, if the rate of payment be the same whether machinery and appliances be modern and rapid or antiquated and slow, the inducement to employers to provide the newest machinery and plant and the most improved conditions will be reduced considerably, and in the long run some of the consequences of not providing them will fall upon those whom he employs. In the case of the Home Worker it may be contended that as the employer does not supply machinery or appliances, but gives out the work, to be done by the person under conditions and with appliances which the worker provides, the lack of efficient machinery and appliances is not the fault of the employer who gives out the work. Under better conditions, where the persons concerned were able to organise and secure equitable payment, such a position would adjust itself, and the employer who avoided the cost of providing premises and plant would have to pay more to those to whom he gave out work than he would if he provided the appliances and premises. It is just here that the special position of the Home Workers and the conditions which render their earnings low apply; and it is because their position and those conditions are exceptional that the intervention and assistance of Parliament have been invited.

38. Your Committee attach importance to the experience and opinion of Mr. Askwith, of the Board of Trade, who for many years has, from time to time, rendered most valuable service by acting as Arbitrator and Conciliator in trade disputes of various kinds. He has settled piece-work rates in industries where the complication and diversity of patterns, &c., is great, and the results have been arrived at without excessive difficulty, and afterwards have worked satisfactorily. He is of opinion that "Wages Boards are workable and practicable, and would be beneficial, and ought to be tried." After making full allowance for the fact that these settlements have been made in trades where the employees were organised and had trained members of their trades unions to represent them, and where the whole of the conditions were much more favourable than would be the case when piece-work rates for Home Workers had to be fixed, your Committee agree that the experiment ought to be tried.

39. Upon the question of the general policy of Parliament fixing or providing for the fixing of a minimum rate of payment for work, below which it should be illegal to employ people, your Committee are of opinion that it is quite as legitimate to establish by legislation a minimum standard of remuneration as it is to establish such a standard of sanitation, cleanliness, ventilation, air space and hours of work. If it be said that there may be industries which cannot be carried on if such a standard of payment be enforced, it may be replied that this was said when the enactment of many of the provisions of the Factory and other similar Acts were proposed, and public opinion supported Parliament in deciding that, if the prognostication were an accurate one, it would be better that any trade which could not exist if such a minimum of decent and humane conditions were insisted upon should cease. Parliament, with the full approval of the nation, has practically so decided again and again, when enactments have been passed forbidding the carrying on of specified industries, unless certain minimum conditions as to health, safety, and comfort are complied with. It is doubtful whether there is any more important condition of individual and general well-being than the possibility of obtaining an income sufficient to enable those who earn it to secure, at any rate, the necessaries of life. If a trade will not yield such an income to average industrious workers engaged in it, it is a parasite industry, and it is contrary to the general well-being that it should continue. Experience, however, teaches that the usual result of legislation of the nature referred to is not to kill the industry, but to reform it. Low-priced labour is a great obstacle to improvement. It discourages invention, and removes or prevents the growth of a great stimulus to progress and efficiency. The direct and early result of prohibiting unsatisfactory conditions in industrial life is almost invariably to direct the attention of the most competent minds in and about the trade to the production and introduction of such improvements in machinery, methods, and processes as will enable the industry to continue under greatly improved conditions, and be carried on with greater success than before. In our judgment there is no reason to doubt that similar beneficial results to all concerned—employers, workpeople, and the general public—to those which have followed the establishing of minimum conditions of other kinds in various departments of industrial life, would follow the establishing by law of minimum rates of payment for such classes of workers as experience has shown are unable to secure for themselves rates of payment for work which may reasonably be regarded as even the lowest upon which an average worker can exist.

RECOMMENDATION.

40. With regard to this portion of their inquiry, the conclusion at which your Committee have arrived is that the general principle should be adopted of establishing Wages Boards for Home Workers, each Board to fix—

(1) A general minimum rate of time payment for an average Home Worker in the particular trade for which it acted, and also for any branch of or process in the trade for which a different rate might seem to be desirable, such other rate to be not less than the general minimum rate.

(2) Minimum piece rates for any work done by Home Workers, those piece rates to be such as would enable an average worker to earn not less than the equivalent of the minimum time rate.

In this way the great practical difficulty of fixing piece rates for every variation in size, pattern, and class of every article would be avoided. Piece rates could be fixed for everything which was to any extent of a standard size, pattern, or character, while the minimum time rate would ensure that articles, or patterns, or sizes which were not covered by the minimum piece rates already fixed could not be paid for at a lower piece rate than would yield to an

average worker the equivalent minimum time rate. It should be compulsory for the Wages Board, as its first duty, to fix a minimum time rate of payment for the trade for which it was appointed, for the district for which it acted. The gradual building up of lists of piece rates based on the minimum time rate would follow.

41. In view of the fact that this proposal represents a very considerable new departure in industrial legislation, and fully realising the many difficulties that surround it, your Committee are of opinion that it is desirable that Parliament should proceed at first somewhat experimentally, and apply these general principles to one or two trades, in which the necessity for some legislation is great, and where experience could be gained without running any serious risk of dislocating an important industry. We, therefore, recommend :—

That Wages Boards be established for certain specified trades. The Boards should consist of representatives of the employers and the employed women Home Workers in equal numbers, with a Chairman chosen by the members; or, failing agreement upon one, by the Home Secretary. The Boards should have power to fix minimum piece rates of payment in those trades for all women workers, who, in a private house, room, or place which is used as a dwelling house, work for any other person at the production or making or preparation of any articles for sale by another person. They should fix such minimum rates of payment, when called upon to do so by any employer or seven workwomen; or by the whole of the representatives on the Board of either the workpeople or the employers; or by the Chairman or the Home Secretary.

42. Each Board should be required to fix a minimum time wage for its district for the whole of the women workers in the trade for which it acted. When this was done, the piece rates paid for work in those trades would have to be at least such as would enable an average Home Worker to earn not less than the minimum wage for that trade in that district in a week of, say, 60 hours.

43. In order to avoid the fixing of rates of payment which would be likely to prove unreasonable and inadvisable in special cases, and to give those who would be affected by them an opportunity of securing their reconsideration, if a substantial case for so doing could be made out, it would be desirable to give the Home Secretary power to suspend for a specified time any determination of a Board and refer it to them for further consideration.

44. It should be an offence for any person to pay or offer to a woman Home Worker a lower rate of payment for work than the minimum fixed by the Board. The duty of enforcing the Act and the determinations of the Board should be entrusted to the Factory Inspectors, and the Board itself, which, in this respect, would act through its Secretary.

45. The election of representatives of the workwomen in each district would be facilitated by the existence in the offices of the Local Authority of a complete register of them and the trades in which they were engaged. It would probably be desirable that the Local Authority be required to provide a suitable room for the Board to meet in, that a Factory Inspector should be the Secretary to the Board, and that a moderate payment should be made, either by the locality or the Treasury, to the representatives of the workwomen on the Board.

46. The trades for which your Committees suggest that Wages Boards should be established, in the first instance, are tailoring and the making of shirts, underclothing, and baby linen. Power should be given to the Home Secretary, on application being made to him by such responsible representative or interested persons as may be specified, and after he has caused an inquiry to be made, to direct that a Wages Board should be established for any other trade in any district.

47. It might be left to the Home Secretary to define the district over which the jurisdiction of each Board should extend. It has been suggested that difficulty would arise through different districts fixing different rates of payment. We think this would not be found to be of practical importance. The rates of payment now in all trades vary in different towns and in different parts of the country, and it is not probable that they would do so to any greater extent under the operation of the proposals which are now made. But if real difficulty did arise, it would be possible to arrange for the appointment of supervising or co-ordinating Boards, which might also develop into Boards of Appeal.

48. The fact that payment for Home Work must be at piece rates relieves your Committee of the very great difficulty that would attend any attempt to adjust a time rate of payment to the capacity of the slow, the infirm, the inefficient, and the aged. As the payment for Home Work is according to the amount of work a person is able to get through, those who are below the average in output earn an amount which is in proportion to their ability, power, and industry. The earnings of those who are slow and inefficient cannot be raised by giving them a rate of payment above that which is made to the average worker, even though it yield a very poor income to those whose output is small. What can be secured is that a minimum rate per article or per process shall be paid to all workers for the same amount, character, and quality of work.

49. One difficulty which has to be considered in connection with all legislation of the kind which is now suggested is the risk of evasion, especially where the possibility of collusion between the employer and the employed has also to be allowed for. In this respect the difference between dealing with a strong combination of well-organised workers and such a peculiarly helpless and powerless body of people, whose circumstances seem to render anything like effective combination and organisation for mutual support and protection quite impracticable, as women Home Workers are, is very great,

and for practical purposes really fundamental. The importance of this will be seen if the question of enforcing decisions of the Boards as to piece rates be considered. When a piece rate for making a given article has been fixed, it might be easy for an employer who wished to evade payment of that rate to so alter the pattern by omitting or changing some trivial details as to make it difficult to prove in Court that the lower rate which he was paying was, in fact, a payment for precisely the article and work for which the Board had fixed a higher rate. If the workers were represented by a strong organisation of their own, such attempts at evasion would not be tolerated, but Home Workers have no such power behind them, and must rely on what can be proved definitely and conclusively in Court. It is in this connection that the difficulty, indeed the practical impossibility, of a Board fixing piece rates for every variation of every detail of every article and pattern in trades where the changes are constant and the variations are almost innumerable, brings into prominence an important difference between the case of the Home Workers and those adjustments of rates of payments in organised trades where the services of arbitrators and conciliators like Mr. Askwith have been so valuable and successful. Under the recommendations which your Committee make, the fact that a minimum time rate of payment, below the equivalent of which any piece rates must not fall, is to be fixed, will provide an exceedingly useful supplement to such piece rates as are fixed by the Boards. We attach the greatest importance to the fixing of a minimum time rate and its application as the standard by which piece rates other than those fixed by the Boards may be tested.

50. The cost to Home Workers which is involved in the intervention of the middleman between the employer and the worker is a matter to which your Committee have directed their attention. There are cases where the person who obtains the work from the warehouse or factory and distributes it to and collects it from the Home Worker renders a distinct and valuable service. Indeed, one of the most unsatisfactory phases of Home Work is often the time which is lost and the expense incurred in fetching and returning work. In many cases the cost of tram fares and the loss of time in the journeys and waiting at the warehouse are together equivalent to a reduction of from 20 to 25 per cent. in the amount which could be earned if there were no such deductions of time or expense. Where another person undertakes this, the saving to the worker is very appreciable, and where the intervening person does not obtain more than a reasonable remuneration for the service rendered and the responsibility undertaken, the arrangement is a beneficial one. It is obvious, however, that it is one which places the worker very much at the mercy of the middleman or middlewoman, as the case may be, and opens the door to a system of real "sweating." It is very desirable that, wherever practicable, work which is given out to be done by workers at their homes should be delivered and collected by persons in the direct employ and pay of the employer. An incidental advantage of the arrangement would be that the employer could be kept informed as to the condition of the house in which the work was done. It would tend to facilitate the adoption of this arrangement if it were provided that, in ascertaining whether the piece rates paid were such as would yield an average worker not less than the fixed minimum wage, allowance should be made for the time occupied in obtaining and returning the materials and articles. That is to say, the time so occupied should be regarded as part of the 60 hours of the average worker's week.

51. The full protection of the Truck Act should be secured to Home Workers. Provision should also be made to ensure that at least the full amount of the fixed minimum rate of payment should be paid to the worker in cash. Any attempt to regulate the hours for or during which Home Workers should work would be impracticable. The enforcement of regulations for the employment of children in Home Work is very difficult.

52. It has been suggested to us in the course of our inquiry that in some industries there is no room for any appreciable increase in the payment of the employees owing to the low prices at which foreign competitors produce the articles. Even if it were found that some branches of industry which are now carried on in this country under conditions of excessive toil and miserably inadequate earnings for the workpeople had to be abandoned, the benefits which would result from improving the condition of the great mass of the poorest workers in our midst, and diverting British industry and capital, in the exceptional cases, into other channels which are far more suitable for them, would abundantly counterbalance any temporary inconvenience which might be caused. It will, however, have been gathered from what has already been said that your Committee do not regard Home Work as an efficient and cheap method of production, and they are by no means convinced that if it died out altogether any goods which are now made in the homes of the workers would not be produced quite as cheaply as now and under much more satisfactory conditions in properly equipped factories or workshops. Competition must be met by increased efficiency, not by low wages. The increasing facilities of communication and the opening up of countries with immense populations of industrious people will more and more bring into the field of industrial competition the low-priced labour not only of some parts of Europe, but also of India, China, and Japan. If we attempt to compete with these peoples on their own lines of low wages we shall tend towards their level of subsistence and then be beaten, because in the climate of their countries, where nature is prolific in its provision of food, and far less of it is required than is necessary here, people can live far more cheaply than we can. Experience teaches that healthy and well-educated and highly-trained men and women living and working under satisfactory conditions provide the industrial army with which thoroughly capable, alert, and enterprising employers can most successfully meet any competition which they may have to encounter. The conditions of work and the rates of payment which it is sometimes suggested are essential to the retention of some of the trades in which extremely lowly-paid people work are precisely those which are, in our judgment, not only not conducive to, but really incompatible with, the highest efficiency and the cheapest production.

53. Again we may quote Mr. Aves :—

“ This question of cost is so fundamental that when the view is accepted that increased wages must lead to increased cost, and when circumstances appear to leave no margin for such an increase, any change that involves higher wages comes to be regarded as impracticable. Some of the fallacies, mainly traceable to an assumed fixity in the determining conditions—personal and economic—which underlie this assumption in its application to certain industries are recalled by Victorian experience, and the extent to which the combined view is held that Special Boards have increased wages and have not increased cost is of practical significance, since it is found to prevail in several of those trades in which the evil of underpayment is apt to be most prevalent. The Special Boards themselves may or may not have sent wages up to the extent often assumed or even at all. The fact remains that in several trades in which wages have tended upwards there is much testimony to the fact that neither cost nor price have been similarly affected, and in some instances it has been admitted that they have tended in the opposite direction.”

54. One safeguard against most, if not all, the conceivable harm which could possibly result from the unwise use by Wages Boards of the powers which your Committee suggest should be conferred upon them by will be found in the fact that the proposal is that the Boards should be composed of employers and employed who are engaged in the trades with regard to which they would fix rates of payment. No one could be more deeply concerned than they would be that every precaution should be taken that nothing be done that would really curtail the trade with which all their interests were so closely allied. No one would more speedily perceive and feel the effects of an imprudent decision, and it would be within their power to amend it promptly. We believe that the members of these Boards would approach the discharge of their duties in a spirit of moderation, with a strong sense of fairness, and a full appreciation of the importance of the issues which would be submitted to them. There is no reason why they should not be able to decide what are the lowest rates of payment which may reasonably and equitably be made for work done under specified conditions in selected industries. They could at least secure the levelling up of the rates of payment in their respective trades to those adopted by the best employers in those trades. We have been impressed by the testimony we have received to the effect that most, if not indeed all, employers would be glad to have fixed a minimum rate of payment and conditions below which neither they nor their competitors should be allowed to go. If nothing more than this were accomplished by the adoption of the recommendations which we make, a substantial step would be taken in the improvement of the position of that portion of our people whose special circumstances we have been considering.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS.

55. The conclusions at which your Committee have arrived may now be summarised. They are that it is desirable :—

(1.) That there should be legislation with regard to the rates of payment made to women Home Workers who are employed in the production or preparation of articles for sale by other persons.

(2.) That such legislation should at first be tentative and experimental, and be limited in its scope to women Home Workers engaged in the tailoring, shirtmaking, underclothing and baby linen trades.

(3.) That all women Home Workers who are employed by other persons in producing or preparing articles for sale should be required to register their name, address, and class of work at, and receive a certificate of such registration from, the offices of the Local Authority.

(4.) That it should be an offence for any person to employ any woman Home Worker to produce or prepare any articles for sale by another person unless she produced a certificate showing that she had been duly registered.

(5.) That Wages Boards should be established in selected trades to fix minimum time and piece rates of payment for women Home Workers in those trades.

(6.) That it should be an offence to pay or offer lower rates of payment to women Home Workers in those trades than the minimum rates which had been fixed by the Wages Board.

(7.) That the provisions of Section 9 of the Public Health Act, 1875, with regard to factories and workshops which are not kept clean or are ill-ventilated or overcrowded should be extended to rooms in which Home Work is done, and power should be given to Sanitary and Factory Inspectors to inspect them.

(8.) That the full protection of the Truck Act should be secured to Home Workers.

Question, That the *Chairman's* Draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph,—put, and agreed to.

Paragraph 1.—amended and agreed to.

Paragraph 2.—

Amendment proposed to leave out the paragraph—(Mr. *Chiozza Money*).
Question put, That the words "If the term" stand part of the paragraph.
The Committee divided.

Ayes, 6.

Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.

Noes, 5.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Robinson.

An Amendment proposed in line 3 of the paragraph, after the word "Committee" to leave out the words "are of opinion that, although doubtless there are cases of this kind, sweating of this description does not exist to any such wide-spread extent as would justify them in regarding it as the important factor in the problem which they have had to consider," and insert the words "have not taken sufficient evidence to justify them in giving an opinion as to the extent to which sweating of this description exists"—(Mr. *Bridgeman*)—instead thereof.

Question put, That the words "are of opinion" stand part of the paragraph.
The Committee divided :

Ayes, 8.

Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.

Noes, 4.

Mr. Boland.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Chiozza Money.

Amendments made, in line 3, by leaving out the word "doubtless"; in lines 4 and 5, by leaving out the words "does not exist to any such wide-spread extent as would justify them in regarding it as," and inserting the words "is not"—instead thereof; and, in line 5, by inserting after the first word "the" the word "most."

Paragraph further amended, by leaving out all the words from the words "It can only," in line 6, to the end of the paragraph,

Question put, That the paragraph, as amended, stand part of the Report.
The Committee divided :

Ayes, 8.

Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.

Noes, 4.

Mr. Boland.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Chiozza Money.

Paragraph 3.—

Amendment proposed to leave out the paragraph, and insert the following new paragraph :—

"3. Your Committee have understood sweating to mean a condition of employment in which, through any or all of the following factors, viz. : (1) Low rates of remuneration, (2) excessive hours of labour, or (3) unhealthy work places, the workers are unable to sustain physical efficiency, and we have accordingly had regard not only to nominal rates of wages, but to the conditions under which those wages are earned. We have had sufficient evidence to convince us, and indeed it is almost common knowledge, that the earnings of a large number of people are so small as alone to be barely sufficient to sustain life in the most meagre manner, even when they toil hard for extremely long hours. The consequence is that, when those earnings are their sole source of income, the conditions under which they live are not only crowded and insanitary, but altogether pitiable and distressing. And while our evidence has been chiefly concerned with trades in which Home Work is prevalent, it has been shown that very low rates of remuneration are by no means confined to Home Workers, but are not infrequently the lot of factory workers also"—(Mr. *Chiozza Money*)—instead thereof.

Question put, That the words "On the other hand" stand part of paragraph 3.
The Committee divided :

Ayes, 10.	Noes, 2.
Mr. Bridgeman.	Mr. Boland.
Mr. Brunner.	Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Fell.	
Mr. G. P. Gooch.	
Mr. Arthur Henderson.	
Mr. Hugh Law.	
Mr. Massie.	
Mr. Parkes.	
Mr. Robinson.	
Mr. Stuart Samuel.	

An Amendment made, in lines 6 and 7 of the paragraph, by leaving out the words "barely sufficient" and inserting the word "insufficient" instead thereof.

Another Amendment made, in line 9, by inserting, after the word "are," the word "often."

Another Amendment proposed, in line 9, after the word "distressing" to insert the words "and we have evidence that many are compelled to have recourse to Poor Law or charitable 'relief'" —(Mr. *Hugh Law*).

Question, That those words be there inserted,—put, and *agreed to*.

Another Amendment proposed, after the words last inserted, to insert the words "Lord Dunraven's Committee, after hearing evidence from as many as 291 witnesses, drawn from many different trades and localities, recorded their opinion in 1890 that the evils of sweating 'can hardly be exaggerated.' In the almost complete absence of statistics on the subject it is impossible for your Committee to decide whether the volume of sweating is at the present time more or less than in 1890, either actually or relatively to population, but sufficient evidence has been put before them to show that sweating still exists in such a degree as to call urgently for the interference of Parliament. While it is impossible to measure the number of sweated individuals, there is, unfortunately, no doubt whatever that it is very large, and that it is still true that the evils of sweating are very great"—(Mr. *Chiozza Money*).

Question put, That those words be there inserted.

The Committee divided :

Ayes, 7.	Noes, 5.
Mr. Boland.	Mr. Fell.
Mr. Bridgeman.	Mr. Massie.
Mr. Brunner.	Mr. Parkes.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.	Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.	Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Hugh Law.	
Mr. Chiozza Money.	

Another Amendment proposed, after the words last inserted, to insert the words "While our evidence has been chiefly concerned with Home Workers, it has been shown that very low rates of remuneration are by no means confined to them, but are not infrequently the lot of factory workers also in the trades in which Home Work is prevalent"—(Mr. *Hugh Law*).

Question, That those words be there inserted,—put, and *agreed to*.

Another Amendment made, in line 12, by leaving out the words "in 1890."

Another Amendment proposed, at the end of the paragraph as amended, to add the words "though a contrary opinion was expressed by a large number of witnesses"—(Mr. *G. P. Gooch*).

Question, That those words be there added,—put, and *agreed to*.

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to*.

Proposed new paragraph, to follow paragraph 3, brought up and read the first time, as follows.—

"Your Committee are of opinion that the trades to which the term 'sweated' can be fairly applied are exclusively those in which women do work at home"—(Mr. *Brunner*).

Question, That the proposed new paragraph be read a second time,—put, and *negatived*.

Further consideration of Report adjourned till to-morrow.

[Committee adjourned till to-morrow, Thursday, 9th July, at Twelve o'clock.]

Thursday, 9th July, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir T. WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Brunner
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.

Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Consideration of Draft Report resumed.

Proposed new paragraph brought up and read the first time, as follows :—

“ Your Committee are of opinion that sweating chiefly arises from keen competition at both ends of the scale. On the one hand competition between employers tends to reduce the price of the article made, while on the other hand work is competed for by a large number of weak and unorganised workers who needs must work for anything they can get. There is no reason to suppose that larger profits are necessarily made out of sweated labour than out of better paid labour. The evidence goes to show, however, that in every trade in which sweating occurs varying conditions of labour exist, and that it is usually possible to level up conditions within an industry without affecting the cost of the articles produced, the levelling up tending to produce greater efficiency in the industry rather than to destroy it. In many trades sweating is an attempt by small masters with insufficient capital to produce a spurious cheapness at the expense of wage-earners, in order to emulate the healthy and legitimate cheapness of the output of employers working with better paid labour exerted upon up-to-date plant and appliances ”—(Mr. *Chiozza Money*).

Question, That the proposed new paragraph be read a second time,—put, and *negatived*.

Paragraph 4, agreed to.

Paragraph 5.—

An Amendment proposed, in line 3, after the word “ outside ” to insert, at the end of subsection (1), the words “ Such a home is a ‘ Workshop ’ under the Factory and Workshop Act, and it must be registered as such ”—(Mr. *Chiozza Money*).

Question, That those words be there inserted,—put, and *agreed to*.

Another Amendment proposed in line 5, after the word “ family ” to insert at the end of subsection (2), the words “ Such a home is a ‘ domestic workshop ’ under the Factory and Workshop Act, and it must be registered as such ”—(Mr. *Chiozza Money*).

Question, That those words be there inserted,—put, and *agreed to*.

Another Amendment proposed, in line 7, after the word “ homes ” to insert, at the end of subsection (3), the words “ They are outside the protection of the Factory and Workshop Act, save in regard to the ‘ particulars ’ section, hereinafter referred to ”—(Mr. *Chiozza Money*).

Question, That those words be there inserted,—put, and *agreed to*.

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to*.

Paragraphs 6 and 7, agreed to.

Paragraph 8.—

An Amendment made, by adding at the end of the paragraph, the words “ Miss Collett’s views, however, were not shared by the majority of witnesses ”—(Mr. *G. P. Gooch*).

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to*.

Paragraph 9, agreed to.

Paragraph 10.—

An Amendment made in subsection (2), by leaving out the words “ wives of working men,” in line 6 of the subsection, and inserting the words “ the daughters of men in work and their wives ” instead thereof.

Another Amendment proposed, in subsection (2), to insert after the word “ time ” at the end of the subsection, the words “ These latter classes of workers do not depend for their livelihood upon what they earn, and are therefore willing to accept rates of pay which are below the limit necessary to maintain life at a reasonable standard. It is their competition which is very largely the cause of ‘ sweating ’ ”—(Mr. *Brunner*).

Question proposed, That those words be there inserted.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Another Amendment proposed, after subsection (6), to insert as a new subsection, the words "The competition of foreign-made articles was stated by several witnesses to be an important factor contributing to depress the prices paid for the Home Work in certain trades, of which the Irish lace trade and the hook-and-eye trade were adduced as examples"—(Mr. Bridgeman).

Question, That those words be there inserted,—put, and *agreed to*.

Another Amendment made, after subsection (8) of the paragraph, by inserting as a new subsection, the words "The intervention of the middleman between the employer and the worker occurs in many trades. Cases are numerous where the person who obtains the work from the warehouse or factory distributes it to and collects it from the Home Worker, and makes a profit or charge, so that the worker does not obtain even the low price paid by the warehouse"—(Mr. Fell).

Another Amendment proposed, after the words last inserted, to insert, as a new subsection, the words "Fierce competition exists among the employers in some of the most sweated trades. The cutting of prices in contract work follows as a natural consequence, the less reputable employers underbidding their competitors and seeking to recoup themselves by reducing the remuneration of the workers. Your Committee have had evidence that material differences exist in the rates of payment usually paid by different employers in the same town at the same moment for the same work"—(Mr. Hugh Law).

Question, That those words be there inserted,—put, and *agreed to*.

Another Amendment made by adding, at the end of the paragraph as amended, the words of paragraph 11 of the Draft Report.

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to*.

Paragraph 11, *disagreed to*.

Paragraphs 12 to 15, *agreed to*.

Paragraph 16,—amended by adding at the end thereof, the words "As far as experience of the working of this section of the Act has gone, these outworkers' lists are usually incomplete and incorrect, and furnish no sufficient indication of the number of outworkers in any trade."

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to*.

Paragraphs 17 and 18, *agreed to*.

Proposed new paragraph, to follow paragraph 18, brought up and read the first time, as follows:—

"The Government Departments and various local authorities have inserted a clause, usually known as the 'fair wages' clause, as well as schedules of prices to be paid to the workers, in the form of tender made by their contractors, with a view of securing a fair rate of wage. Your Committee are of opinion that the excellent intentions of these authorities are often frustrated in practice"—(Mr. Stuart Samuel).

Proposed new paragraph read a second time, and inserted in the Report.

Proposed new paragraph, to follow the paragraph just inserted, brought up and read the first time, as follows:—

"Your Committee are of opinion that these provisions of the existing law have failed to produce any real amelioration of the condition of Home Workers, and that legislation of a far-reaching character is required"—(Mr. G. P. Gooch).

Proposed new paragraph read a second time, and inserted in the Report.

Paragraph 19.—

An Amendment made, in line 2, by leaving out the words "the Australian Colonies and" and inserting the words "the States of the Australian Commonwealth and of the Dominion of" instead thereof.

Paragraph further amended, in line 5, by inserting after the word "Report" the words "recently presented to Parliament."

Another Amendment proposed, in line 9, to leave out the words "so far as they bore upon the subject of Home Work"—(Mr. Chiozza Money.)

Question, That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the paragraph,—put, and *negatived*.

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to*.

Paragraphs 20 and 21, *agreed to*.

Paragraph 22,—amended, and *agreed to*.

Paragraph 23, *agreed to*.

Paragraph 24, *disagreed to*.

Paragraphs 25 to 27, *agreed to*.

Further consideration of Report, adjourned till Wednesday next.

[Committee adjourned till Wednesday next, 15th July, at Twelve o'clock.]

Wednesday, 15th July, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Hugh Law.

Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Consideration of Draft Report resumed.

Paragraph 28,—amended, and agreed to.

Paragraph 29, agreed to.

Paragraph 30.—

An Amendment proposed, at the end, to add the words, "Your Committee have received evidence showing the fear of some Home Workers that if the conditions of their employment are made more stringent they may be prevented from obtaining any Home Work at all"—(Mr. Fell).

Question put, That those words be there added.

The Committee divided :

Ayes, 4.

Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Parkes.

Noes, 6.

Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Richardson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Paragraph agreed to.

Paragraph 31.—

An Amendment made in line 4, after the word "home," by inserting the words "for the first time, such certificate to remain valid until any change of residence."

Another Amendment made in line 8, after the word "made," by inserting the words "and no fee of any sort should be charged either for registration or certification."

Another Amendment made by adding, at the end of the paragraph, the words of paragraph 32 of the Draft Report.

Paragraph, as amended, agreed to.

Paragraph 32, disagreed to.

Paragraph 33.—

Amendment proposed in line 3 to leave out the word "Home," and insert the word "sweated"—(Mr. Chiozza Money)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, That the word "Home" stand part of the paragraph.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Paragraph amended, in line 10, by inserting after the word "but" the word "that"; and, in line 11, by leaving out the words "personal or."

Paragraph, as amended, agreed to.

Paragraph 34.—

An Amendment proposed, in line 8, to leave out the word "would" and insert the word "might"—(Mr. Fell)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, That the word "would" stand part of the paragraph.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Paragraph agreed to.

Paragraph 35,—amended, and agreed to.

Paragraphs 36 to 39, agreed to.

Paragraph 40.—

An Amendment proposed, in lines 2 and 3, to leave out the words "Home Workers" and insert the words "industries where Home Work is prevalent"—(Mr. Trevelyan)—instead thereof.
Question put, That the words "Home Workers" stand part of the paragraph.
The Committee divided :

Ayes, 8.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.

Noes, 6.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Another Amendment proposed, in line 4, to leave out subsection (1) of the paragraph—(Mr. Bridgeman).

Question put, That the words of the subsection down to the word "payment" stand part of the paragraph.

The Committee divided :

Ayes, 10.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Noes, 3.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. Parkes.

Further consideration of Report adjourned till to-morrow.

[Committee adjourned till to-morrow, Thursday, 16th July, at Twelve o'clock.

Thursday, 16th July 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Boland.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Hugh Law.

Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Consideration of Draft Report (Paragraph 40) resumed.

Paragraph 40.—

An Amendment made, in line 2 of subsection (1), by leaving out the word "acted" and inserting the word "acts" instead thereof.

Another Amendment proposed at the end of subsection (1) to insert the words "for the district for which the Board may act"—(Mr. Bridgeman).

Question proposed, That those words be there inserted.
Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Another Amendment proposed in subsection (2) to leave out the words "those piece rates to be such as would enable an average worker to earn not less than the equivalent of the minimum time rate"—(Mr. Bridgeman).

Question put, That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the paragraph.

The Committee divided :

Ayes, 9.

Mr. Boland.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Noes, 2.

Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Parkes.

Another Amendment proposed, at the end of the paragraph to add the words, " If these Wages Boards were found to be successful they might be extended to other workers in the trades in which Home Work is prevalent "—(Mr. *Stuart Samuel*).

Question, That those words be added,—put, and *agreed to*.

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to*.

Paragraph 41.—

An Amendment proposed, in line 4, after the word " to " to insert the words " women only in "—(The *Chairman*).

Question, That those words be there inserted,—put, and *negatived*.

Amendments made, in line 8, by leaving out the word " women "; and, in line 10, by leaving out the word " women."

Another Amendment made, in line 14, by leaving out the word " workwomen " and inserting the word " workers " instead thereof.

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to*.

Paragraph 42.—

Amendments made, in line 1, by inserting after the word " a " the word " general "; and in line 2, by leaving out the word " women."

Another Amendment proposed, in line 2 to leave out the word " acted " and insert the words " acts, and should have power to fix a special minimum time wage for any class of work or process in the trade in its district, such minimum to be not less than the general minimum for the trade in the district "—(The *Chairman*).

Question, That the word " acted " stand part of the paragraph,—put, and *negatived*.

Question, That the proposed words be there inserted,—put, and *agreed to*.

Another Amendment proposed, in line 4, to leave out the words " in a week of, say, 60 hours "—(Mr. *Chiozza Money*).

Question, That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the paragraph,—put, and *negatived*.

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to*.

Paragraph 43.—

An Amendment proposed, to leave out the paragraph—(Mr. *Chiozza Money*).

Question proposed, That the paragraph stand part of the Report.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Paragraph *agreed to*.

Paragraph 44,—amended, and *agreed to*.

Paragraph 45.—

An Amendment made.

Another Amendment proposed, in line 1 after the word " district " to insert the words " provided such representative either at present is, or has been previously engaged in, the trade under consideration "—(Mr. *Parkes*).

Question, That those words be there inserted,—put, and *negatived*.

Another Amendment proposed, in line 5, to leave out all the words after the word " Board " to the end of the paragraph—(Mr. *Bridgeman*).

Question put, That the words " and that a moderate payment " stand part of the paragraph.

The Committee divided :

Ayes, 12.

Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Hendersons
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Noes, 2.

Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Fell.

Another Amendment proposed, in line 6, to leave out the words "of the workwomen"—(Mr. *Stuart Samuel*).

Question, That the words "of the" stand part of the paragraph,—put, and *agreed to*.

Another Amendment made, in line 6, by leaving out the word "workwomen" and inserting the word "workers" instead thereof.

Another Amendment proposed, at the end of the paragraph, to add the words "for loss of time and expenses incurred in attendance at the Board"—(Mr. *Bridgeman*).

Question put, That these words be there added.

The Committee divided :

Ayes, 3.

Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. Parkes.

Noes, 11.

Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to*.

Paragraph 46.—

An Amendment proposed, in line 2, to leave out the words "tailoring and"—(Mr. *Fell*).

Question, That the words "tailoring and" stand part of the paragraph,—put, and *agreed to*.

Paragraph amended in line 2, by inserting after the word "linen" the words "and the finishing processes of machine-made lace"; and in line 5, by inserting after the word "for" the words "these trades or for."

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to*.

Paragraph 47,—amended, and *agreed to*.

Paragraph 48, *agreed to*.

Paragraphs 49 and 50,—amended, and *agreed to*.

Paragraph 51.—

An Amendment proposed, in line 3, to leave out all the words after the word "cash" to the end of the paragraph, and add the words, "We are of opinion that the Employment of Children Act should be adopted by all local authorities, and enforced for the protection of children working at home and elsewhere"—(Mr. *Chiozza Money*).

Question, That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the paragraph,—put, and *negatived*.

Question, That the proposed words be there added,—put, and *agreed to*.

Another Amendment proposed, after the words last added, to add the words "But we think that any attempt to regulate the hours of adult home-workers would be impracticable"—(Mr. *Bridgeman*).

Question put, That those words be there added

The Committee divided :

Ayes, 5.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Parkes.

Noes, 8.
Mr. Boland.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Arthur Henderson
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to*.

Further consideration of Report adjourned till Wednesday next.

[Committee adjourned till Wednesday next, July 22nd, at Twelve o'clock.

Wednesday, 22nd July, 1908

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER in the Chair.

Mr. Arkwright.
Mr. Boland.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.

Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Consideration of Draft Report resumed.

Paragraph 52.—

An Amendment proposed, to leave out the paragraph—(Mr. *Fell*).

Question proposed, That the words "It has been suggested" stand part of the paragraph.
Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Another Amendment proposed, in line 3, to leave out the words from the words "Even if it were found" down to the word "wages" in line 14—(Mr. *Bridgeman*).

Question put, That the words from the words "Even if it were found" down to the word "caused" in line 8 stand part of the paragraph.

The Committee divided

Ayes, 10.
Mr. Boland.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Noes, 3.
Mr. Arkwright.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Fell.

Another Amendment proposed, in line 9, to leave out all the words after the word "caused" to the word "workshops" in line 13—(Mr. *Boland*).

Question, That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the paragraph,—put, and *negatived*.

Another Amendment proposed, in line 14, after the word "efficiency" to insert the words and by defending Home Workers against unfair foreign competition"—(Mr. *Bridgeman*).

Question put, That those words be there inserted.
The Committee divided.

Ayes, 4.

Mr. Arkwright.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. Parkes.

Noes, 9.

Mr. Boland.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Another Amendment proposed, in line 20, to leave out from the word "Experience" to the end of the paragraph, and add the words "It is clear that the fixing of piece rates with a view to raising the earnings of Home Workers can only be effective if accompanied by a duty which would prevent the unfair competition of articles made in countries where no such provisions against sweating prevail. Without such a duty the raising of piece rates must tend to the destruction of Home Work"—(Mr. *Bridgeman*)—instead thereof.

Question put, That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the paragraph.
The Committee divided.

Ayes, 9.

Mr. Boland.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Noes, 4.

Mr. Arkwright.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. Parkes.

Paragraph, as amended, agreed to.

Paragraph 53.—

An Amendment proposed, at the end, to add the words "It must also be remembered that in Victoria the fixing of minimum wages was preceded by a tariff on imported goods of the same character as those for which the minimum wage has been fixed"—(Mr. *Bridgeman*).

Question put, That those words be there added.
The Committee divided.

Ayes, 5.

Mr. Arkwright.
Mr. Boland.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. Parkes.

Noes, 9.

Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Another Amendment proposed, at the end of the paragraph, to add the words "But your Committee do not feel justified in expressing a definite opinion on this point"—(Mr. *Bridgeman*).

Question put, That those words be there added.
The Committee divided.

Ayes, 4.

Mr. Arkwright.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. Parkes.

Noes, 11.

Mr. Boland.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Paragraph agreed to.

Paragraph 54, agreed to.

Paragraph 55.—

Paragraph amended by leaving out the word "women" in subsection (1) and in subsection (2).

Another Amendment made by inserting after the word "trades" at the end of subsection (2) the words "and in the finishing processes of machine-made lace."

Another Amendment proposed, after the words last inserted, to insert the words "The Home Secretary should be empowered, after inquiry made, to establish Wages Boards for any other trades"—(Mr. G. P. Gooch).

Question, That those words be there inserted,—put, and *agreed to*.

Another Amendment made.

Another Amendment proposed, after the word "Authority," at the end of subsection (3), to insert the words "and that the keeping of accurate outworkers' lists by employers should be strictly enforced"—(Mr. G. P. Gooch).

Question, That those words be there inserted,—put, and *agreed to*.

Other Amendments made, in line 1 of Subsection (4), by leaving out the word "woman"; and, in line 2 of Subsection (4), by leaving out the words "she produced a certificate showing that she had been duly registered," and inserting the words "the worker produce a certificate of registration" instead thereof.

Another Amendment proposed, to insert as a new subsection the words "That the delivery and collection of work done at home should be done by persons in the direct employ and pay of the employer. Where that was not done, the amount which a worker could earn in a specified time should be calculated on a basis which included the time spent in fetching and returning the work as time occupied in doing the work"—(The Chairman).

Question, That the proposed new subsection be inserted in the paragraph,—put and *agreed to*.

Another Amendment proposed, in line 1 of Subsection (5), to leave out the words "time and."

Question put, That the words "time and" stand part of the paragraph.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 11.

Mr. Boland.
Mr. Branner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Noes, 4.

Mr. Arkwright.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. Parke.

Other Amendments made.

Another Amendment proposed, in line 3 of Subsection (6), after the word "Board," to insert the words "But Wages Boards should be empowered to make exceptional arrangements with regard to aged and infirm workers."—(Mr. Bridgeman).

Question put, That those words be there inserted.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 5.

Mr. Arkwright.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. Parke.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.

Noes, 10.

Mr. Boland.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Another Amendment proposed, in line 4 of Subsection (7), after the word "them," to insert the words "and secure the enforcement of the law."—(Mr. Trevelyan).

Question, That those words be there inserted,—put, and *agreed to*.

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to*.

Proposed new paragraph, to follow paragraph 55, brought up and read the first time, as follows:—

"Your Committee desire to add that, while they believe that their specific recommendations would, if carried into effect by Parliament, diminish the evils which arise from the underpayment of labour, they do not regard them as the only lines of effort which should be adopted by Parliament

in this connection. We have already referred to the causes which produce so many units of industry willing to offer their services for a very small wage, and we believe that the eradication of the sweating evil would be greatly furthered by the reform of the Poor Law, by suitable legislation to mitigate the distress arising from want of employment, and by old age and invalidity pensions. Such legislation would reduce the dimensions of the lower strata of the labour market and thus stop at its source the supply of sweated workers. We regard as not less important increased devotion to the physical and technical education of children, as being another means of reducing the supply of workpeople willing to labour at small wages. The wider issues here raised were not covered by our terms of reference, but in view of the evidence submitted to us we feel it impossible to conclude our observations without calling attention to them"—(Mr. Chiozza Money).

Question proposed, That the proposed new paragraph be read a second time.
Proposed new paragraph, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Proposed new paragraph, to follow paragraph 55, brought up and read the first time, as follows :—

"A Bill introduced by Mr. Toulmin, which has been read a second time and referred to your Committee, has been duly taken into consideration by them; but in view of the opinions expressed in their Report, your Committee do not think it necessary to examine in detail the clauses of this Bill. They, therefore, report it, without amendment, to the House. They wish, however, to express the opinion that it is extremely desirable that the subject of the reference to your Committee, and their Report thereon, should be dealt with by legislation at an early date"—(The Chairman).

Proposed new paragraph read a second time.

An Amendment proposed, in the last line of the paragraph, after the word "legislation." to insert the words "promoted by the Government"—(Mr. Arthur Henderson).

Question put, That those words be there inserted.
The Committee divided.

Ayes, 5.

Mr. Arkwright.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Noes, 7.

Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.

Question, That the proposed new paragraph be added to the Report,—put, and *agreed to*.

Question, That this Report, as amended, be the Report of the Committee to the House,—put and *agreed to*.

Ordered, To Report, together with the Minutes of Evidence, and an Appendix.

Ordered, To Report the Sweated Industries Bill, without Amendment, to the House.

WITNESSES' EXPENSES.

NAME OF WITNESS.	Profession or Condition.	From whence Summoned.	Number of Days Absent from Home, under Orders of Committee.	Allowance during Absence from Home.	Expenses of Journey to London and back.	TOTAL Expenses allowed to Witness.
				£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Mr. W. J. D. Walker -	Industrial Inspector, Congested Districts Board (Ireland).	Dublin - -	3	3 3 0	4 18 0	8 1 0
Mr. William Bridgett -	Chairman, William Bridgett and Sons, Ltd., Nottingham.	Nottingham -	2	2 2 0	1 14 8	3 16 8
Miss Mary Macarthur, for the sum, disbursed by her, of the expenses of seven anonymous Witnesses whose attendance before the Committee on Thursday, March 19th, 1908, was secured through her by desire of the Committee.						4 15 0
Mr. J. G. Newey - -	Manufacturer - -	Birmingham -	2	2 2 0	1 13 0	3 15 0
Miss Edith Lawson, for the sum, disbursed by her, of the expenses of seven Witnesses—from Glasgow, Leeds, Sheffield, Leicester, London, and Bristol—whose attendance before the Committee, on April 1st, 1908, was secured through her by desire of the Committee.						12 10 1
Mr. Guy P. Morrish -	Partner in firm of Welch, Margetson & Co.	Londonderry -	3	3 3 0	5 19 8	9 2 6
					Total	£42 0 3

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MINUTES. OF EVIDENCE.

Wednesday, 26 February, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Arkwright.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Sir William Bull.
Mr. Boland.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.

Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Arthur Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.
Sir Thomas Whittaker.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. DOUGLAS SHOLTO DOUGLAS called ; and Examined.

Chairman.

1. You are engaged, I think, in the manufacture of boxes of various kinds?—Yes, card-board boxes.

2. Those boxes are largely used, I presume, for packing purposes ; they are fancy boxes, and things are put in them for sale?—Yes, for packing purposes and for display.

3. May I ask if your boxes are made by machinery?—They are mostly made by hand ; they are cut by machinery, but they are made up and put together by hand.

4. Is the work done largely in your own works or do you give it out to be done by home workers?—I have to employ a large number of home workers, as well as people on the premises, because, the trade being a season's one, one has to expand to a certain extent, and of course home workers become very useful.

5. We have had some evidence given to us as to the rates of payment made for the making of these boxes, which seem to those of us who do not know all the details to be extremely low and furnish an opportunity of earning but a very small wage after the very long hours of work during the week ; can you give us any information on that point, or throw any light upon it from your particular point of view?—I think that in some instances the rate of pay undoubtedly is low, but that is only for very low grade stuff. I might tell you that most of these hands who are outdoor workers have previously been indoor workers, and they have taken to outdoor work when they have married, or something of that kind, and I think where they have been badly paid it is because they have not troubled to acquire knowledge of making the better class work when they were in the factory, but I am bound to say that I think the rates of pay to

D

Chairman—continued.

outdoor workers generally for the decent class work, the better class work plain and fancy, compare very favourably with other trades.

6. I suppose a large quantity of these boxes are what you would call low class work, that is, cheap class?—There is no doubt about that.

7. Therefore there would be a considerable number of the home workers on this low class trade?—That is so.

8. There you say the payment is low?—I should say the scale of pay was low upon that.

9. What would you mention as a low rate of payment?—I should think that a hand who was constantly employed working regularly, say, eight hours a day, ought not to earn less than half-a-crown a day certainly. Anything under that I should call bad, because my hands, and I am prepared to prove it by my books, would not earn on the average less than 3s. to 4s. a day. The 3s. to 4s. per day refers to factory workers on good class work, and the 2s. 6d. per day to the home workers.

10. We have had evidence before us suggesting that the payment worked out at very much less than that?—I can hardly think that that would be for hands who were regularly employed and who made the class of boxes I refer to. Of course, if you refer to boxes such as the pen boxes, little nib boxes made in Birmingham, I class those rather with match-boxes ; of course, the pay there is simply scandalous.

11. It was London boxes I was referring to?—Would it be violet powder boxes ?

12. I do not know for what purpose they use the boxes?—Some of the druggists' boxes are badly paid, there is no doubt about that.

13. At what rate per gross ? I suppose you would supply all the materials practically?—Yes.

7*

14. I

26 February, 1908.]

Mr. DOUGLAS SHOLTO DOUGLAS.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

14. I think we understood that all the materials were supplied, except string and glue?—Yes.

15. What rate say, per gross, as a low rate, would you say was bad?—I should say that anything under 1s. a gross was extremely low, and not a living wage.

16. But we have heard of 2d. a gross?—No, not for cardboard boxes, surely?

17. Yes?—I mean that is a class of trade I never had to deal with at all in cardboard. I cannot help thinking that for 2d. a gross it must be scaleboard boxes or match-boxes made out of scaleboard, and not cardboard.

18. You would think anything under 1s. a gross a low price?—Very bad.

19. You are evidently quite aware that there are a great many people working in their houses at very poor rates of payment; what remedies would you suggest, or what would be your view of the remedies that are suggested to us? We have two, mainly, before us: one is that of licensing, and the other is that of establishing a Wages Board. First as to licensing the worker or the worker's premises; what would you say as to that proposal?—I would say that that would go a very long way to removing the evils which undoubtedly exist.

20. Would you suggest that the premises should be licensed, or the worker?—The worker.

21. Would the licensing of the worker depend on the premises being cleanly and suitable?—Reasonably cleanly, because you must not be too hard on some of these people; they have to live where they work, and if one was to enforce a very rigid standard of sanitation I am afraid you would hit very hardly on some very poor people.

22. We have had evidence before us which has indicated that in many of these trades the work is done in the rooms in which the people live, and so in connection with boxes, where the boxes are of any considerable size, if they are working in the room in which they live they will pile up great piles of them, they will have the paper about, and the glue or paste, and the whole place must necessarily become not only untidy but dirty with the sticky mess about the place?—That is so.

23. And if these things are piled upon the bed, for instance, where the people sleep, what would you do in cases like that?—I certainly should insist where they were sending out large boxes (boot boxes or envelope boxes) that the employer should be compelled to clear that away regularly at frequent intervals—every night, for instance.

24. To what extent would your regulation go in regard to the premises? What would you require there before the worker was licensed?—I should require the local sanitary authority to satisfy itself that the place was reasonably fit for the work to be carried on; that is to say, it should not be an underground cellar, or it should not be a stable, or it should not be a place with a w.c., or sink, or drain, or anything of that kind going out of it; but apart from that I am afraid you could not say that it should not be done in a room which was sometimes used as a sleeping apartment, because many of these people only have one room.

25. Then you would permit them to work in

Chairman—continued.

the room where they also live all the rest of the day and sleep at night?—Yes, provided the work was cleared out every night.

26. That would be a rather difficult provision, would it not?—No; if the work was done in the daytime and the employer sent round in the evening and fetched it away I do not see very much difficulty in it.

27. But in the majority of these cases, at least in many of them, is it not the rule for the worker to take the work to the employer, and not for the employer to send for it?—Yes, and I think that is one of the terrible grievances—that the workers have to sacrifice so much of their time, for which they receive nothing. Seeing it is for the convenience of the employer that they do the work at their homes, it is only reasonable that the employer should send and fetch it away. Besides, it is a matter of great inconvenience to the travelling public, these workers travelling in omnibuses and tramcars with huge bundles of stuff. It is an expense to the worker, and in every way I think it is undesirable.

28. Your proposal would be that the worker should be licensed?—Yes.

29. Have you any regulations to suggest as to what should qualify a worker to be licensed beyond the premises?—No, I could not suggest anything beyond that, except that the worker should have some domestic reasons for working at home.

30. Then really it would be the premises?—I suppose it would amount to the premises, but the reason I mention the worker is that the worker would be moving about. I suppose it would resolve itself into the premises.

31. He would be licensed to work in certain specified premises?—Yes.

32. Would you make any specification as to age?—Of course, I should not propose to license anyone who was not of sufficient age to work in a factory; I mean to say, if there was no stipulation as to age, people who were too young and who are at present barred from working in factories might apply for a licence.

33. Supposing you licence an adult person, what provision would you make that they should not employ their own children at all—that their own children should not work at home?—That is a very difficult thing to prevent, and that is one of the evils of outdoor working, and that is why I realise that if you were effectually to do away with sweating among outdoor workers, you have got to do away with outdoor workers entirely.

34. That would mean, would it not, that you would feel that, although you might license an individual to take the work, you would find difficulty in confining the work being done to that individual?—I am afraid there is that difficulty; that objection will always arise, irrespective of remuneration.

35. Then you would attempt to place a limit on the age of the worker?—No, I do not think I should, apart from that. I mean I would not refuse to license a worker because she was old, but only if too young.

36. On the age of the person, you would license?—Certainly.

37. Do

26 February, 1908.]

Mr. DOUGLAS SHOLTO DOUGLAS.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

37. Do I understand that you would desire to provide by law that no other person than the one licensed should do the work?—Certainly.

38. How would you enforce that?—It is rather difficult to enforce these matters, except by penalty, if discovered.

39. We have had evidence that in many classes of the work the children do help their parents in the evening, and when they are at home?—Yes, and that is very much so in the box trade.

40. Would you really prohibit that?—I really think that some limit should be put upon them.

41. You recognise that it has always been felt to be a very great difficulty—imposing conditions and hours upon young people or children working at home?—Yes.

42. Still, you would face that?—I think so; I think it ought to be faced, because it is at present being used as a means to evade the Factory Act.

43. What would be the position of the employer with regard to these licences? I suppose he would have to keep a register of the names and addresses of all persons employed?—Yes.

44. Would you propose that there should be any punishment on both the worker and the employer for violation—working without a licence, or giving out work to an unlicensed person?—Certainly, if you employ an unlicensed person, I think that should be punishable.

45. Would you punish the employer?—Certainly.

46. And would you punish the worker?—Certainly, I should punish the employer, and I suppose the worker ought to be punished too, but certainly the employer should be dealt with.

47. Then, with regard to your suggestion that the employer should send and bring all the work?—That I want to qualify. I think that it would be no hardship on the worker to come and fetch the work, and it would be an advantage, because it is quite possible when giving the work out to the workers, they might want to see a pattern to work to, and it would be to their advantage, otherwise mistakes might arise in doing the work; but I still adhere to my suggestion that when the work is made up, and in bulk, the workers should not have to bring it back themselves, either at their expense, or otherwise.

48. Do you think that is a matter on which we could legislate?—I certainly think if there was a rule put in their wages book that the employer is to fetch the work away, you might be quite certain that the hands would not bother to do it. You see they lose so much time in doing this, for which they are paid nothing.

49. I quite appreciate the point of the desirability, but do you think that is a matter for the Legislature to decide as to who should send the work, or bring it home?—Yes, I think so; I think that provision could easily be made that the employer should send and fetch the goods away when they are made up.

50. You hold rather a strong view, I think, referring to the box trade, as to the material, especially the kind of glue that should be used?—Yes.

51. What is your view in that respect?—I

Chairman—continued.

think that the only adhesive that should be allowed is cake glue.

52. What is cake glue?—Glue that is made up into a cake. I might have brought you a specimen.

53. What are the other kinds used?—There is what they call tub glue, glue size and fish glue.

54. What is the objection to them?—In the first place they are all very objectionable in smell, particularly in a small room and close atmosphere, and in the case of fish glue I have some evidence that it is actually poisonous to the hands. Glue size is a very wide term, and sometimes it is better than others, but generally very nasty indeed.

55. Of course you recognise that the difficulty comes in directly you begin to specify what people are to use and what they are not to use?—I do not think so; there is a regular box-maker's cake glue, and we all recognise it; it is a trade term; and, if the employer gives out the glue when he gives the work, I do not see that there would be any difficulty there unless the hands deliberately substituted something else, which, of course, they would not do.

56. At the present time the workpeople provide the glue?—Only the outdoor workpeople; the indoor workpeople do not provide the glue.

57. I am thinking of the home workers; they provide the glue?—Yes.

58. You would provide by law that they should only use a certain kind of glue?—Yes, the same as the employer gives his indoor hands. There is no hardship on the employer, because if he made the work on the premises he would provide the glue; it is only a little bit of extra bunce if he gets the outdoor worker to do it.

59. You have made the suggestion that the employer should set out definitely in some book the conditions under which his work was given out, and that that should be approved by the Home Office; is not that so?—Yes, you could have a pattern book used for the trade.

60. And that that should be approved?—Certainly, by the Home Secretary.

61. What is your view as to the time for making payment for the work done—the wages practically—the piecework payment?—I think that the hands should be paid on one stipulated pay day per week.

62. Not daily?—Not daily, when they bring the work in. I can give you a very strong objection to that.

63. What is the objection?—The objection is this, that at present there are in the trade many outdoor workers, what are known as express hands, and if a job comes along which the employer wants done quickly he does not tell the outdoor worker to wire into it and work all night, but he says, "Directly you bring this job in you will be paid." Well, the hand probably having no money, sets to work and works all night and comes in at nine o'clock the next morning and gets payment; but I think it is a very undesirable state of affairs for workers to sacrifice their night's rest and work all night on this job. It is quite opposed to the spirit of the Factory Act. If there was not that inducement of immediate payment it is obvious
the

26 February, 1908.]

Mr. DOUGLAS SHOLTO DOUGLAS.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

the hand would not bother to work during the night time.

64. You mean if they were paid at the end of the week they would do it during the day?—That is so.

65. Have you any view as to the possibility or desirability of attempting to deal with this question in any way by establishing a Wages Board?—I am afraid that owing to the great variety of work it presents tremendous difficulties. I could illustrate it. In the first place, you could not fix the price of boxes by a scale of dimensions; for instance, a little box like that (*showing a box*) is much more difficult to make than a box say four or five times the size, because it is more difficult to handle. And the same applies to a shallow box like this (*showing another box*); that is much more difficult to handle than a box four times the depth. You see, if one was to say that all boxes above certain dimensions were to be paid at a certain price—and I take it that is how you would make hard and fast rules—it would often mean that one hand was being paid really very much more than the job was worth, and another one would be suffering very badly.

66. How is the price arrived at now? Have you any scale of prices now?—That is mostly a matter between the hand and the employer to arrange. I may tell you that in this class of work there are very few hands who can do it, and they get very well paid for it, although it looks like a plain box. The price of that is 3s. a gross, and I can prove that by my books.

Sir William Bull.

67. What do you mean by 3s. a gross; is that the amount you pay for the work or what you sell it at?—It is 12s. a gross, or 10s. 6d. a gross, we sell it at; it is 3s. a gross for the hand to make. It is a shoulder box, and wants very careful making.

Chairman.

68. You provide all the material?—Except the glue.

69. And you pay 2s. 6d. or 3s. for the making?—3s. That I can show by my books.

70. What would an average hand be able to earn making these boxes?—She would make a gross a day.

71. About 3s. a day?—Yes.

72. You say these prices are arranged practically as to each individual kind of box, according to the size and shape, and that there is no scale?—Yes, there is no scale; most of our hands are good workers, and, of course, we try to keep them. If we did not they would very soon find employment elsewhere; there is a shortage of labour really among the good hands, and if a hand came to me and said: "Well, the fact of the matter is I was not able to earn sufficient on this particular job," I should have to pay her more money or run the risk of losing her. I will give an instance of it. I was having some time ago some boxes made with a band; *that* represents the four sides of the box, and it wants careful putting on. I substituted different kind of labels, gelatine labels, and all the hands came to me and said, "We want double the money to put them on."

Chairman—continued.

and I had to pay it to them, and it is honestly worth it, because it took double the time to do it. The moment you put it on the glue board it curls up, and it takes them double the time to put it on that it does the other. If you try to fix the price by a Board probably you would not realise that until you came to put the thing into force. Then, again, there are some papers which would be much easier to put on than others; for instance, with a paper like *that* it would not much matter whether you put it on upside down or how you put it, it is a cloudy design of paper. But with *this* paper it makes all the difference being put upside down or not—it requires special care.

73. This is all done by piecework and not by day pay?—Yes. And then there is another paper here which wants special care, that is what they call an ice paper, and if the worker's hands are hot (she has to keep putting her hands in cold water to keep cool while doing this work) there is trouble over it at once. We call it ice paper because they say it melts, although, of course, it does not melt. *That* is wood veneer; you might have a job where it was to be put on *that* way, or *that* way (*describing*), and it would take considerably longer to do it in the one way than in the other because it would fray unless you exercised great care.

74. Is your suggestion that it would be extremely difficult to fix these rates unless they could be constantly adjusted almost week by week?—It would need daily adjustment. I will show you another paper which is more astonishing still. This shows the great care a hand wants to exercise in doing it. If you hold that paper up in a certain light you will see it *that* way a certain colour; twist it round, it is the same paper, but it is a totally different shade. If a hand was careless or did not exercise the greatest possible care, she would spoil the whole lot of work because the lids would appear not to match the boxes. Obviously you must pay more to the woman who puts on a paper of that kind than for putting on a paper like *this* (*showing another paper*). There are great difficulties about these things, and if you saw a box ready made up probably you would not realise, when it came before the Wages Board, what the actual difficulties were.

75. We have had some evidence given to us in regard to some trades where the details have been very great indeed, and there are rather elaborate lists of variations of prices, which seem to be practicable. In this trade it is your opinion that the variations would be greater still?—So great as to cause trouble with the hands themselves.

76. Apart from that question, what would be your view as to the general operation of a Wages Board?—There is no doubt that, if you could fix a uniform scale of wages, it would be a very grand thing for the employers; it would stop a rare lot of cutting among ourselves. I should like a strong union in our trade, I can assure you.

77. Do you find that there is a great deal of variation in the rate paid for the same class of work?—Yes, there is.

78. How is it that those who take the lower rate are induced to do so?—For this reason; it

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it all depends upon what a hand has been used to when she was first trained. A girl, for instance, trained in a box factory to make shallow small work would never be able to earn a fair wage if she was doing large work, although, mind you, for hands accustomed to the large work that scale of pay might be very ample.

79. That is merely a question of the efficiency of the worker and not the rate of payment. Do I understand that the rates of payment vary amongst different employers for the same work?—Oh, yes; but not perhaps very greatly. They do vary slightly in some instances.

80. Would you think it would be an advantage if the operation of the Wages Board resulted at any rate in raising all the wages to the level of, say, the best ones?—Hardly, because you see those employers are not in the same district.

81. Do employers in the same district pay different rates?—Hardly any difference; I should say they are pretty uniform in the same district.

82. But the variation is in different districts, then?—Yes. A firm at Banbury, for instance, pay very different wages to what are paid in London for the same class of work.

83. Would your view be, then, that a Wages Board ought to be of wide operation?—Certainly.

84. Would that be practicable?—I am afraid it would not.

85. Do I understand you correctly in taking it that your recommendation is that licensing the worker for the premises would be the most practicable and efficient step?—I am sure of it, because employers on the Board would have an undue advantage over their competitors who would have to submit original designs for their inspection.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

86. You stated that it was for the convenience of the employer that his people should work at home?—Yes.

87. In what way is it for the convenience of the employer?—If the employer was able to make the goods on his premises he would study his indoor hands first, and he only employs those outdoor hands because he has got an overflow of work, and it is to save himself taking larger premises, or premises larger than he requires for the normal trade.

88. Has it anything to do with the factory inspection?—I should not like to say it had not.

89. You state that there is a shortage of labour among box workers?—Among the good hands.

90. Therefore, there is a pretty level rate of wage among the good hands?—Yes, they do very well.

91. Would not the condition of these workers be improved by better training when they were young?—Yes, that is the trouble; they are not sufficiently technical.

92. Then really, as a matter of fact, would you state that a good worker could earn good wages, but that a bad worker earns bad wages?—That is exactly the position.

93. Amongst those remedies that have been suggested, do you think that any of them will be efficacious in enabling the bad worker to get a

Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

better rate of remuneration?—Yes, the employer providing the glue would at once raise the price; it would save the worker purchasing. The worker loses about one penny in every shilling by providing her own glue.

94. Is not that a matter rather to be arranged between the employer and the employed than by legislation?—I think when the employer is practically committing a pious fraud he ought to be dealt with by the Legislature. He charges his customer for that glue.

95. Outside the glue, speaking now generally, my question is intended to cover most of the trades—is it your opinion that either the licensing or the Wages Board would have the effect of raising the remuneration of the bad worker, or what I might call the inefficient worker?—I cannot say that I think it would; it would probably have rather the effect of driving the inefficient worker to the wall.

96. Therefore we come back again to your original remark, that you are afraid that sweating could only be abolished by abolishing the inefficient home worker; I understood you to say that?—It is very much that.

97. Would you go so far as to recommend that home work should be prohibited by law?—No, because it would not be practicable.

98. In what way?—Whichever party in the House of Commons introduced that would have to face the hostility of the other party, and it would be such a fine election cry throughout the East End of London that I am perfectly certain it would never go through, and I would not recommend it for that reason.

99. Is that the only reason why it would be impracticable?—That is one reason, and a very good one.

100. Is it the only one?—No, perhaps it is not the only one.

101. May I ask for any other reason?—You see, as a matter of justice, I am afraid that one ought not to interfere with outdoor workers who have a good domestic reason for working at home. That is one point we have not raised in my examination-in-chief.

102. There is one other question with regard to the Wages Board I would like to have your opinion upon. You say that different rates of wages would be paid at Banbury compared with those paid in London. We have had it in evidence, in answer to the objection, that it would be difficult to have a Wages Board to cover the whole country, that at the present time there is a great inequality of wages, and that local conditions would prevail?—Yes.

103. Are you of opinion that that would be an insuperable objection supposing local conditions did prevail, and supposing the Wages Board in each locality worked according to their own local conditions, would not that be feasible?—If the locality was not to be too narrow; I think there should not be one Wages Board in Finsbury, another in Bethnal Green, and another in Shoreditch, because workers would be shifting into the district where there were the highest wages, and employers where they would be lowest.

104. You would recommend larger areas; but, in

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in that case, would your objection to Wages Boards diminish?—The Wages Board would have a good effect in some ways. I do not see how you are going to get the workers themselves to serve on these Wages Boards, and give their time, unless they are paid for it.

105. We have had that question put in evidence before; there seems to be an impression that an arrangement could be made to pay. Supposing such were the case, would you still have an objection to Wages Boards?—No, I would not have any objection then, apart from its impracticability.

Sir *William Bull*.

106. Are you a large employer of labour?—Yes.

107. About how many do you employ?—About a hundred outdoor hands and over a hundred indoor.

108. I was not here at the commencement of your examination, and this question may have been put already: About what are the sizes of the boxes you make?—They run from that little box which I showed just now up to about the size of what we call a 12-tab. soap box (*describing*).

109. And you undertake contracts for any trade?—Yes.

110. You make cardboard boxes for all trades?—Yes, confectionery, cigarettes, the haberdashery trade in a small way, handkerchief boxes and that kind of thing; in fact, all the trades that use them, and it is surprising the number of trades that do use cardboard boxes.

111. Are there many persons engaged in the business?—There are 300 factories in London alone.

112. Are most of those in the East End?—A large portion of them are, but some, for instance, are at Wandsworth and Battersea. There is a very large one at Clapham, Kent at Clapham is a very good maker, but they are mostly to be found in the neighbourhood of Shoreditch, Finsbury, Bethnal Green and Whitechapel, and some at Dalston, Hackney and round there; the East Central and North East.

113. Of course you understand that this Committee is sitting for the purpose of considering home work in all trades?—Yes.

114. Do you think that your rules that you suggest could be made applicable to most of those trades in which home work is common?—Most of those trades where the work was exhibited at the Sweated Industries Exhibition; I went there to specially study that. Of course, I have no expert knowledge of tailoring, but I should imagine it could probably be applied to a large extent.

115. You are something of a social reformer, besides being a box manufacturer, and you have taken an interest in this matter outside your own business?—Yes, I am a member of the Borough Council, and take an interest in that sort of work. I am a school manager, and I am a member of the Committee looking after the starving children in Shoreditch; so that I know the conditions under which those people live, or exist.

116. When you say you give 3s. a gross for

Sir *William Bull*—continued.

boxes, one gross of which can be made in a day, and the selling price of which is 10s. 6d., I take it that there are a good many expenses between the one and the other?—Yes, and the difference between the 3s. and the 10s. 6d. does not represent my profit, of course not. There is the labour of cutting, there is the gold blocking, which you see there, and then there is the material, which is not a very big item in that instance, but the cutting is a very tricky piece of work.

117. What do you mean by "cutting"?—The cutting of it out of the board and scoring.

118. You have to do all that?—Yes; that is done by men, and they have a scale of pay which they are perfectly contented with.

119. That is done in the factory?—Yes, it is only the putting together that is put out; the workers take it home in the flat, and there is no great hardship in their taking it home in the flat; it is only when they put it up into a huge bundle, and then it comes so hard upon them to take it back.

120. Do you in the factory use these various kinds of glue?—No, we only use cake glue.

121. Why?—Because of the objectionable smell.

122. Do you think most of the manufacturers only use this cake glue?—Yes, most of the manufacturers use the cake glue, certainly.

123. They would not use any of these inferior qualities?—No; it is only because the hands have to buy this stuff and they get it cheap that they use it. There is one reason why so many people like to be outdoor hands, and that is, that they like to have what they call their freedom: that is that they can work when they like and play when they like, and the result is that the last three days of the week when they want to earn wages for their rent and so on, they are working tremendously hard; but on the first three days of the week they are playing about.

124. While, as a matter of fact they could be working if they wanted to?—Yes. Of course, in a factory you have to have proper discipline; for instance, they must take their meals at the proper time, and I would not allow eating and drinking to be going on during work time, and I would not allow drink to be brought into the place. They can do as they like at home, and they really want protection against themselves more than against their employer, from what I can see of them.

Mr. *Robinson*.

125. I take it that the effect of the proposals you make would be to drive the work into the factories more?—No, I think that the better class hands, those who know their trade, are decent people and want to live under decent conditions, would still be employed just as much outside.

126. As regards sending for the goods at night, is not a lot of this work done late at night after 6 o'clock, and that would be about the latest time that the goods would be sent for, so that it would be impossible to do what you suggested earlier in your evidence, would it not, to clear the room every night of the work that had been done?—That is what I want to prevent; I want to induce these people to work during the daytime instead

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of working at night, because I am sure working at night is bad for them, and there is no doubt that by doing it at night time the children are forced into doing it. They are away at school during the day, and the mothers wait until the children come home, and they have their tea and then they start work.

127. You say the goods should be collected at 6 o'clock, and that no more work should be done?—That is so.

Mr. Arthur Richardson.

128. I take it that of these two proposals, licensing or Wages Boards, you would prefer licensing?—I think that would be more effective to generally better the condition of the worker.

129. Do you think that licensing would be applicable to most of the trades which may be termed sweated industries?—Yes, all those trades which I saw at the Sweaters' Exhibition undoubtedly it would apply to—toy-making, artificial flower-making, and so on.

130. You are aware, of course, that in many of these industries children at a very early age are engaged in connection with that work?—Yes, at an early age the children do acquire knowledge.

131. As to the licensing, whom would you license?—The person who was to do the work, the parent.

132. Take an industry like the lace trade in Nottingham, it has been stated in evidence that while there are some 8,000 home-workers there are 1,000 middle women who fetch the work from the factory and distribute it amongst the workers; would you license the middle women?—No, I would not allow any middle women at all; we do not have it in our trade, and I do not see why it should be allowed in any other.

133. It has been given in evidence that those middle women are a necessary part of the machinery to carry on the work?—They are not necessary to me, because I have a competent instructor in my place who gives the work out and explains to the hand how it is to be done.

134. Here is one industry in connection with which it is stated to be necessary—and it is one of the largest home work industries there is in the kingdom?—Yes, but it is confined to a very narrow district—to Nottingham, and, therefore, I imagine it would hardly affect any legislation you brought in with regard to London.

135. I think we have had it in evidence that in Birmingham exactly the same thing applies; but you would not license the middle woman?—No.

136. You would not license the father of the family where these children are employed?—The actual person doing the work is the person I would license.

137. How would you license the child?—I would not license the child.

138. But the children do the work; how would you prevent them?—I would make it a punishable offence.

139. Do you not think that would be a hardship?—Not at all, because they are only evading the Factory Act. Surely it would be better to amend the Factory Act and let the children

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Mr. Arthur Richardson—continued.

go and work in the factory under decent conditions than let them work at home under the terrible conditions in which their homes are kept. Of the two evils that would be the lesser.

140. Whom would you punish in that case, the employer, that is, the manufacturer, or the father of the child, for permitting it?—The father for permitting it; it would probably be the mother who would be licensed.

141. You would punish the mother?—The person who put the child to work, certainly.

142. Do you not see very big difficulties in the way of doing that?—I hardly think so, because these places would be open to inspection; the inspector could go round and see what was being done.

143. Do you know how many inspectors there are?—Of course I know it means an increase in the staff of inspectors.

144. How many additional inspectors would you have put on?—I daresay it would mean half a dozen for the Nottingham lace workers.

145. You say one of the reasons why you would not suggest Wages Boards is because of the many varieties of work?—In my particular trade.

146. Yes, but we have to apply it all round; do you not think that there are as many kinds and as many prices in a delicate business like lace as there are in the box-making?—I should hardly think so.

147. It has been stated in our evidence that there are some hundreds of varieties of prices?—I am not an expert in lace; I am dealing now with the trade of box-making, which has thousands of varieties.

Mr. Arthur Henderson.

148. I think in your statements you have shown a preference in favour of the licensing system?—Undoubtedly.

149. Is it your opinion that licensing would affect the standard of sanitation in the home where the work was done?—Oh, yes, undoubtedly.

150. Do you think, then, that the effect of raising the standard of sanitation would in any way affect the rent charged for the place?—That the landlord would charge more if he had to keep the place in better condition?

151. Yes. I want to ask you if you consider that that would be a probable result from raising the standard of sanitation?—No, because I think the landlord rack-rents his tenant whenever he can as it is, and you cannot get more than the maximum out of anybody.

152. Do I understand you to suggest that rents are now so high that it would be impossible to get more for these particular places?—I am sure you could not get more in the East End of London.

153. You suggested that one change that might be made by law would be to compel the employer to provide the home-worker with the material?—The whole of the material, yes.

154. Do you think that if we adopted that suggestion there would be a tendency on the part of a certain type of employer—those we are trying to get at, those who are known to be sweating employers—to still further reduce the prices of the work?—No, I do not think so,

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because he already provides all the material to his factory workers.

155. Do you admit now that there is a difference in the prices paid by the reasonable employer and the sweating employer in the same district in your industry?—Oh, yes, there is sometimes, but that is only on the very low grade stuff.

156. We need not go into the particular classes of stuff. Do you really admit that in the same district in the same trade there is a difference between the price paid by the reasonable employer and the sweating employer?—If by the same district you mean the whole of London, yes.

157. Could you give us any reason for supposing that that bad employer, if he was compelled to provide all the material, which he is not doing to-day, would be ethically better, and be prepared to continue to pay the price if his cost is increased?—Well, his cost is not increased, because he would have to reckon that glue in any case; it is only because it is an outdoor hand that he makes her pay for the glue.

158. He really is, in the making out of his estimate, relying on cheapening the cost by "doing" the home worker?—Yes, putting something in his own pocket.

159. Your objection to Wages Boards, I gather, was the difficulty in your mind of practically carrying out in a district the intentions of the Board?—That is so.

160. I think you admitted to the Chairman, or one of the other members, that if the district over which the Board operated was not so wide that difficulty might be got over?—No; it should be a fairly wide district. We do not want a Wages Board in each parish.

161. I said "reasonable"; every parish would be absolutely ridiculous. I daresay you follow the principle of the Wages Board. A Wages Board Bill has been before the House, and there is a great amount of elasticity provided for in that Bill. Might I ask you this question: If there was a Wages Board in the West End of London, and a Wages Board in the East End of London, and a Wages Board, say, in South London, you would admit, I suppose, that all these districts vary considerably?—Yes, in some respects.

162. Would those areas for London be anything like reasonable?—I am afraid not, because the employer would go to that particular district where there were the cheapest wages, and the employees would go and work in the district where there were the highest. I am afraid it would be too narrow.

163. Do you not admit in your evidence that that exists to-day; that there is a difference in the price paid for exactly the same work, without a Board?—There is a difference, but I do not say a vast difference.

164. I withdrew the word "vast"?—That is so, and I will give you the reason why. Take my own instance, it would not pay me to go down to Bow or Stratford, because there is the question of distributing the goods afterwards very largely in the West End of London, and what I should gain by the saving in wages I should lose on the question of the carriage; and, besides, it is better for me to be central.

Mr. Arthur Henderson—continued.

165. If reasonable areas could be arranged for the operations of the Board, and they should have the effect of protecting the good employer against the sweating employer in the same industry, would you approve of it?—Yes, if that was practicable, I would be agreeable to it.

Mr. Brunner.

166. Your objection to a Wages Board in your own industry is that there is such an immense variety of boxes to be made?—That is so.

167. Is there not a large number of classes, forming a regular trade, in which you could fix the rate of wages by a Board?—I am afraid not. Cigarette boxes, for instance, are made in all possible varieties, and you are always bringing out fresh novelties; the same with seidnitz boxes, which are made in all varieties; and in the case of perfumery boxes, satin-lined stuff, the variety is simply endless.

168. I suppose every customer comes to you with a different demand?—Yes; he does not want what his competitor has got, you see, and fresh lines must be got out for each customer in each trade every season.

169. He wants to get a novelty which is distinct from anything used by his competitor?—Yes, and it must be reserved to him. For instance, Cadbury would not have the same boxes that Fry wants.

170. You told us that 1s. a gross would be low or bad wages on any class of work. Is it not possible to get good wages anywhere on low class work?—I am afraid not; I am afraid that in very low class work they never get good pay. When I say "low class work," I mean work that can be made anyhow, that the employer would not look at; the sort of work that a hand who had never learned the trade properly could knock in, and, provided there were 144 in the bundle, she would be paid for it.

171. Do you not think that a Wages Board could fix, for that low class, a standard rate?—For that low class work, certainly: a minimum limit.

172. For that low class work that has not the same variety that there is about high class work?—Yes.

173. So that, so far as low class work is concerned, you think a Wages Board would be competent to deal with it?—I feel sure it would, for anything under say 1s. per gross.

Mr. Arkwright.

174. I think you said that, provided there were the number of boxes in the bundle, it was all right, and, if there was nothing very wrong in the making of them, the woman would be paid as a matter of course?—Yes, because they are mere packing material.

175. That applies to the trade of which you are speaking. Do you know anything of the clothing trade?—I know people in the clothing trade, but I do not supply them with goods.

176. Do you think that same sort of thing could be made to apply to the case where a woman comes back with a certain amount of clothing?—Certainly.

177. You mean that every article would not have

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have to be separately checked?—I imagine that is what goes on now.

178. You think workers come back with, say, a certain number of shirts, and they are paid as a matter of course without those individual articles being examined for faults and so on?—I would not say that, but I think that the employer, provided the stuff was not too bad, would not feel inclined to say very much; I should think he would probably feel ashamed to say much about it, because he knows very well the price is so bad.

179. In the trade of which you speak, you think it would be possible to collect the work at the houses?—Yes.

180. Do you think that would be possible for other trades like clothing?—It might be. I do not know how far clothing bulks. The great grievance of having to carry this stuff in my trade is that the hand has to have a very large bundle, and generally has to ride, for which she must pay, and there is the loss of time, and so on.

Mr. Boland.

181. Supposing you take the two suggestions together, the fetching of the work by the employer, and the total supply of the material, in the specific instance of 3s. being paid for the gross of boxes, would the worker still be able to earn that 3s. under these new conditions?—Certainly.

182. The employer would lose to the extent that he would have to supply the means of cartage?—Yes, but he would save rent by employing them.

183. And he would also be supplying the extra material?—Yes, the glue, which he already reckons in his estimate.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

184. I gather that you recommend licensing in preference to Wages Boards, but I want to be quite clear as to what you claim for licensing. I understand that all you claim for it is that it would raise the sanitary standard of the room where the work was done to a rather higher level than prevails now. Do you claim anything more than that for it?—Yes. I would not (and this is a point I wanted to bring out before) grant a licence to a hand unless she was able, in addition to living under sanitary conditions, to furnish a proper domestic reason for working outside a factory. The person who simply wants to work outside the factory to have what they are pleased to call their "freedom," that is to loaf about half the week and work hard the next half, is a person who ought to be put under proper discipline and to work under decent conditions in a factory.

185. That is imposing conditions which are not imposed in connection with the American system of licensing?—Yes, I know that.

186. Therefore that is quite a new contribution on your part?—Yes, an improvement.

187. Then licensing would not touch the question of wages at all?—I think it would, for this reason—that it would largely tend to send a number of people at present working out of doors indoors, and a large number of the home workers would become factory workers. Less competition among home workers would also tend to raise their wages, because there would be fewer of them.

Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

188. May I ask whether it has occurred to you that it is probable, as in America, that the licence would be in many cases handed on from the person to whom it was granted to somebody else and the law thereby evaded?—That is overcome by the employer keeping a proper register. An employer should not be allowed to engage hands until they can produce their licences, and I should certainly make any trafficking in licences a punishable offence.

189. Despite that, the evil is a very real one in America, where the system of licensing prevails. I gather that in your trade work is regular, that is to say there is a fairly steady demand on your part for work of this character?—It varies with the time of the year. At Christmas time, for instance, we are tremendously busy.

190. Would you say that six months out of the twelve you can give to your ordinary workers enough to occupy them for an ordinary day every day in the week?—Certainly.

191. You say you have a certain amount of work done in the factory and a certain amount done in the home. Would you say the profit you make or expect to make on these two classes of work is about the same?—Yes, except, of course, that the employer naturally makes a bit more on that work where the hand provides the glue, because the difference representing the cost of the glue goes into his pocket, and he saves something on rent also.

192. The answer surely is that you make more profit on your home work than on your factory work?—In some respects you do and in some respects you do not, because there is more detail, booking and so on, in giving the work out to the outdoor worker than in the case of the indoor worker. You require a larger staff to deal with the outdoor work than with the indoor work.

193. Taking all your expenses into account, may I take it that your profit is about the same on both?—About the same.

194. Do you think that wages in your trade, as we have heard in some other trades, tend to go down in the course of time, and have they done so during the last four or five years?—Yes, and that is owing to an outside condition. There has been a reduction in some cases.

195. To what is that due—to competition from other employers?—No. What has happened is this: In 1887, when the Merchandise Marks Act was introduced, it was provided that all boxes bearing English wording should be stamped so as to show the country of their origin, and that practically killed the trade in foreign boxes coming into this country; but about five years ago there was a special Customs Order introduced, by which boxes were not to be treated as manufactured articles. They were to be treated as coverings, and the result is that the foreigners come in and hit us very hard indeed, particularly in the slack season of the year, when we want work.

196. They make precisely the same sort of boxes you do?—Yes, and they put English wording on, and nothing to indicate the country of origin.

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197. Could that be altered by any change in the law, apart from Wages Boards?—My contention is that the law covers it already, if it was put in force. It is a question of departmental administration.

198. Only one more question. If wages boards are to work at all we must have representatives of the workers upon them, and some people seem to think that the workers are so low, helpless and ignorant that they would not be able to elect or select representatives really capable of voicing their interests on the Wages Boards. What is your opinion upon that point?—That is so. They are very much demoralised, and the conditions under which they live really have not fitted them to fight their battle.

199. You think that amongst all your hundred outdoor workers you could not find half-a-dozen really able to give an intelligent account and to take an intelligent part in the discussion of the question of their wages?—I am quite sure they could not.

200. So that from your point of view the Wages Board solution is out of the question?—It seems to me to be a perfectly impracticable one, so far as my trade is concerned.

201. If these home-workers cannot elect their representatives, it stands to reason that the Wages Boards cannot be constituted?—That is so.

Mr. Bridgeman.

202. Are there only women employed in your outside home work?—There are some men employed, but they are principally employed in going round getting work for the wife; they do not do any themselves; they simply take the work backwards and forwards, and, I believe, live on what their wives provide. That is one very bad feature of the outdoor work.

203. They represent the middle women in Nottingham to a certain extent?—Yes.

204. Are the women who do this work mostly married women or widows?—I should say the majority are married women, but there are some women who like to do the work outside because they can do as they like and not be under discipline; they object to discipline.

205. Are most of them women who have no other means of support, who have no husbands or sons to support them?—No, I am afraid that, unfortunately, there are a large number of instances where the husbands and sons ought to support them, but they take advantage of the woman's knowledge and let her do the work.

206. You mean it is not done as an additional wage for the support of the family?—In many instances it undoubtedly is. I know some outdoor workers who live under very respectable conditions—in fact, they make a point of having their summer holiday, and that is from what the wife has provided out of her earnings or savings.

207. Taking the hundred you employ for six months in the year, you say they are all regularly employed?—Yes.

208. For the other six months what proportion is employed?—During the other six months they have to work really on short time; that is all they can do.

Mr. Bridgeman.—continued.

209. But they are working?—Yes, I keep them going somehow.

210. That is the same hundred who are going on all the time. You do not have to turn off some completely?—There is a certain wastage in every staff. I do not take on fresh hands during the slack season, but I can keep those going I have got. There is this pleasant feature about our trade, which, perhaps, there is not about most trades, and it is about the only pleasant feature, namely, that the consumption of boxes is very largely on the increase, and that is really the salvation of the trade.

211. You spoke about foreign competition, and I understood you to say that the Merchandise Marks Act in itself was enough to protect you from foreign competition until the Customs Order was issued?—Yes, it did protect us tremendously; it practically broke up the whole of the German printed boxes coming into this country, and I suppose our trade benefited more by the Merchandise Marks Act really than any other.

212. What is exactly the thing that has set you back compared to the position you were in before?—It is one of the principles of the Merchandise Marks Act that if a manufactured article coming into this country bears any English wording that might lead the consumer to assume that it was an article manufactured in England, it must have the country of its origin put on it. That, of course, was very good for our trade, and protected it immensely, but there were certain large consumers of boxes who objected to that, because they found they had to pay a higher price to the English manufacturer compared to what they paid to the makers abroad. So that by some means I do not quite know how it was arranged that these boxes were to be treated as coverings, and not as manufactured articles.

213. You say that it is merely a Customs regulation that has made the difference?—Yes.

214. Were the wages higher during the period before the Customs regulation was made which allowed the foreign competition?—Yes, and I can tell you in which line—in the jewellery boxes which come in from abroad nested the one in the other. The English firms would not take defeat, and when the foreigners came into the trade it was cut down to a terrible extent in the jewellery box trade.

215. Supposing the Wages Board had the effect of raising wages for out-work, would it drive the trade out of London, or out of the country, in your opinion?—Of course, if you raise the price of the out-workers' work in London to any appreciable extent, it will certainly hit the London manufacturer, and benefit the country maker. The man down at Banbury, for instance, would welcome a Wages Board for Shoreditch, I know.

216. I suppose the manufacturers could go down to the Garden City, or some such place, and carry on their work there?—No, because I have been down at the Garden City and considered that myself, but the trouble is who is to go there first, the workers or the factory? I cannot take my factory down to Letchworth until I can see the workers, and they are not going there until

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[Continued.]

Mr. Bridgeman.—continued.

until they see me. I have thought all that out.

217. Then you think that the Wages Board would have the effect of driving work out of London into the country possibly, but not out of London into foreign countries?—I would not go so far as to say that; it is only a question of degree, and I should imagine it might have the effect of driving it out of the country altogether; but certainly it would have the effect of driving it out of London.

Mr. Parkes.

218. You have had the opportunity of seeing a great many of those out-workers, I suppose?—Yes, I have been in their houses.

219. What is your opinion of the general condition of them in the trade with which you are concerned?—I should say that it differs very considerably. In many instances they live in very decent surroundings indeed, and are very decent people. That refers to those who work hard and regularly, and who are not out merely to avoid discipline, but who for some domestic reason are working at home. On the other hand, there are the loafers, and they are living under terrible conditions, simply appalling.

220. You would not consider the advisability of abolishing home work?—As I say, I do not like the idea of out-door workers, but you would hit some people who were very worthy people indeed, and it would be too drastic.

221. You do not think it would be desirable to abolish it?—No, you could not do it.

222. How would you prevent indoor workers from taking work from those who were licensed, provided there were a licensing system?—I cannot help thinking that that could be made a punishable offence.

223. How would you detect it?—The inspectors would surely have power to go round and inspect the premises that were being used.

224. That means a great increase in inspectors, I suppose?—Yes, undoubtedly you would have to have inspectors, but then I think it necessary, for this reason; surely there ought to be inspectors to go round and see that these premises where the work is being done constitute a fit and proper place for its being done in. I do not want to say too much against my own trade, but I suppose you can quite see that it is extremely undesirable that the boxes which are being made to be sold in West End shops, possibly to contain articles of food, confectionery and such like, should be made in premises below a certain standard of cleanliness. You can spread disease if proper care is not taken.

225. With regard to foreign competition, are not your prices for work controlled to a certain extent by the prices of the boxes which come into this country?—Since they have come back again, undoubtedly.

226. Should you not take that into consideration when you fix the prices by the Wages Board?—If you do not have it in view it simply means that you would be playing into the hands of the foreigner entirely.

227. Supposing you fixed these wages by a Wages Board, would you fix the price upon the

Mr. Parkes—continued.

capacity of the expert worker, or the inefficient worker, or how could you meet both classes?—As I have already said, that is one of the great difficulties of the Wages Board. I have been giving certain hypothetical cases, but on general principle I am against the Wages Board.

228. That would be a great difficulty?—Certainly.

229. And would the constitution of the Wages Board be a great difficulty too?—Yes; I do not see how you could constitute it. I will give you an instance: Take a hand who has been trained in a certain class of work. If you said to her, "What is a fair price for making that?" she would say, "3s.," because she would be used to that class of work; but that might be a cruel price to a hand not used to that class of work.

230. So that, on the whole, while you consider Wages Boards desirable, you do not think they are workable?—I do not think they are workable.

231. Who is the judge of the efficiency of the work brought back by the home-workers?—You compare the work with the sample you have.

232. And if it is not efficient you reject it, I suppose?—Yes; for instance, if the label is stuck upside down or there is something left out of the box, you would not pass that. If the work was too bad you would not give any more to the hand but discharge her.

233. You said that you would only pay the workers at the end of the week, but supposing a worker wanted money very badly in the middle of the week, would you refuse it?—I think you would have to be pretty hard; you would have to have a hard and fast line there to prevent the night working.

Mr. Trevelyan.

234. You said in the course of your chief examination that you would like, if possible, to see a trade union in your trade?—Yes.

235. In making that remark you appeared to contemplate the possibility of it—that it would be not only desirable, but possible?—It is bound to come, I think.

236. If it is bound to come, would the union be representative of all the trade?—No; only of the indoor people.

237. That is to say that your difficulty with regard to finding representatives of the workers applies only to the outdoor workers, and not to indoor workers?—That is so.

238. You think the position and intelligence of the indoor workers are such that they could form a Union, and, therefore, presumably, could also, if necessary, choose representatives for the Wages Board?—The indoor workers are all working together; there is combination in the workshop, and if one cannot do the work the others will back her up. They are very independent, and they have no reason to grumble.

239. I only wanted to find out the extent of the impossibility of finding representatives of the workers. You do not think it would be impossible to get representatives for the factory workers, but you do think it would be impossible to get representatives of the outdoor workers?—That is so.

240. Do

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[Continued.]

Mr. Trevelyan—continued.

240. Do you think it would be impossible for the representatives of the factory workers, with their knowledge of the trade, to form adequate representatives of the out-workers? Why should not the out-workers choose or have chosen for them, representatives from amongst the indoor workers?—I do not suppose they would know them, for one thing, and another thing is that the factory workers are very young mostly. They are unmarried girls generally, and I do not know that some of these young girls would be particularly bright representatives on a Board.

241. I do not suppose they would at first, but would not that always be the case when dealing with a new Trade Union—that the masters would find it very difficult to deal with the unpractised representatives?—If it was a question of having men to deal with on a Board it might be all right. I may tell you that I am not in favour of females being on any boards, and that is really where the trouble is. I am rather prejudiced against female legislation altogether, and I could not recommend that. The men would be all right, they might be able to do something.

242. Would it be impossible for the men to represent the women?—I do not think that the women would let the men represent them; they will not have them, and that is the trouble.

243. That is not so in all trades. There was one other of your difficulties I should like to ask you a little more about. One of the chief difficulties you put forward was that the variations in the trade were so great that it would be extremely difficult for the Board to fix the prices?—That is so.

244. Of course, you know that there are certain trades in which hundreds, or perhaps almost thousands of different kinds of commodities have had their prices fixed already; they have taken months to fix and immense numbers of details have been gone into?—Yes; but boxes are something like printing, the variety is so enormous. Every trade and every maker in every trade wants a different box for his particular goods.

245. You do not think that is rather an arbitrary demand upon their part, and supposing for different classes of boxes you had a price fixed, could not the manufacturers almost coerce their customers not into accepting exactly the same boxes, but into accepting very much more the same kind of boxes than they do at present. For instance, in the case of that glazed paper you have shown us, supposing there were prices fixed for that kind of box, would not the manufacturer reply to the customer, "Well, I cannot do that." The glaze is rather a fad on the part of the customer, is it not?—Yes; but it is one of those fads with regard to which if it was refused the customer would say, "If you will not do it, the foreigner will." He would take up that attitude at once, and, even if it cost him twice as much, he would get it from abroad. It is a very dangerous principle to hold a revolver at your customer's head.

246. With regard to the competition of other districts in London, I suppose it might be contemplated under the Wages Board system to have provincial Boards, as well as London Boards, and would not your fear of provincial competition

Mr. Trevelyan—continued.

be largely met by that?—Of course, the Wages Board in London would be totally different to the Wages Board in some of the country districts. For instance, there are some country districts where the industry is entirely represented by one firm, whereas that is not so in London, and this difficulty would arise, that in the case of the Banbury maker he might be able to exercise a tremendous weapon against his employees, because he might order a lock-out, or something of that kind, if they would not submit to him. He would practically be boss of the Wages Board, as he is boss now.

247. Could that be met by having some sort of Appeal Board in order to see that that sort of clashing of Wages Board findings should not occur?—I do not know about an Appeal Board, that never entered my mind; but if you have got a Board, and they have to regulate twenty different employers, there is no fear of any one of them declaring a lock-out, because supposing even nineteen did, the twentieth one would say, "Here is a fine opportunity to cut in and get these other fellows' trade." I say that a Wages Board might be practicable to a certain extent in London, and more so than in the country, where the industry is in the hands of one or two firms. A Wages Board in this case would consist of one or two masters and an equal number of workers, which is an obvious absurdity.

248. Your fear is that the one Wages Board, because it was controlled by one man, might agree to undercut London?—Certainly.

249. That might possibly be met if you had a National Board to supervise the action of all local Boards?—Yes.

250. To see that they were not setting an entirely different standard of wage, making due allowance for local conditions and rent and the like in one place compared with another?—You could hardly have a Board which was to settle all these thousand and one little things in my particular trade, and then have it referred to some other Board; I am afraid it would not be workable. That is the trouble.

Mr. Chiozza Money

251. With regard to that possibility you imagine of an employer, after a decision of the Wages Board, locking out his employees, do you recognise that the wage would be the legal minimum wage?—Yes.

252. Do you recognise that, if he locked out his employees, he would be locking himself out of business; he would have to shut up his business?—Not if he said, "The work I now make out of doors I will henceforth make in." You cannot prevent the employer doing that.

253. He stops work; he cannot get people to work for him at lower than the minimum wage, and, therefore, if he locks out his workpeople, he locks out all his workpeople?—He only locks out the outdoor hands.

Mr. Trevelyan.

254. You are thinking of a Wages Board which would only apply to out-workers?—Yes.

255. Obviously

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[Continued

Mr. Chiozza Money.

255. Obviously it must apply to the whole trade?—Not only to the district?

256. No?—The question has been put to me in this way: "Supposing you had a Wages Board for country manufacturers." I will assume that there is a Wages Board in a particular district where there is only one manufacturer of a particular article. That man is in a beautiful position then, because he will practically fix the pay.

257. No, it is fixed between employer and employed on impartial terms, and I cannot see that the employer will be master of the situation at all?—He can say, "I shall not employ you."

258. Then he stops his own business?—No, because he makes them on his own premises instead of out of doors.

Mr. Trevelyan.

259. You are speaking of a Board which only applies to out-workers, and Mr. Chiozza Money is talking of a Board which applies both to the factory hands and to the out-workers alike?—That case has not been put to me yet by any gentleman here.

Mr. Chiozza Money.

260. I take the liberty of putting it: if you take it that the Wages Board applies to both, except that a difference must be allowed for if the glue and other materials are supplied by the out-worker, you can recognise that in such a case the employer could not lock out his employees?—No, he would cut his own throat then, or he might give up manufacturing and become an importer.

Chairman.

261. I understood you to say that the business of box-making had increased very largely and is growing?—The demand for boxes.

262. I also understood you to say that the wages were going down?—In certain classes of boxes.

263. It seemed a little inconsistent, and I did not understand how if you had a growing demand

Chairman—continued.

you had a diminishing payment?—Because a great deal of the greater demand is being supplied from abroad.

264. But I thought you had a bigger demand at home?—There would be if the work did not come from abroad.

265. I understood you to say that your business was a growing one at home?—I did not wish to convey that it was growing better from the workers' point of view.

266. I understood that the demand for your own make of boxes was a growing one?—Yes.

267. And that the salvation of your trade was that it was a growing trade?—Yes.

268. That means a greater demand for your own boxes?—No; it means that in respect of the foreign competition we are not hit as hard as some trades where the demand is not growing.

269. I do not talk of foreign competition. I understood you to say that the box-making trade in this country is a growing trade?—Certainly it is a growing trade.

270. Then how is it that the wages are going down if you have an increasing trade?—I can give you one very good reason—owing to the labour-saving machinery.

271. Is the payment to the people smaller because of the machinery?—Undoubtedly that has hit them.

272. Then the low rate of payment is largely due to the competition of machinery?—It is partly due to that, and of course that is one of the things that might operate against the out-door worker, if you pressed the question of Wages Boards too far.

Mr. Parkes.

273. Do they have machinery in connection with the home-work?—No, that is all hand work.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Mr. THOMAS HOLMES called; and Examined.

Chairman.

274. You have had very great experience as a Police Court Missionary, and working amongst the poor for many years?—Yes.

275. Would you just very briefly summarise what your experience has been?—Do you mean my experience with regard to the poor generally, or the home-workers?

276. The home-workers mainly?—My attention was drawn to the home-workers first about 10 years ago. I met two or three widows at the Police Court charged with attempting suicide, and I naturally took interest in them; I visited their homes, and became aware of the conditions under which they lived, the prices paid for their work, the hours they generally worked, the amount of rent they paid, the kind of food they ate, and everything of that description. On one occasion I took three widows for a holiday. Each of them

Chairman—continued.

had attempted suicide, and was broken down in health of mind and body through hard work and poor food. One was a match-box maker, the second was a blouse maker, and the third was a general machinist. Mrs. Holmes and I spent a holiday with them, and the story of their lives, their manner, their appearance, and their broken spirit was a revelation. After that time I devoted a great deal of my life and time and energy specially to the home-workers.

277. Can you tell us roughly what is your general opinion of them as to character, industry and the rest of it?—My experience of 10 years is this—that I have found them to be the most industrious, sober and honest class of the community that it has been my lot ever to meet with; in fact, their goodness appals me.

278. What are the trades you have found, those

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those you have had experience of, most engaged in?—Box-making, artificial flower-making, costume-making for children and adults, and a whole mass of small industries in which numbers of people are engaged.

279. The rates of payment we have heard of are very low; do you think these are due largely to what I might describe as competition with machinery, and that they are doing work at home which in other directions in many trades is done in factories with machinery, and consequently at a much lower price than it can be done for by hand work?—I do not think machinery has got anything to do with it. That is my experience.

280. Surely that is a very broad statement?—There are a thousand and one industries in which women are engaged. To some of them in factories scientific machinery is applied, and in a great many it is not; but whether the women work in competition with the machine-made goods in the factory, or whether they work in competition with those who work by their hands in factories, roughly speaking the payment of the women remains the same.

281. Surely there would be cases of this kind, would there not, where a rate of payment which would yield a fairly good wage if the work were done by machinery and in the factory would be a very poor wage if a woman were attempting to do the same work at home?—Yes, that must be so; but my point is this, that it has very little effect, and, as far as my experience goes, it has no effect, because it is acknowledged by the women themselves, and by the community generally, that the labour of women is thought worthy of very little remuneration. Take the little barrel button which is used for an officer's uniform; it is covered with black material first, and then worked with filigree lace with the needle, and the prices paid for making that kind of thing to-day are just the same as they were 40 years ago. I know one widow who is working, and has done nothing else than work at these little things at her own home in Bethnal Green for 40 years, and her payment for that work now is practically the same as it was at the beginning of that period. Her fingers have got stiffer, and she cannot earn quite so much now; but they seem to base the payment of women upon what prevailed 60 or 70 years ago, with regard to the sempstresses of London generally.

282. Have you any specimens of work with you which you can show us?—Yes (*the Witness produced various articles of adults' and children's clothing*). There (*exhibiting*) is a woman's costume made by the hundred, and the widow and her daughter who made this, to my knowledge, have sat for seven years making nothing else. There have been slight varieties of them. This costume, skirt and coat, are made throughout with seven seams round the bottom, five seams up the side, a band put on and the placket worked round for 1s. 1d., finding their own machine and thread. For 20 years the mother and daughter have been sitting side by side at machines, honest, industrious and intelligent people.

Mr. Boland.

283. How long did the making of that costume

Mr. Boland—continued.

take?—The mother and daughter working together would make seven of those in two days, but they would sit from nine in the morning till half-past 12 at night. The daughter is 33 years of age, an exceedingly skilled worker. It is only by the combination of the labour of the two that they can get through the work.

Chairman.

284. How came it that the mother brought the daughter up to such a trade?—The father died when the girl was quite an infant, and the mother took to the machine. When the girl was old enough to leave the school, she sat by the side of her mother, and they have sat so ever since for 18 years.

285. Why did she not put her to a better trade?—I may say that I have offered the daughter an indoor position with a firm in London at a very good weekly wage, but the daughter says, "I must look after my mother; we cannot very well be parted after sitting side by side so long, and my mother is getting old and feeble."

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

286. How old is the mother?—About 60, and you might take her for 80 if you saw her. She is nervous, and the daughter, who is 33 years of age, is losing her eyesight. There has been a tragedy going on.

Mr. Arthur Henderson.

287. You have given us the price the worker receives; can you give us any idea of the price these things sell at?—The prices vary in the different shops. I never pass a shop without taking notes myself, and if I see anything like this I store it in my memory. It is from about 29s. to 39s.

Chairman.

288. That is a very wide range; you do not know the price clearly?—No.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

289. Before you get away from this mother and daughter, do they keep a servant?—No.

290. And therefore they have to attend to their own domestic arrangements and cook their own food?—Yes.

291. That is included in your statement that they work from nine in the morning till half-past 12 at night?—Yes.

292. Therefore it is not correct to say that they work at these costumes from nine in the morning to half-past 12 at night?—It would not be correct if they worked in the factories to say that they worked from six to six.

293. You made a statement to the Committee, and I ask you whether it is correct or not, that they work from nine in the morning to half-past 12 at night to earn this wage?—Allow me to explain. I freely admit that they do their own cooking and that they take some little time to their meals. When I say they commence at nine o'clock, that means that they commence after breakfast, and frequently they begin before nine. At dinner time they have a little time for their dinner, but when you consider such a miserable little

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Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

dinner it is, it needs no cooking, and it is probably a bit of bread with margarine or some jam and a cup of tea. The time is not worth considering.

Chairman.

294. You are probably aware that this is the kind of article and the kind of work that can be done very much more expeditiously by power machinery in a factory than by hand at all, and that what might yield a very poor return to women working under the conditions these do, might easily yield a very fair wage to women working in a factory?—The firm this is made for have several factories and employ a large number, and they have also a large number of outdoor hands, and I cannot conceive that it can be done any cheaper or any more expeditiously than it is done between these two skilled workers.

295. Still in the factory there would be power machinery?—There would be this, that the machinery would be driven probably by electricity or steam; but on the other hand they make a charge on the workers for the driving of the machines in the factory.

296. Coming back to the point, the lady is about 60, and the daughter's sight has become affected?—Yes, I am sending her now to the seaside on that account.

297. And the old lady, you said, looks as if she were 80?—Yes.

298. We have here, therefore, two women who are not what you would call effective and efficient women; one of them is the equivalent of an old woman of 80, and the other is losing her sight, so that they work obviously under very considerable physical difficulties?—I have known these people intimately for seven years. The daughter's sight was, to begin with, not affected, and it is only within this last three weeks that I have learnt from a doctor to whom I sent her that her sight is affected, and that it is necessary for her to have a month's rest, so that up to then I have had six years' clear experience of their ability to work, and I venture to say that in the whole of the machinists of London you would not find two more persistent and skilled machinists.

299. In spite of their age?—Yes, and their earnings have been practically the same the whole of the time.

300. In cases like that, and for such cases, what would be your view as to the practicability of a Wages Board?—It is the only hope, in my opinion.

301. Do you think that people working as they are would be able to select representatives?—Among this class of people who have taken up this kind of industry I find a large number of intelligent and very well educated women who could, provided they were not afraid of the consequences, very well represent their own interests upon any Board.

302. You think they could be organised?—Yes.

303. I suppose one may take it that societies like the one you are connected with and others would largely make it their business to help these people in the preliminary organisation?—Yes.

304. And you think that could be quite possible?—Yes.

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Chairman—continued.

305. With regard to suggestions for licensing, what is your view as to those?—They are worth nothing at all; it is a stupid idea, in my opinion.

306. With regard to the sanitary condition of the homes, I imagine that this delicate work you have shown us must be done under cleanly conditions, at least?—Yes.

307. But there are trades like fur-pulling, box-making and various other trades where glue and other things are used, and they get very dirty and insanitary?—Yes.

308. And also I am afraid many of these people, owing to their poverty and depression, have not the spirit even to keep their places as tidy and clean as they should be; would licensing do anything in the way of improving the cleanly and sanitary conditions?—No, it would not. That ought to be a matter for the sanitary inspector, and he ought to do his business thoroughly. The conditions under which these people live are not owing to the work in which they are engaged, but the horrible environment altogether, the rotten houses, the horrible backyards, and the filth that is all round them. It is not so much that the industry in which they are engaged degrades the home as it is that the neighbourhood degrades the industry.

309. You think that ordinary inspection for this purpose apart from sanitary inspection by the local authority would be of no value?—No; because you would leave the people to live in a filthy place where it was not fit to make match boxes, which seems an enormity.

310. And you look mainly to increasing the income of the people to enable them to live under more satisfactory conditions?—Yes; and to the combination of the people.

311. You think that the combination with the Wages Board would raise the wages?—Yes.

312. Do you think that would have any effect on the employment of these people?—No.

313. You think the employment would still continue?—I am sure.

314. What makes you so clear about that?—Let me explain why I am in favour of the Wages Board. First, it would establish a right principle. It would make the first charge upon any manufactured article, the labour done, and the profits would then have to be built, first considering what wages they have got to pay. At present that is the last consideration. These things go down by a regular progression because they can take contracts, they can send out shipping orders, and they can furnish these things on sale or return with the certainty that they can take an odd penny or twopence if it is necessary off the worker; but when you get a Wages Board you will first get a fixed price, which must be of great value both to the master and those employed; and, secondly, it would give a very great deal of encouragement to these people. It is the apathy of the people engaged in all these things and their helplessness which forms the greatest obstacle to their advancement; but, provided they could see that there was a prospect of their wages not going any lower, they would have that certainty to begin with, and thereby combination, if there was the possibility of their rising, I am quite certain

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Mr. THOMAS HOLMES.

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Chairman—continued.

it would encourage thousands of people that are engaged in the various home industries of London.

Mr. Parkes.

315. How would you fix the prices of the infinite variety of garments the fashions in which are changing each day almost?—My idea of the Wages Board would be to have a Wages Board for the factory and the home-workers, and if you established a price in the factory it would be very easy to establish it for the home-worker.

316. Do you mean to say that the price in the factory should always govern the home-workers?—I think so.

317. Have they not greater facilities in the factories for making the goods?—Yes; you would have to take these facilities into consideration.

318. Would not the same thing apply to the factory? Do you not think there would be an infinite variety of new and fresh garments every week which would require adjustment as to price?—Yes, of course there would, but skilled people will tell you, although the appearance of the garment may change, to a certainty how much work there is in the garment.

319. Do you find that the men have a tendency to depend on the women for their livelihood?—No. It is quite true that a number of women do engage in these industries to supplement the earnings of the husband, but in our association, in which we have got about 1,000 members, we have got very few of that kind, and I may say that the whole of our people are engaged in this work simply and solely for the purpose of getting their own living.

320. Do you find some out-workers doing well?—Yes, especially if they can get a little out of others. If a woman can employ four or five girls she does well.

321. And you would not abolish home-work?—Certainly not.

Mr. Bridgeman.

322. What is your Association which you spoke of just now?—The Home Workers' Aid Association.

323. You said you thought the effect of the Wages Board would be to increase wages, but where would the money come from in your opinion?—From the public.

324. You mean it would increase prices?—Certainly.

325. You do not think then that the manufacturers or the various people concerned are getting abnormal profits?—No; some of them who have been very careful indeed have not made profits at all, but have gone bankrupt.

326. And yet you think it would not make any difference in getting large contracts?—May I explain just exactly what I mean? I get hundreds, and I may say I have had thousands, of letters during these last nine or ten years from women and ladies—not that I would make any distinction—and men as well asking where they can possibly buy shirts, clothing and other things that have been properly paid for, and I am quite certain—in fact, it is an absolute conviction with me, that if employers can give the community a positive assurance that their goods of any kind

Mr. Bridgeman—continued.

have been made under good conditions and properly paid for, the public will be prepared to support these tradesmen and pay for the goods.

327. Do you think the public are prepared to pay any price as long as they know the work is properly paid for?—Yes.

328. And therefore there is no danger from foreign competition?—None.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

329. I should like to ask whether in your experience the Particulars Clause is enforced, that is to say, that when work is given out the particulars of the prices for the work and so on are communicated at the same time?—I know several cases in which it was not enforced.

330. At any rate, you do not think it is any good even where it is enforced?—You mean the prices paid and all the rest of it?

331. When the work is given out it means that the giver of the work says how much the remuneration for that particular work shall be, but you think where that is done it is no great help?—I have found out a few cases where it has not been done, and I have called attention to it; but where it has been done it is not of any great value.

332. Do most of the people with whom you come in contact depend entirely for their livelihood on the wages for their home-work, or are some of them what are commonly called pocket-money earners?—No, mine are all workers.

333. And they live by it entirely?—They live by it. These garments were made by them.

334. In some cases, as in West Ham, for instance, we find that a man will do two or three days' casual labour in the week, and the woman will do the rest, and that the woman is not always keeping herself entirely. If the man is in good work she will do a little, but if the man is not in work at all, she will do a lot?—That is so.

335. Are there middle women in these trades?—Yes.

336. Do you regard the institution of the middle women in these trades as being part of the necessary machinery?—Yes.

337. I suppose you would agree that the existence of the middle women at once makes the remuneration of the home-worker very much less?—A little less.

338. But you do not think the middle woman can be got rid of?—Ultimately, yes.

339. Do you know whether any of these goods go abroad because there is a very large export trade?—Yes, plenty of them go abroad.

340. Do you think that as many goods go abroad as come from abroad?—Yes, the worst paid industries in London are for foreign trade exported.

341. Therefore you think that the export and the import really cancel out in the trades you are connected with?—Yes.

342. You were speaking of a certain trade in which the prices had not changed for 40 years?—That was the little barrel button.

343. Would you apply that to most of the trades with which you are familiar?—No.

344. You think there has been a downward tendency?—Yes.

345. You

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Mr. THOMAS HOLMES.

[Continued.]

Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

345. You have been associated with home-work for the last 10 years, and you would say that the general standard is distinctly lower, say 10 per cent. lower, than it was when you began to be connected with the work?—Distinctly lower, but I could not give the percentage.

346. Something considerable?—Yes.

347. Do you find that the difference in pay between one giver of work and another giver of work is considerable?—Yes, and that is why the Wages Board would be useful.

Mr. Boland.

348. On this question of home employment, we had it from the last Witness that, in his particular trade, a great number of the women practically supported the men of the family, and that the men did not do any work. You do not seem to be of that opinion as regards home-work as a whole?—Certainly not.

349. Do you know the Westminster Division fairly well?—Not with regard to home-work, but I know the whole of North and East London.

350. And as regards these districts, you practically say that the men are not living on the home-work of the women?—Certainly not.

Mr. Arkwright.

351. May I ask one or two questions about that particular coat and skirt? I think you said you knew for certain that the remuneration these two women received for making that dress was 1s. 1d.?—Yes.

352. You were not able to tell us for certain at what price these things would be sold to the person who finally wore them?—Oh, no.

353. But you said you thought anything between 29s. and 39s. would be the price?—Yes.

354. May I put it at 32s.? We have got the difference between 1s. 1d. and 32s., and you told us, I think, that there was not very much

Mr. Arkwright—continued.

margin for the employer to pay better, and that you thought the public would have to pay more?—Yes.

355. Might we, in view of that, just see where the money between 1s. 1d. and the 32s. has gone?—Will you let me explain? The price you quote now is to the ultimate purchaser of the garment; but these things are made in very large quantities, travellers are sent out with them, and it is a kind of speculative business, sale or return. If the season suits the particular make of goods, they are all sold; but if not they come back upon the manufacturer, and there is a dead loss there. Therefore, what he gains by the poor payment of his workers, on the one hand, he loses by the bad commercial transactions on the other.

356. Have you any idea what the actual material of that dress and skirt would cost?—No; I may say that this is not the cloth that was supplied to the worker. They are very much afraid of their goods being exhibited, and therefore I sent and purchased some cloth and had it cut out by a skilled cutter and exactly reproduced, with the exception of the cloth and the colour of it.

357. You cannot tell us even what your material cost?—No, I could not tell you now. These children's coats were made for 9d., finding silk and thread. Might I just add one remark with regard to the box-making? I have had a very large experience of box-making, and I have seen some of the most beautiful cardboard boxes that can well be imagined, with silver paper and beautifully made for all kinds of ladies' correspondence cards, chemists' goods, and superior sweets; but I never found anything like 3s. a gross paid, nor half of it. I have seen thousands of these boxes made, and I have never seen any price like that.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Wednesday, 4th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Bridgeman.
Sir William Bull.
Mr. Boland.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Ernest Lamb.

Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Arthur Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.
Sir Thomas Whittaker.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. E. G. HOWARTH called in ; and Examined.

Chairman.

358. You have been engaged in a considerable amount of investigation work in West Ham, I think ?—Yes.

359. And in the course of that you have come in contact with a number of people who are engaged in Home Work ?—Yes, a certain number.

360. You have published a book which has given a good deal of information about that subject ?—I would like to point out that I did not visit all these people personally.

361. You visited some of them ?—Very few.

362. You have not seen them yourself then ?—No ; of course, in an experience of about five years' living down in West Ham I have come across a great many, but I did not visit specially those ones of whom particulars are given in that book.

363. Who did get these particulars ?—These were visited by two people mainly ; we employed a lady who had been a Sanitary Inspector and a person who was well acquainted with the district down there, and they came to us every night after having filled in particulars, and we looked over their particulars, and then, if we wanted anything further, found out, or if anything on the sheet was not clear we sent them back and asked them to ask further questions. Neither Miss Wilson nor I visited them ourselves to any large extent.

364. That would apply largely to the particulars as to the rates of earning and the class of goods on which they worked ?—Yes.

365. I do not think we want very much from you on that point ; we have had a good deal of evidence which has been brought before us as to the existence of those conditions. We want rather to get your view as to the operation of the

Chairman—continued.

suggested remedies. Just very briefly will you tell us what is your experience as to the inadequacy of the present law ?—It chiefly affects the working as far as my experience goes, and the first thing that we found extremely defective was the lists of out-workers supplied to the Medical Officer of Health. As you know, lists have to be supplied on two days in the year, I think the beginning of February and the beginning of August, by employers of out-workers whom they employ, and those are looked through by the Medical Officer of Health, and he keeps all the names and addresses of those working in his area and sends on to other areas concerned those working outside. We got from the Medical Officer of Health a list, roughly, of 1,700 or 1,800 names, and on taking those visited, we found that a great number, something like 500, did not live at the places mentioned ; some were dead, some had never been employed, and we found that in the end there were really only about 600 who did represent out-workers.

366. That means, I suppose, that these people are flitting about from place to place, and that a list which may be accurate one month may be inaccurate the next ?—Certainly ; and in addition to that, the lists appeared to be made up very carelessly, because, as I say, a certain number were known to be dead and a certain number who were on the list at particular addresses and who answered to the names, and so on, said they never had worked and never did intend to work at home-work.

367. What suggestion do you make in regard to them ?—I do not know whether West Ham is an exception, but in certain districts in London the lists are very much more perfect ; for instance, the lists in West Ham, I imagine, are not sent in all on the 1st of February or the 1st of August ; but

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Mr. HOWARTH.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

but that can be corrected quite easily by prosecuting the employers.

368. Then your suggestion really amounts to this, that possibly there is a certain amount of local laxity?—Certainly; I am perfectly clear about that. I should like to give as an illustration Finsbury, where the Public Health Act was excellently carried out by Dr. Newman. The lists there were kept up very well and were sent in on the two dates which they have to be sent in by, and in order to do that, in 1905 he issued 45 summonses against employers for failing to supply lists, and 12 were fined from £1 to £2 plus costs for not doing so. The others produced the lists in Court, and were dismissed on paying the costs. You see, it is the local authority's affair really to see that the lists are produced. Then there is the question of their accuracy. The Medical Officers of Health can have the lists verified and send round to the employer to say, "What do you mean by sending me in lists which are not accurate?"

369. This all amounts to a suggestion that it is not so much the law that is at fault as the administration of it by the local authority?—That is what I want to convey.

370. With regard to West Ham, I gather there is a very large amount of home-work done there?—It is rather difficult to say what "a very large amount" means. We had on the lists about 1,800 names. It is quite impossible to tell whether these are exhaustive or not.

371. But the result of your investigation was that you did find home-work very general, did you not?—If 1,800 names out of a population of 300,000 can be called general.

372. Did you investigate the whole of the 300,000?—No, we investigated all the names on the Medical Officer's list, 1,786 to be exact.

373. So far as you were able to ascertain, what was the main reason why these people were working under conditions which you found largely unsatisfactory? Was it owing to their own personal poverty, if I may so put it, or was it owing to the uncertainty of the earnings of the head of the family where there was a man? Take a family where there was a husband and wife, was it owing to the casual employment or unemployment of the head of the family?—There was a great deal of evidence to show that the earnings were supplementary to the casual earnings of the head of the family, and that is quite natural in a place like West Ham, where casual labour is so extensive, due to the docks and low-skilled factories, and so on.

374. You would suggest that there is a larger proportion of unskilled labour in West Ham than in many parts of London?—Certainly.

375. And that, you think, is one reason why there is so much home-work to supplement the earnings of casual labour?—Yes. In the cases that we visited 53 per cent. of the whole were supplementing the earnings of either casual or irregular workers.

376. Did those people work regularly or did they work casually at all? Did they work when their husbands were in employment; were they in regular employment or did they only take up this work when their husbands were out of employment?—A great many took it up definitely when

Chairman—continued.

their husbands were out of employment or working short hours; others took it up in order to insure against a bad time when their husbands would be out of employment, so that they should have something to fall back upon.

377. Did you find many cases proportionately of those who adopted this method of working at home in order to supply themselves with extra money, so to speak, pocket-money, or for purposes of supplying special things, like boots and things of that sort for their children?—There were certain instances of that. I cannot tell what proportion, but that is largely among the better class kind of work, costumes, underclothing, and so on, where girls work to provide for their own dress; or in one case, I think, we had a person who wanted to buy a piano, and in other cases wives of artisans in fairly good positions earning 30s. a week or more worked in order to supply some definite thing, such as clothes or boots for their children.

378. They were not dependent upon their income from this work?—Not dependent, no.

379. It was a supplementary income?—Certainly.

380. What classes of trades were most numerous in which the people worked in West Ham, broadly speaking?—I might almost say it is nearly all the clothing trades in their various sub-divisions—clothing, tailoring, shirt-work, blouses, underclothing, and so on.

381. Would you say that it was largely the cheaper class of ready-made clothing?—Of course, it varied; a large part of it was the cheaper class of ready-made clothing.

382. That work would be, of course, in competition with the work done in clothing factories?—Certainly.

383. Consequently, when low rates of payment are quoted, showing a low rate of earnings, it does not necessarily follow that that rate would yield a low weekly wage to a worker in a factory?—Because they are able to get through more by machinery, you mean?

384. Yes?—That is so.

385. And they would not have the trouble of carrying the work backwards and forwards, and the many difficulties that the home-worker has?—I agree with that; on the other hand, a great deal of the work in tailoring is very low class that would not necessarily be done in factories at all.

386. What kind of work are you referring to?—The work that is usually referred to as slop tailoring.

387. That can be done very cheaply in factories?—It can be done, but there it so often is not.

388. Still it is competing with the work that is done in factories?—Yes.

389. You are of course aware that work can be done in the factories at rates which seem extremely low, and yet which yield a good wage to those working in the factories?—Yes, I know that.

390. And if the work is done in the home, the payment cannot be higher than it is in the factory; but under the conditions under which they work it will yield a very low rate of wage for the week?—Yes.

391. On

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Mr. HOWARTH.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

391. On that point, what remedy would you suggest?—It is rather difficult to be asked what remedy I would suggest; I would much rather you asked me various questions concerning remedies.

392. Have you thought anything of the proposal that Wages Boards should be established?—I have the Sweated Industries Bill before me, and I certainly think that an experiment at any rate might be made.

393. Taking the case I put to you, would you suggest that the Wages Board could institute a rate of payment higher than that which is paid in the factories?—I am afraid I could not tell you that; it would have to depend on the working of the Act to show.

394. Can you suggest that it would be possible to do so? The point I want to put to you is this: if the rate yields a fairly good weekly wage in the factory, could you expect the Wages Board to fix a rate for out-workers that would be higher than the rate that is paid in the factory?—Not necessarily. One advantageous way in which it might operate would be to unify the rates paid to home-workers, which are now very different for the same class of work.

395. You found, then, that different rates were paid for the same work?—Yes, very different rates.

396. You are quite sure that it was the same work?—Quite sure that it was the same work.

397. You are no doubt aware that—take the tailoring trade—rates will vary, one rate being half as high again as another for work that an ordinary person could not distinguish between, and yet the worker getting the lower rate will earn more in the week than the one getting the higher rate, because there really is a difference in the work which the ordinary observer does not understand?—Yes, I quite agree to that, and I should have hesitated to say that there were different rates for the same work if I had done the investigation and seen the shirts and things, because I could not have told; but the person who did that part of the investigation was a lady who did understand these things, and who counted all the seams, and all the particulars, putting on pockets and collars and bands of various kinds and so on, and took some trouble to satisfy herself that the work compared was the same class of work.

398. Of course the number of seams and the number of pockets is not the sole guide?—No, and the material too of course.

399. It is the class of work itself—the finish and everything else?—Yes.

400. However, their report to you was that there were different rates for the same work?—For the same work.

401. And I understand your suggestion is that at any rate one effect of the Wages Boards might easily be to raise the general level of payment to the best?—Yes.

402. But you do not suggest that the best could go above the rate paid in the factories?—No, I do not suggest that; I do not say it might not happen, but I do not see how at the present moment it would.

403. That would seem to imply that, in any case, the condition of the people working at home,

Chairman—continued.

so far as the earnings go, would be likely to be less satisfactory than in the factories whatever we might do?—Not necessarily; there are lots of other things that Wages Boards might have an effect upon, for instance the work now as far as one can gather is spread over more people than it need be spread over. If Wages Boards set a standard, the employer would probably distribute that more regularly over fewer people.

404. Why should he do so?—Because he would probably find they were more efficient if they had more work.

405. But he pays them by the piece?—Yes.

406. And his desire to get the quality of the work good would be the same now as then?—But it would be an advantage, and probably a convenience to him to be dealing with more regular and fewer people.

407. Would not that be the same now? I do not see where the Wages Boards would make any difference on that point?—They would make him think about the worker more than he does now.

408. Is there anything in the suggestion which has been made to us, that an employer likes to have a considerable number of hands available, so that under pressure he can get his work done, and that when times are slack he spreads it over the larger number, so that they are still connected with him, and available for a greater amount of work?—Yes, I imagine that is certainly true.

409. Would not that remain the same with the Wages Boards?—I do not think so, because under the present conditions, when an employer does spread his work over a large number he has not the knowledge of what it means to the large number over whom the work is spread.

410. I suppose it follows as a matter of course that the poorest class of work was done in the poorest districts?—Yes.

411. Were they poor because they did the poorest class of work, or did they do the poorest class of work because they were poor? Did you go into that point at all?—I think as far as the evidence went, they took the poorest class of work because they were poor; we came across several instances of people who deliberately rejected the poorest class of work.

412. Would not the others be the least efficient workers—the poorest class of workers?—Not necessarily, because they might be working to supplement the earnings of a very casual husband, whereas the other might be working to supplement the earnings of a less casual husband; their powers of work might be exactly the same.

413. I do not see what bearing that would have on their efficiency?—I am afraid I must have misunderstood your question.

414. My point was, would not these poorer class of workers doing the least satisfactory class of work, the slop-work, be a less efficient class of workers at their work than those who did a better class of work?—Probably, because they would be less capable of working through lack of food and so on.

415. Does not it really come to this, to some extent at any rate, that the efficient worker earns a much better payment than the inefficient one?—That must always be so.

416. And

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Mr. HOWARTH.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

416. And that this low rate of weekly earnings is, to some extent at any rate, due to the fact that they are largely inefficient workers?—From various causes—yes.

417. And as they are paid by the piece, you would have to raise the payment very considerably to make any marked difference in their weekly earnings?—Certainly.

418. Would that payment bring the payment above the rate at which the work can be done by efficient workers in factories?—Very probably; therefore, it would not be given out.

419. Would that be practicable?—I do not think it would for that class of work.

420. Then if you were to raise the rate of payment to these people in these poorest divisions to a rate that would give them a satisfactory wage, it means that you would probably extinguish the trade?—You would extinguish that part of the trade.

421. Would that be the result of the Wages Board?—In the case of a certain number of people who are inefficient, I think it probably would if it was carried out.

422. You rather look to the fact that the worst class of home-work would be stamped out by the Wages Board, and be driven into the factories?—Yes.

423. What effect would that have upon these people who are working casually, and presumably could not very well go into the factory?—Well, I do not know that they could not go into the factory; some of them would go into the factory, and some of them would not.

424. Taking those who, owing to family reasons, take a certain amount of work in at home, not working all the day, but looking after their house during the rest of the day, would they be able to go into the factory?—A certain number.

425. But some would not?—Some would not, and they would not get work.

426. And the operation of the Wages Board might be that they would lose the opportunity of doing this casual work?—Certainly.

427. Would you say that the payment now for home-work is much less than the payment made for the same work in factories?—I am afraid I have got no evidence upon that, because we did not compare the rates in the factories with the different rates in the home-work.

428. I notice in your book, if I may refer to that, on page 261 reference is made to a case at the bottom of a maker of wash leather and carriage sponges who worked from 9 o'clock in the morning of one day to 3 o'clock in the morning of the next day, and earned 8d. Are we really to take that as a serious statement of an actual fact concerning an efficient worker?—We do not say it was an efficient worker.

429. It would be assumed, I suppose?—Not necessarily.

430. Then it has no bearing at all on the matter before us?—Certainly it has a bearing.

431. What would be the bearing?—It shows the length of hours and the pay earned by some people, whether efficient or inefficient.

432. But it really means that an incompetent worker cannot earn a decent wage. Supposing I were put to do some of this work of which I

Chairman—continued.

have no knowledge whatever, it might take me 24 hours to do what a competent person would do in an hour?—That is perfectly true, but in the case of this person, it was not the first time she had made these things.

433. Have you any suggestion as to the way in which the life of that person could be improved?—I am afraid I have not.

434. Wages Boards would not help, then?—They would to this extent, that she probably would not get the work.

435. She would lose the 8d.?—Yes, which would be a very good thing.

436. Is that an exceptional case?—Certainly it is an exceptional case.

437. This is given in the book as an illustration of the long hours some people work for very little money?—Certainly; we must give exceptional cases as well.

438. It is not a representative, average case?—Not an average case, certainly.

439. Is it not apt to be quoted as an illustration of the conditions that prevail?—That I am afraid I cannot tell you.

440. Would you tell us what was the result of your experience with regard to the Particulars Clause? Was that of any value?—It was certainly of some value, but it was carried out in such different ways; some people received printed particulars with the exact nature of the work to be done, with the quantity of the material that was given, with the amount to be paid, and exactly what they had to do on each thing. Others had just a pencil scrawl on a bit of paper which was often illegible (I have seen many of those), and some had nothing at all. Then some had "shirts at 2s.," "shirts at 3s.," and the rest was left to their imagination.

441. Therefore you think the particulars are not given so clearly and fully as they should be?—Certainly not. That is largely owing to the difficulty of enforcing it.

442. The difficulty of inspecting so large a number of homes and particulars must be very great indeed?—Yes, and there we come back to the lists question again; if you have hopelessly inefficient lists you cannot have a Factory Inspector going all over the place in order to find a home-worker.

443. Then you find in certain classes of work, blouses for instance, do you not, that the workers are of a superior class, and do that work somewhat irregularly for extra money?—In many cases—yes.

444. That is to say brothers, fathers or husbands are sometimes clerks, and people in a better position?—Yes.

445. Do they take that work at a low rate, do you think?—You mean a lower rate than a person who is trying to live by it?

446. Do you think they cut the market, so to speak, at all?—I cannot tell you actually from evidence that they do, but they are apt to.

447. Would you think the class of work they do is rather better than the work done by what we may call the slop-workers?—Certainly.

448. They get a higher class of work?—A much higher class; they would not take slop-work.

449. And possibly therefore do not cut the market

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Mr. HOWARTH.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

market much?—Possibly not, but they are always apt to.

450. We have had a suggestion before us as to licensing either the worker or the home, the object being to ensure that the place in which the work was done was, at any rate, somewhat suitable and cleanly. What would you say as to that?—That there are great difficulties in the way; it would demand a great increase of the inspection staff both locally and from the Home Office. That would be very difficult to carry out. Besides I do not know that I want slop-workers who are working under bad conditions and pay licensed at all to do the work.

451. Broadly, I gather from that remark your view would be that it is better that this cheap class of work done under unsatisfactory conditions should be stamped out and be driven into the factories?—That is what I think, certainly.

Mr. Trevelyan.

452. The Chairman referred to a very bad case of long work and low pay; I take it that your point with regard to that is that the work, whether efficient or inefficient, had better not be done under those terms?—Certainly.

453. And if efficient, the worker would get higher wages under the Wages Board, and if he was inefficient he would be driven out of work altogether, as you think to his eventual benefit?—Certainly.

Chairman.

454. The wage might be a good wage?—It might be, but then the worker is inefficient.

455. The efficient worker would earn an adequate wage, and there would be no alteration by the Wages Board at all?—I do not say adequate, but higher.

456. This was an altogether incompetent worker?—We have no evidence to show that she was an altogether incompetent worker.

Mr. Trevelyan.

457. Your point is, I understand, that under the Wages Board it would be impossible for a person to work all those hours and only get that amount?—Absolutely impossible.

458. They would be prevented from working at all if they were inefficient, because they would have to stop at a certain hour?—Certainly.

459. Do you see any objection to a Wages Board being allowed to regulate hours as well as wages?—The great difficulty of carrying it out in practice.

460. Implying inspection?—Yes.

461. You dwelt a good deal on the imperfection of the lists of out-workers in West Ham; if the matter were left to the Factory Inspectors and the lists had to be supplied to the Factory Inspectors, and there were an increase of the factory staff, do you see any great difficulty in enforcing correct lists?—I think the lists have to be supplied to the Factory Inspectors when they want them now, but they have not time to go and visit at all regularly. It would be much better to do it through the sanitary authority.

462. How do you think that the sanitary authority can be kept up to the mark? Have

Mr. Trevelyan—continued.

they enough of an impulse to do it in those cases?

—They have been kept up to the mark sometimes by Home Office circulars, which remind them of their duties, which some of them have altogether forgotten. Perhaps if the Factory Inspectors asked more for the lists and made a few visits, they might find out how imperfect the lists were, and remonstrate with the sanitary authority. At the present moment the lists may never be wanted.

463. You think it would be possible to make the lists more accurate by having some kind of certificate or licence given to the out-workers? Do you see any objection to the registering of the out-worker by that certificate or licence before he or she is allowed to work?—It would have to be a particular licence, not a general licence to out-workers.

464. A particular licence for each worker, that is what I mean?—Yes. Do you mean a general licence to work at any kind of home-work?

465. Yes. You think it ought to be for some particular work?—I am afraid I have not many views on the licensing of actual workers, but it certainly might be bound up with the Wages Boards.

466. Do you think you could enforce an improvement in the wages earned by the home-workers unless you had some kind of lists and registration of workers which you could really rely upon?—You must have the lists as perfect as possible in order to enforce anything under the Wages Board. That is the first thing necessary, it seems to me.

467. Do you not think that the simplest way of arriving at that is to require every worker to be registered and have a licence?—Under certain Orders they have got to be registered now; their names and addresses have to be supplied to the Sanitary Authority.

468. By the employer?—Yes.

469. And the only security is the employer's word at the present moment?—Certainly.

470. It is not in any way checked by the out-worker admitting himself to be an out-worker?—No.

471. From that side there is absolutely no check at the present moment?—No.

472. Nor is there any check at all when the work is given out; the employer might be giving out to twice as many out-workers as he has given in names to the authority?—Certainly.

473. Would it not be possible to check that by requiring that no work should be given out except to licensed workers, and a list of licences kept by the employer; would not the licensing effectively check any incorrectness in the lists?—It might help, certainly.

474. Have you any other suggestion as to the way in which the list of out-workers could be made effective?—It can be made effective even now if the sanitary authority visit all the out-workers on the list, once they find out the imperfections, and write to the employer saying, "Why do you send in an imperfect list?" that is to say, take more trouble.

475. Would not that require that every house in the whole district should be visited in order to ask whether work had been given out from such

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[Continued.]

Mr. Trevelyan—continued.

such and such a factory?—You mean referring to the people not on the list given by the employer?

476. Yes?—I think, probably, if the employer knew that the lists were going to be verified, it would tend to make him put his out-workers on it.

477. I want to ask you one other question on one other difficulty with regard to the Wages Boards; it has been suggested that in a good many trades the workers would not be able to provide representatives for the Boards—that they would not know how to elect or select representatives for themselves?—There is always a difficulty among unskilled and casual labourers.

478. Have you any view with regard to the way in which the representatives of the workers could be elected or chosen?—It is conceivable that some outside Association might help them to form a Trade Union.

479. And you think that in almost all trades they could find representatives in that way?—I think so.

Mr. Arthur Dewar.

480. Do I understand you to say that you prefer the minimum Wage Board to the licensing system?—Certainly.

481. Have you any experience of the working of it in other countries?—No, I am afraid I have not.

482. Have you considered it maturely? Is your opinion of this particular matter variable, or is it mature? I know your experience on other matters, but, with regard to the cure, do you think your opinion is variable or not?—I want it tried as an experiment.

483. I thought so; so that you are not quite sure of it yourself in the meantime?—I think it is extraordinarily difficult for anybody to be sure of it.

484. I wanted to know whether you had considered it so maturely, as to be able to offer a confident opinion, and I understand you cannot—most people cannot, of course?—I should be sorry to say that anybody could have a confident opinion upon it.

485. What is in your mind when you suggest the experiment? Do you mean a small local experiment, or confined to a few trades?—Either; the way legislation experiments is rather to confine it to one trade all over the country.

486. Perhaps, one trade to begin with, to see how it works out?—Yes.

487. Do you think that the experience of Australia and New Zealand would have a bearing in this country? Suppose, for example, that they had been successful there, would that, in your opinion, obviate the necessity for the experiment you suggest?—It is extremely difficult to say, because I do not know the conditions there.

488. Did I understand you correctly to say that the purpose you wish to attain in instituting the minimum Wage Board is ultimately to drive the people into the factories?—Some, certainly.

489. Would not the licensing system also tend to drive them into the factories?—Do you mean licensing the premises, or licensing the workers?

D

Mr. Arthur Dewar—continued.

490. Either; would not that tend to drive them into the factories?—Certainly it would tend in that direction.

491. Do you think it would, perhaps, tend to drive them even more rapidly into the factories than the Wage Board would?—No. I think anything affecting wages is more likely to drive them into the factories.

492. Have you considered what the effect of the minimum wage would be, firstly, on the worker, and secondly, on the employer? What would happen to the worker, for example, who was not able to earn the minimum wage?—In a particular trade, you mean?

493. Yes—take a person who is earning something now, and there comes along a Wage Board, she would earn nothing; what do you propose for her?—I am afraid I do not propose anything; I think that is a question that might legitimately be left to the Wage Board to decide when it was erected.

494. Do you not think that is the very first thing we ought to make up our minds upon—what is to happen to the derelict whom we have by our legislation made derelict?—No; I do not think it is.

495. You would leave that to chance?—Certainly, it would work exactly in the same way as the regulation of casual labour.

496. What do you think the effect would probably be on the employer? Would it raise the price of goods?—I doubt it; it is very difficult to speak of that, but I should doubt if it would. I think the first thing it would do, as I said, would be to unify the rates, possibly eliminating a middle-man or two.

497. Should we not have the employer in this country saying, "If you prevent me having sweated wages here, you must not permit goods created by sweated wages coming from Germany"?—Undoubtedly it would make a great many employers say that.

498. How would you answer the man who said that to you, when you instituted the Wages Board?—I am afraid the Fiscal Question is rather a large one.

499. You talked about the exceptional case of 8d. being paid for 18 hours' work, but in some of the lower grades of home-work, surely that is not quite so exceptional, and my recollection is that we have had evidence here of a woman who with her family worked at carding hooks and eyes for a whole week, as long as they were fit to work, day and night, and all she made was 2s. 5d. at the end of the week: is not that common enough?—I said this was an exceptional case in West Ham; it happens to be the most startling thing in the book, which has already been referred to, and it was therefore seized upon; but I cannot say that there are not other things comparable to it in Birmingham, for instance. We know that there are.

Mr. Fell.

500. I have only two questions to ask you. You say that the Wages Board would unify the rates paid to the home-workers; would it not possibly

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Mr. Fell—continued.

possibly level them down as well as up?—Possibly; I said “unify.”

501. They might fix on the middle price paid, so that some might be worse off?—Possibly.

502. With regard to this man who worked these long hours, would the Wages Board affect him in any way?—He would not get work under it, probably.

503. Why not? It would only fix the price at which wash leathers were to be made—6d. a dozen, or a hundred, or whatever it might be; how would that affect him?—It would probably be brought to the notice of the employer that these things were happening, and he would give the work to somebody else.

504. Why? If this man does it just as well, taking 24 hours to do it, and earning 8d., and another man could earn his 8d. in a quarter of the time, it does not make any difference to the employer?—I do not say it would necessarily, but I think it would tend to. He would have more knowledge of who his workers were.

505. Unless you limit the hours of his working, I cannot see that the Wages Board would have anything to do with it?—I think, certainly, it would have the effect of giving the employer more knowledge of the people who were working for him, because questions would be discussed at the Wages Board, and the employer would be there; if a case was brought up like this, he would say, even to avoid scandal, “I will not employ that person any more.” I think it might reasonably be expected to work out like that.

506. The Wages Board would have nothing to do with fixing the rates of wages people earned?—No.

507. Only the price of the articles?—Yes, but still instances would be talked about at the Wages Board, and that is one of the things it is there for.

Mr. Ernest Lamb.

508. *Apropos* of the suggested remedy of licensing persons and premises in the sense in which out-workers are at present registered, do you think that such registration has been beneficial to those out-workers who have been included?—Certainly, because at any rate some of them have had their premises visited, and are working under healthier conditions than they otherwise would have been. The public has been protected to some extent.

509. So that although you prefer to see a trial of a Wages Board rather than the licensing remedy, you would be prepared to admit that in so far as we have had an experiment in licensing it has been beneficial?—It has certainly.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

510. Is it your experience that the premises where clothing is made are very often so insanitary that they are a danger to public health?—I am afraid I cannot answer that question.

511. You have not heard from your assistants whether the state of the rooms where the clothing work is carried on is very bad or not?—We had a good deal of evidence of what is called domestic cleanliness, but not necessarily the drains, and so on.

Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

512. So that, so far as your experience goes, that is not a very serious matter in West Ham?—I do not think so. It depends entirely upon the public health authority, of course.

513. Would you say that during the last five years, for instance, the wages of home-workers have remained fairly constant; have they gone up or down, or have they varied so constantly that you cannot give any general reply?—We have several instances of people being paid less now than they were five, 10 or 15 years ago; but I should not like to make a general statement on a period of five years. If you take 10 years, I would certainly say they had decreased.

514. Would you say that foreign competition, especially in the cheap clothing trade, is a factor in that result?—I think the largest factor has been the machinery in factories.

515. In other words, the foreign competition has not contributed to that result in West Ham, so far as you are aware?—I have not heard of its doing so.

516. I gather that you state that the rates paid for home-work and for factory work of the same character are very different; but I did not gather quite clearly whether in your opinion different rates were given for the same work by different employers?—I did not mean to say the first; I said I had very little evidence as to the difference of rates in and out of the factory. What we have evidence upon is different rates of pay for the same work.

517. Very considerable differences?—Very considerable.

Mr. Bridgeman.

518. About these lists which you said were so unsatisfactory: you said that some people on the lists supplied were dead, and some were not doing home-work at all. Have you had any evidence of people doing home-work who were not on the lists?—Certainly; we had 67 cases supplied to us by our own visitors of people who were not on the lists, and still were doing home-work; and if one had taken more trouble there might have been more cases.

519. Then you think that the 1,800 returned as doing home-work might be very largely increased if proper investigation were made?—It might be increased, certainly.

520. To what extent, if any?—I am afraid I cannot tell you.

Mr. Parkes.

521. What is your idea of the general remedy for this state of things among out-workers? Have you formed any definite idea as to what you think would be the remedy?—I am afraid I have not formed any idea of the general remedy.

522. You have no preference either for one remedy or the other, either Wages Boards or registration?—I would prefer the Wages Board as an experiment.

523. Have you thought how it could be worked out? Have you thought over the difficulties of working a Wages Board in connection with these people?—A certain number of the difficulties certainly, but I think the Wages Board would settle those as it went along to some extent.

524. How

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Mr. Parkes—continued.

524. How would you adapt a Wages Board for the efficient and the inefficient out-workers, at the same time, which would meet both cases?—I think that, again, would have to be left to them, because they would have to make inquiry into trades, and to get evidence, and they would then be able to decide on what methods to adopt.

525. Would not the Wages Board have the effect of crushing out the inefficient people?—To some extent it might.

526. Do you think it is desirable to force a great number of these home-workers into the factories?—A certain number, certainly.

527. Do you think it is possible to force them into factories?—I think so.

528. Married women and children?—Some married women, certainly.

529. Women who have to look after their homes, and to do domestic work?—Naturally, the people who would be forced in would be married women, who had few of such responsibilities.

530. Do you think it would be really possible to make married women give up their home duties to go into factories?—Certainly I do, because so many hundreds of them are in factories now.

531. Would you not deprive a great many of them of their work altogether, if you tried to force them into factories?—A certain number, certainly.

Mr. Hugh Law.

532. I think Mr. Trevelyan put to you that the Licensing and Wages Boards were not necessarily contradictory proposals, and that they could work together. I should like to ask you, assuming Wages Boards to be in operation, would you prefer the system of licensing, to which, of course, the conditions of sanitation and so forth would be attached, which might be reduced to certain areas; or would you prefer a system of compulsory registration of names and addresses, such as has been suggested by one of our witnesses, without conditions, merely for the purpose of checking the lists which you have said the employers are compelled to keep?—I would prefer compulsory registration, because I think it is a matter for the Public Health and the Housing Authority to see that the premises, whether home-work is or is not done in them, are sanitary and structurally sound.

533. That means, if it is to be operative, putting a certain number of people out of work, whereas the other would not?—Yes.

Mr. Massie.

534. Just one question to supplement Mr. Bridgeman's questions: for all you know, in consequence of the inaccuracy of the lists, there may be a host of home-workers in West Ham whose names the employers are unwilling to return?—There may be.

535. You spoke of the verification of the lists, and, of course, it is quite easy to verify the names that are in the lists; but have you any idea how it would be possible to discover the host that may exist?—I think I answered that question

Mr. Massie—continued.

before; I said, if the lists were verified, and the employers knew they were verified, it would act as an incentive to them to send correct lists.

536. A verification to be worth much would have to be the result of a visit from house to house almost, would it not?—Not necessarily; I think it would work the other way.

537. But you think the verification would involve a considerable increase in the number of Officers for verification purposes?—Certainly, but then it is not only for verification purposes, it might be bound up with the sanitary inspecting, for instance.

538. Assistant Medical Officers and Inspectors also?—Health visitors chiefly.

Mr. Arthur Richardson.

539. I should like to put one question with reference to a question put by Mr. Dewar, in relation to this woman who earned 8d. in 18 hours: is your suggestion that Wages Boards would squeeze that type of worker out altogether?—They might.

540. How?—As I said before, her case would probably be one which was instanced at a meeting of the Wages Board, and the employer responsible would probably say that he would not employ a person who could not earn more in such long hours.

541. But how should he know, seeing they are paid by piece, and not by the hour?—The case, as stated, might be brought up to the Wages Board.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

542. Did you have evidence of many cases being in receipt of parish relief?—Only 2·5 per cent.—very few.

543. I understand the gist of your evidence to be that the competition of casual workers reduces the wages of those dependent on the work for their living; do you confirm that?—You mean the competition of people who are working for pocket-money, practically?

544. Yes?—No; I am afraid I suggested that that might be so, but I have not much evidence to show that it is.

545. Is it not consequential upon additional people coming into the trade, that that must reduce wages?—Economically it certainly is.

546. If a Wages Board were established, and had the power to prevent employers employing people who earned less than a certain fixed minimum per week, would not that have the effect of keeping out this casual labour?—It might help.

547. I am now speaking of the employers paying a minimum wage per week, including piece-work. Would that have the effect, in your opinion, of keeping out casual labour?—It would certainly have the effect of keeping out the inefficient ones.

548. Can you give the Committee the name and address of the woman who earned 8d. for 18 hours' work?—I cannot for the moment, but I might find it out. All these notes were upon the schedules, cards, and whether these cards are still in existence or not I do not know.

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Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

549. Such an exceptional case (I take it myself as being an exceptional case) must have made an impression on the visitor, and I think if you can furnish the Clerk with the name and address of the woman, and the name and address of the employer, it would give an opportunity of seeing if there were not some exceptional circumstances in the case?—I am afraid that is rather an unwise thing to do, because all these particulars are confidential.

Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

550. But there is no confidential evidence before this Committee: as to all evidence that is put in, there is no such thing as confidential?—I am afraid I cannot give you the name of the person if it has to be published.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Mr. GEORGE SHANN, M.A., F.R.E.S., called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

551. Whom do you represent in giving evidence before this Committee?—I represent the National Anti-Sweating League, but I am giving evidence more directly on Birmingham.

552. You have devoted a great deal of attention to this question in various ways?—Yes, I think so.

553. You have written upon it, and you have worked in connection with Mr. Cadbury in Birmingham, investigating the conditions there, have you not?—Yes; I also investigated the conditions in Glasgow, and I worked in a factory from the time I was 10 until I was 20 years old; so that I have been in touch with working-class conditions all my life.

554. You had something to do with the organisation of the Exhibition of Sweated Industries?—Yes, I had a great deal to do with that; I served on the initial committee, and while the Exhibition was running, I acted as Managing Secretary and Organiser for the Exhibition.

555. On the summary you have given me there is a suggestion of information that you can give us which we should be glad to have, as to a comparison between the possible earnings for the same kind of work where it is done by machinery and wages done at home by hand?—Yes.

556. You can give us some information, perhaps, first of all, about the hook and eye industry in Birmingham, about which we have had some evidence?—Yes, I can give you a great deal of information upon that. I have got here facts and figures which are based on a large number of instances which I have personally visited during an investigation extending over three or four years.

557. Can you tell us not so much about individual cases as fair average cases representing the payment and the amount that can be earned by a worker at home and by a worker in a factory at similar work; say, carding of hooks and eyes?—In regard to the carding of hooks and eyes, that is largely a home industry; there is practically no competition in similar work between home-work and factory; but recently, largely, I think, owing to the attention that has been paid to this matter, machinery is being introduced. The machinery, however, works on quite different rates, and an employer in Birmingham stated recently that the worker working on the machines can earn from 6s. to 14s. per week.

Chairman—continued.

558. What kind of a worker would that be—a girl?—A girl or a woman would earn from 6s. to 14s. a week on the machine. That was stated publicly by an employer in Birmingham. In regard to the hours of the women doing the work by hand, competing with machinery, we got out a large number of examples, and then we made an average of 56 women, just taking typical cases—that is to say, we took them as they came, not selecting in any way, and we found that the average earnings of these 56 women, some of whom worked very long hours indeed, worked out at 3s. 3½d. per week.

559. They worked at home?—They worked at home.

560. Were these married women?—Married women and widows almost exclusively. It was quite an exception to find a single girl working; if a single girl was working at this trade, it would be a girl who was temporarily out of work.

561. How long hours a day would they work, do you think?—The hours would vary, but, if you will take the first example, you have got on page 2 of my *precis*, one worker earned from 5s. to 6s. per week, working from 6 to 11 hours per day.

562. How many hours per week would you say?—I should say that the average hours these women work are from 40 to 60 hours a week, and that a woman working that number of hours would earn from 2s. to 6s. at the outside on the average.

563. Roughly, from about ½d. to 1d. per hour?—Something like that; it was quite the exception for us in all our inquiries to find a worker getting, say, 6s., and if a worker was getting 6s., even with very long hours, it would be in a case where more than one person was employed—that is to say, the children would be employed.

564. Were there any persons working at this trade, who were earning their livelihood entirely in this way?—There were people who did not work in any other way, if that is what you mean; but in no case would these wages keep a person. We found a large amount of poor relief and charity amongst these people; for example, we found a fairly large percentage of widows working in this trade, and then, again, in the case of married women, it was work done to supplement the earnings of the husband. I think you will find further on that we made an analysis, and I did that particularly in view of some

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

of some questions asked by Members of the Committee.

565. Have you many persons depending for their livelihood entirely upon this work?—In the case of widows, yes.

566. How can they live on from 2s. to 4s. per week?—The answer is that they do not; they are subsidised by charity and Poor Law relief; in practically every case of a widow, we found that she was receiving relief.

567. When you come to persons working at home—wives—would you suggest that they were really devoting the whole of their available time in the week to this work, or doing it at casual opportunities during the day?—I should say, apart from preparing meals for the children, they would devote the whole of their available time. We got women to keep count for us, and we found that the married women worked from 40 to 60 hours per week.

568. You actually tell us that in Birmingham now there are adult women regularly working at rates which do not yield more than about $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to $\frac{3}{4}$ d. an hour?—Yes, I say that, on these rates if they work out at that amount.

569. With regard to the box-making trade, there is a considerable amount of that in Birmingham, is there not?—Yes.

570. You have given me a table here indicating the comparison between machine work and hand work?—Yes.

571. Would you just explain that to the Committee?—That table I got prepared by an expert, who prepared the costs and piece-rates for a very large firm in the neighbourhood of Birmingham. He has had a large amount of experience in the trade, including experience which brings him directly into a position to make such a contrast. This is a comparative table, drawn up on data which he has obtained in his experience, and also based on experiments which were made by the large firm already mentioned. As a result of his experiments he drew up this comparative table which you have got there.

572. Can you state the figures on this table so that the Committee can understand them without the table being put before them, or had I better ask you questions?—I think you had better ask questions upon it.

573. You have a column here in which you give the hours per gross; that is, I presume, occupied in making the boxes?—Exactly, those are the actual figures.

574. These figures, I understand, you work out thus: that an out-worker, working by hand, would be 10 hours in making this sample gross?—Exactly.

575. Where machinery assisted the work in an ordinary factory, that work would be done in $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours?—Yes.

576. Where the work was done in an up-to-date factory, with the best machinery, the work would be done in an hour and a fifth?—Exactly.

577. That is to say, the same work is done in 10 hours by hand at home, in $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours in a factory where there is some machinery, and in $1\frac{1}{5}$ hours where it is done by first-class up-to-date machinery?—Exactly.

Chairman—continued.

578. Then the next column you have here is: "Hours of Work per week—Actual figures"?—Yes.

579. Is that the number of hours that the workers worked?—This table is based on a particular box, and the hours in the third column of that table are the hours that were given in regard to this particular worker.

580. They worked these hours per week?—Yes.

581. When you refer to the best-equipped machine factories, does one person work at each machine?—In some cases; but in some cases there are two dependent largely upon the machine. For instance, the cutting machine in a box-making factory would sometimes be worked by two persons, and it depends altogether on the kind of machine.

582. But allowance has been made for that in these figures?—Yes. For instance, there are some boxes which are made altogether on the machine, and I have a specimen here (*exhibiting the same*). That is made altogether on the machine, with the exception of putting the label inside.

583. Coming to the hours you have given me here, these are the actual number of hours that the persons worked?—Yes.

584. Out-workers 85 hours per week?—Yes, that was in the case of this particular out-worker.

585. In the factories where there is ordinary machinery, but not up-to-date, 54 hours per week?—Yes, those are the usual hours in Birmingham, roughly.

586. In a first-class factory, thoroughly up-to-date, 41 hours per week?—Yes, those are the rates in the large firm I have already mentioned at the present time.

Mr. Hugh Law.

587. Are these hours based on the time taken by an average moderately-skilled worker?—Yes. In connection with the entry in the table of 41 hours' work in the factory, the point there is that the actual hours a person would have to work by hand home-work to do exactly the same work would be 85. This is an economic table, so as to get an economic comparison of cost, and I do not mean here that a person actually worked 85 hours in the week, so that there is a distinction there.

Chairman.

588. The heading on the top of this column is: "Actual Figures." You do not mean actual?—Not necessarily that this particular worker would work 85 hours every week. As far as the up-to-date factory is concerned, the worker there works 41 hours for the purposes of this comparison, and the machinery-assisted worker in an ordinary factory works 54 hours to produce exactly the same work, while the hand-worker would need to work 85 hours.

589. Upon that I must take you back to your previous figures. Your previous column says that it would take 10 hours for a hand-worker to do what in an up-to-date factory would be done in an hour and a fifth?—Yes.

590. But

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

590. But the comparison between 10 and 1½ is very different from that between 85 and 41?—Yes, of course it is.

591. How do these figures fit?—The point is that 85 was the number of hours worked by this particular home-worker. As a matter of fact, this home-worker we are dealing with here, upon which the comparison was made, was a home-worker in the "Daily News" Sweated Industries Exhibition, and the 85 was the number of hours given by that worker as the amount of work she did to obtain the comparative wages given here.

592. Then I am afraid we cannot attach any value to this table?—This table was accepted and discussed by the Trades Paper.

593. Then I am afraid they have not sufficiently investigated the figures; they clearly will not bear examination?—It seems to me, they do.

594. I do not wish to put the table upon one side without giving you any opportunity you like to explain it; but going back, as I have the figures, they are thus stated—that the actual hours worked to produce a gross of boxes were: Out-worker, 10 hours; ordinary factory, 4½ hours; up-to-date factory, 1½ hours; then, in the next column the actual hours worked per week are given as 85 by the out-worker, 54 in the ordinary factory, and 41 in the up-to-date one. Then you put it to us that those hours represent the production of the same amount of work as is produced by these other quite different hours?—No; the point of the argument is this. This particular worker in the Exhibition, on the basis of whose earnings this table was made, informed us that she worked 85 hours per week in order to get wages that would compare as 50 to 100.

595. Now we come to the next column, and in the next column you give what is headed: "Wages—Comparative Figures"—and this is given in this way: that taking the wages earned in an up-to-date factory as 100, the wages earned in the ordinary factory would be 75, and the wages earned by the out-worker would be 50?—Yes, but in each case, of course, you get the comparison of hours taken in relation with the last column as well.

596. You mean, that in order to earn the wages represented by the figure 100, in an up-to-date factory, they would work 41 hours?—Yes.

597. To earn the wages represented by the comparative figure of 75, the worker would have to work 54 hours?—Exactly.

598. And to earn the wages represented by the comparative figure of 50, the worker would have to work 85 hours?—Exactly; that is the point of the argument.

599. Am I really to take it, then, that these last two columns, the figures of which I have been giving to you, have no connection whatever with the other figures of the 10 hours and 1½ hours per gross?—They have got a connection in this way: First of all, the first figure shows the comparative rate—2 to 1, which from the economic point is very valuable in a factory, because the point of the argument comes in there—that the home-worker competing with machinery can only compete by working at very much lower wages.

Chairman—continued.

600. That broad statement is undoubtedly true, but the figures do not seem quite to harmonise with one another?—The first and the last column in the table deal with percentages.

601. I have not asked you anything about the first column; I have taken the last three, and they do not seem to fit?—They fit in this way, if you put it like this: In the second column an out-worker working by hand would work 10 hours to do the same work that the machinery-assisted worker would do in 4½ hours, or the up-to-date machine-worker in the best factory would do in 1½ hours; so that in view of these comparative hours of work, it is shown that the out-worker has got to work very long hours, and the result is that at the end of the week her wages compared to the worker in the best factory are only 50 per cent.

* Mr. Trevelyan.

The only way in which the two seem to me to fit is that the out-worker is paid more per gross than the factory worker.

Chairman.

602. They seem to be paid quite double the price, and I cannot imagine that that is so?—No. But the point is this, that even working at the same rate per gross, the factory worker would cover very many more boxes with the aid of the machinery. The second column brings that out.

603. Allow me to put it to you in another way: Broadly speaking, the out-worker works double the number of hours that the worker in the up-to-date factory does—85 as compared to 41?—Yes.

604. She earns half the wage?—Yes, although she has worked double the number of hours.

605. That gives you the comparative figure of 4 to 1?—Yes.

606. When you come to the number of hours worked to produce the work, the comparative figure is 10 to 1½: therefore, the out-worker must, according to these figures, be paid at least double the rate per gross, as compared with the worker in the factory?—I am afraid I do not follow your difficulty. At any rate, the general line of argument is: If you leave the table out, and do not take that as evidence, that an out-worker, competing with machinery, has to compete by accepting a very low piece rate of wages, which prevents that worker earning a living wage, except by working very long hours indeed.

607. I quite understand that general point, and, if I may say so, I think that would be sound—that the home-worker earns in the week a lower total wage than the worker in the factory, because he loses the advantage of the up-to-date machinery?—Exactly; that is the point.

608. I am afraid we must pass the figures by. As to the reasons for the home-work, you have a table here which indicates the reasons why the women are engaged in this work?—Yes.

609. Will you just give the figures of that table?—For the purposes of this evidence, we analysed 174 cases, where we had asked this question definitely of the women engaged in home-work—what was the reason why they actually engaged

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

engaged in home-work—and the answer was, in 89 out of the 174 cases, that is 82·64 per cent., that they worked because of the low wage of the husband.

610. According to my table, you are taking the wrong figures, because the husband's low wage was the cause in 51·15 per cent. of the cases?—It is 51·15 per cent. I have stated the wrong percentage by a clerical error.

611. I do not think you had better deal further with these tables at all?—If you do not accept the table; there again the general evidence I have to give on that point is that we found a large percentage of the workers who were engaged in home-work, working definitely because the husband's low wage was not sufficient to keep the family.

612. In connection with this, you told us that you were the Organising Secretary of the "Daily News" Sweated Industries Exhibition?—Yes.

613. A great many facts and figures were given there?—Yes.

614. May we take it that they were drawn up and got together on these lines?—The figures that were presented to the "Daily News" Sweated Industries Exhibition were presented on the authority in each case of the expert who presented them to the Committee.

615. And on what authority are you presenting these to us now?—These are on my own investigations, and the analysis of my own work in Birmingham in every case. I am not speaking at second-hand at all.

616. With regard to remedies, with your experience in these matters, what would be your view as to licensing? Do you see any very serious difficulty in licensing the worker or the home?—In regard to the question of licensing, I should place a remedy like that second to a remedy like Wages Boards, and my reason for doing that is that, in regard to the sanitary conditions of the workers' homes, and the question of long hours, I take them as secondary things to the question of wages.

617. Take it by itself first, if you do not mind; do you see any serious difficulty or objection to licensing the worker or the place?—I do not see any serious difficulty in that respect, providing, of course, that the authority was made the local authority. I think it is an advantage, seeing that the local authority are responsible for sanitary inspection generally, that any legislation dealing with that point should be placed under the local authority.

618. Do you think that licensing would facilitate the work of the local sanitary authority, which they now do, admittedly somewhat imperfectly, in the inspection of these homes?—Yes, because in regard to that, my opinion is that sanitary science is becoming much more prominent in the activities of local bodies; for instance, in Birmingham we found that the sanitary authorities were paying attention to the sanitary condition of houses in which we found home-workers, and we really found some women working in condemned houses.

619. Would the licensing of the workers enable the local authorities to keep their lists more up to date, and more accurately than they are

Chairman—continued.

able to do now, when they have to rely on the employer for the list?—I should think, on the whole, that would be a result.

620. But mainly you would suggest Wages Boards as a remedy?—Yes.

621. With regard to that, and coming back, not to the detailed figures but to the general principle you have enunciated that the wages earned at home are low because they are competing with machinery, which is practically another way of saying that the rate of payment per article or per gross, that might yield a substantial wage in a factory, means a very poor payment at home, what would you suggest that the Wages Board would do? Would it raise that payment at home beyond the piece-rate that is paid in the factory?—No, I do not think it could; it seems to me that would be altogether an economic question.

622. What would it do?—In certain cases it might raise rates generally, and so far as it did that it would benefit the home-worker.

623. You mean that the home-worker must look for an improvement arising from an increase in the factory wage as well?—Exactly, otherwise it would be altogether an economic question, and would at once kill home-work if you placed the rate of home-work higher than the rate in the factory.

624. If the rates in the factory are fairly average satisfactory rates it would be difficult to raise them?—Exactly, in some instances.

625. And therefore the Wages Boards would accomplish nothing?—That is so where already the rates in the factory are satisfactory; but even there I should be prepared to argue that there are a large number of instances where the rates in the factory are not satisfactory. For instance, in box-making I have evidence here, which I can substantiate by other evidence, of one particular worker who earned in this up-to-date factory a wage of 18s. 6d. to 22s. 6d. per week; while in another factory on time-work she earned 10s. per week; and in another factory on piece-work doing pretty much the same sort of work she only got 7s. per week; so that my opinion would be that there is room, even in a trade like box-making, to raise the rates in the worst paid factories to the standard of the highest paid factories, or at any rate on those lines.

626. You think the wages would have to be raised not only at home but in the factories?—I think so, decidedly, in a large number of instances.

627. There would be, I assume, an opening in most trades for the levelling up of the poorest rate of payment to something approaching the best?—I think so.

628. That we might expect to be the result of Wages Boards?—I think so. My experience in regard to women's work and wages in general is that there are arbitrary rates of payment, and it does not follow that because the worker is doing the same work in a different factory she will get the same wage. In fact, our evidence pointed in the other direction, and we find generally in Birmingham with regard to all women's trades that there is this arbitrary pay-
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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

ment of differing rates in different factories, for, as far as we could see, exactly the same work.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

629. With regard to carding hooks and eyes, the Factory Inspector at Birmingham, as far as I recollect, informed this Committee that there was no carding of hooks and eyes by machinery. You are acquainted with definite instances of that taking place?—Yes, in a factory owned by a man named Newey. I have interviewed Mr. Newey himself on this point, and he also wrote a letter to the papers in Birmingham as the result of the evidence of Mr. Graves, and that is the public statement that I am referring to now.

630. Did you find any considerable proportion of these workers receiving parish relief?—We did find a considerable proportion; I have not got any statistics upon that, but I state that as the result of my experience, and in these instances I have given in my statement you will find reference is made to that.

631. In your opinion is it a large proportion who receive parish relief?—In the case of widows it is a large proportion who receive parish relief.

632. My question was leading up to this: in your opinion would there be any hardship if these workers were to receive their total income from relief, and not to compete with other workers?—On the whole I think I should not hesitate to enforce legislation, even if it led to that; because my point there would be that already it is largely a question of charity and Poor Law relief, and that the evil of the present system, especially in regard to the children, is so great that the benefit of the greatest number would come in; and on these lines I should say it would be allowable to do what you suggest.

633. In your opinion would it be a correct statement to say that at the present moment Poor Law relief is supplementing wages for the benefit of the employer?—I certainly say that my experience in other lines would bear that out.

634. When you state the number of hours that women work at this carding, how do you arrive at that number of hours?—By specifically asking the question. I visited some workers as many as 20 times and we specifically asked them questions; we visited them at different times and we found that the one corroborated the other, and then in addition we inquired of people likely to know them—visitors of various sorts—although ultimately, of course, we rest on the authority of the worker.

635. Do you think that the woman worker would be likely to tell you when she went for a gossip with her neighbour?—No, I do not suppose she would.

636. With regard to the box trade you compared the figures of the hand-workers with machinery, but as a matter of fact is there any box-cutting done outside the factory? Does the home-worker cut boxes?—No; they are cut when she receives them.

637. They are made up after they have been cut in the factory? You confirm that?—Yes.

638. And still you compare the hand-worker

Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

with the machines?—Yes, because the hand-worker in the case of a box like this (*exhibiting the box already shown*) would do the finishing by hand, whereas an up-to-date machine covers this box; the machine makes it completely and the worker simply puts it on a central pedestal and it is made right throughout by machinery.

639. Still, when you are comparing machinery in the box-cutting trade with hand-work it is hardly legitimate to compare the time taken by machinery in cutting when the hand-worker does not do it?—I was not comparing merely box-cutting; I was comparing box-making.

640. With regard to your evidence you have told us you were Organising Secretary to the Sweated Industries Exhibition?—Yes.

641. Is it not the fact that a manufacturer in the mantle trade offered a hundred pounds to any charity you liked to mention if you could substantiate your statements with regard to the mantle-making?—It was never brought to my notice if that statement was made. I never heard of it before this occasion.

Mr. Arthur Richardson.

642. Taking these 174 cases of out-workers, 89 of whom were working as [the result of the casual labour of their husbands, in view of the fact that these men would lose their vote by the receipt of parish relief if the whole of the home industry were driven out, would you suggest that all home-work should be done away with?—Yes, I certainly would suggest that legislation on those lines should be carried out. My idea is that even a Wages Board, so far as it dealt merely with rates, might not immediately come to that end, but even if it did I should say yes, because the present evil is so great. It seems to me that an evil like that should be remedied on other lines, and probably the extension of Wages Boards, for example, would affect the wages of the husband.

Mr. Massie.

643. You said you found a great deal of poor relief being given to the out-workers; you have no figure, I suppose, in your mind as to the proportion of that?—No, I am afraid I should not be prepared to give statistics upon that.

644. We had evidence given before you came in that in West Ham the figure was 2.5 per cent., but you have no such figure?—No.

645. You could not tell us whether there was more poor relief than charity or more charity than poor relief?—I think on the whole I should say there is more charity than poor relief, because almost all home-workers are affected by charity at some point.

646. Still, that is only an impression?—Yes; I could not give figures, of course.

Mr. Parkes.

647. Could you tell me what you think is the proportion of the carding of hooks and eyes by machinery in Birmingham?—No, I could not give you that proportion except in this way, that it is a very small proportion at the present time that is done by machinery. The machines have

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Mr. Parkes—continued.

have been quite recently introduced and as yet as far as I know they are only used in this one factory.

648. What would you say would be the difference in the earnings of the persons working by machinery and those who work at home?—On that, of course, I have only the authority of the public statement of Mr. Newey, the particular manufacturer, and he stated, from 6s. to 14s. for a factory worker.

649. Against what?—Against the average of 3s. 3½d. which we have got.

650. Have the wages of the out-workers been reduced of late years?—I could not get very definite information upon that, but I was informed by some of the hook and eye carders that wages had been reduced. In certain other trades wages, undoubtedly, have been reduced.

651. What do you think is the cause of their being reduced?—I should say the general competition, and the want of resistance amongst the workers themselves.

652. Competition from where?—The general competition of the market. In regard to hook and eye carding, it is stated that there is foreign competition, but on that I could not speak with any authority. My own opinion is that proper organisation and machine production should be able to meet this foreign competition.

653. Are you not aware that there is foreign competition in this trade?—There is foreign competition in this trade.

654. In Birmingham?—In Birmingham—that is, in the hook and eye carding.

655. Do you know that there is very severe competition in Birmingham in this particular trade?—Yes, there is severe competition.

656. And that is the reason, partly, I suppose, for the reduction in the wages?—Partly; but, on the other hand, in the factory machine production might tend to meet that, and I think it would.

657. How many women in Birmingham do you think are engaged in this out-work?—There, again, I have no definite statistics, but it has been stated publicly by various people (and various estimates have been made) that there are something like 10,000 out-workers employed in Birmingham.

658. In carding?—In hook and eye carding, and button carding, and packeting hooks and eyes, and similar trades.

659. Suppose you had a Wages Board, what would be the standard of price—the standard in the factory, or the standard of capability of doing [the work in the home?—I should certainly say it would have to be the standard in the factory.

660. If the factory had up-to-date machinery, the home-worker would have no chance whatever?—Exactly; I am quite aware of that, and I am arguing on those lines.

661. That would crush out the home-worker?—Yes; and I think that would be a distinct advantage, providing, of course, that the operations did not take place too rapidly.

662. It would be a distinct advantage to crush these people out of the home-work?—From the economic point of view—yes.

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Mr. Parkes—continued.

663. But not with regard to the condition of the worker?—No; it would accentuate the Poor Law difficulty, but it is already a question of Poor Law, you see. My idea there is that the present evil, especially in respect to the children, is so serious, that even if in the long run it meant crushing the work out in certain cases, that would be an advantage.

664. Do you think the Wages Board would solve the difficulty in this matter?—Not altogether; I certainly think it would be a distinct advantage, so far as it raised rates, just in the same way as any other course which tended in that direction.

665. With regard to Cadbury's, do they make all their own boxes, or do they buy boxes?—They make most of them, but not all. In times of pressure, sometimes, they get work done outside, but it is always done under fair conditions; that is to say, they always make inquiries to see that the hours and conditions are fair. There was rather an interesting example, if I may be allowed to give it, of the difference between out-workers and factory workers in this way: A large firm had a contract out for a large number of boxes, and the firm they were dealing with usually made these boxes in the factory, but a consignment came back which were altogether unsatisfactory; inquiries were made, and it was found that these boxes, because of pressure, had been put out to be made by out-workers, and the work was altogether inefficient, so that they noticed it at once.

666. With regard to the comparison of hours, I understood you to say that to make the same number of boxes, you want 10 hours by hand, 4½ hours by partial machinery, and 1½ hours by fully-equipped machinery; that is to do the same work exactly, irrespective of wages?—Exactly.

Mr. Bridgeman.

667. Are you quite sure that that box which you showed us just now was entirely made by machinery?—Yes, I saw it made yesterday. This is made by the latest American up-to-date machinery.

668. And there is no hand-work in it at all?—No, except so far as the worker handles it. It is first of all put in the cutting machine; the cardboard is put in by one worker and another worker takes it out. Then it is transferred to another machine, and the worker takes the cut paper and puts it on a stand, presses it down, the operation takes place, and when it comes out it is like that (*exhibiting the box*); otherwise the workers would have to put the paper on by hand, and so on.

669. Do you think that a great profit is made by the employers out of home-work?—No, I do not. I think, at the same time, it must pay them better from their point of view to put the cheaper work out, because in the box-making trade it is true that it is only the cheaper work that is put out to be made by sweated workers as long as they compete at those low wages with the machinery. There is just the difference to the employer between the expense of providing the

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up-to-date

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Mr. Bridgeman—continued.

up-to-date machinery, and so on, and the rates at which he can get the work done outside.

670. In your opinion, if we had Wages Boards, and they had the effect of raising wages or of driving everybody into factories who can go, how many people now engaged in home-work would go into the factories; what percentage?—I am afraid I am not prepared to give a percentage like that.

671. I do not want an accurate percentage; but would half go?—I am afraid I could not say in regard to that; I think it is pretty certain some would go, but I am not able to form an opinion at the present time on the number.

672. Do you contemplate that the action which you advise would stop home-work altogether?—In some instances it would, not in all.

673. How many people do you think would be thrown out of work altogether by what you propose?—I am afraid I have not any evidence to form an opinion on in that respect.

674. Is it not rather an important factor in making up your mind?—I think it is an important factor, but at the same time I think we could argue on general lines that large numbers of women who at present work at home could go into the factory if the pressure was severe enough.

675. And the rest would have to go on the rates?—One effect, of course, would be to throw some of them on the rates; another indirect economic effect would probably react on the wages of the husband.

676. And all these advantages would come out of the higher price paid for the article, I suppose?—Not necessarily, because you see the point of my argument in regard to the box trade is that the result would be to drive the work into factories, where it would be done by more efficient machinery. My point is that the home-worker is altogether an inefficient worker, and it is only the low rates paid that make her work possible. I do not think it would raise the cost of production; I think in the long run it might lessen it in certain trades. In this case if the boxes are made in an up-to-date factory, assuming for the moment that the operation of the Wages Board is to force work into the better factories, then it might result in lessening the rates.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

677. Do you happen to know how the rates paid for home-work in Birmingham in the hook and eye trade compare with the rates paid in the same trade in other districts?—As far as I am aware it is an industry that is practically confined to Birmingham at the present time. I have never heard of any other place where there are hook and eye carders to any number, so that I have never seen that comparison made.

678. Is it your experience that where there are young children in the family where home-work is carried on, those young children help their mother?—In the hook and eye carding and button carding—yes, most decidedly so. I have seen several instances personally where that is done.

679. That begins at a very early age?—A very early age; I imagine the youngest children I have seen were about six years of age, and I

Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

have personally seen a child of six years of age at work.

Mr. Fell.

680. You said that you made many inquiries as to the hours these home-workers worked. Do you think they could really tell you the exact hours they worked?—I admit it is very difficult when you talk to these people of averages, either of wages or hours; you have to get to your result by a direct question, and it is very seldom they can give an answer straight off, but I am fairly satisfied that the answers we have got are correct, because we check them in such a lot of ways. We check one worker by another, and we check the same worker at different times. We check the information she has given to us by the information she has given to other people. We visit her at rather extraordinary times to see if she may be working, so that I am fairly satisfied that for practical purposes my information is correct, especially since it is corroborated by several witnesses.

681. You do not think they exaggerate a good deal?—No, I do not think they have exaggerated it.

682. Did they know on whose behalf you were making inquiries—that it was on behalf of the Anti-Sweating League?—No, we did not always inform them what the inquiries were for.

683. They have no clocks or anything by which they can notice when they begin work or stop?—In some cases they have got clocks. I should say they are quite capable of knowing, speaking generally, when they start or finish work.

684. But I should say—I do not know whether you agree—that they cannot tell what intervals they have without working and which they spend on other matters?—I agree with you that they are not absolutely exact figures always in that way.

685. You say unmarried women do not work at all?—Generally not; usually the unmarried women would be in the factory.

686. And the married women work to supplement the low wages of their husbands?—That is the case.

687. And the widows have their earnings supplemented by charity or parish relief?—Yes.

688. You say that if there was a Wages Board it would react on the wages of the husband. In what way do you mean?—It seems to me from a general analysis of the results of trades unionism in regard to the theory of wages in general that one reason for low wages is the want of resistance on the part of the worker. We find where trades unions operate that they tend to keep the standard up, and we find, comparing men with women, that the standard amongst women is lower, and comparing the sweated worker the standard is lower again. Therefore, assuming that the husband was not helped out with the earnings of his wife and children, it would tend to create discontent and resistance to low rates of wages and casual labour on economic grounds.

689. That is a very indirect way of raising the wages of the husband?—But it seems to me

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[Continued.]

Mr. Fell—continued.

me that all things in economics and social life are indirect.

690. If the wages are not raised in factories you say they could not be raised for home-workers?—That is so, because if you made rates higher for home-work, obviously that would take away at once the only reason for home-work.

691. And the wages in the factories largely depend on foreign competition?—Not necessarily on foreign competition, because, for instance, in the box trade, foreign competition can almost be neglected. In some cases it depends upon foreign competition obviously where exports come in.

692. You believe the evil is very great in the case of these widows; what did you particularly mean—their poverty?—Their poverty and the results on the children, future generations and

Mr. Fell—continued.

the community in general, are so great at the present time that it would be a positive advantage if some of them were forced altogether on the rates, because we could counter-balance that by the fact that some workers under the Wages Boards would earn a living wage who at the present time do not, or they would at any rate approximate to it.

693. Some would, but others would not get any work at all, and would have to go to the workhouse or take parish relief?—Yes; from my point of view I think that would be an advantage in this way: that it would tend to a more scientific treatment of the question of unemployment in general.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Thursday, 5th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Arkwright.
Mr. Bridgeman.
Sir William Bull.
Mr. Boland.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.

Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Ernest Lamb.
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

MR. TREVELYAN IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. W. J. D. WALKER called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

694. You are the Industrial Adviser and Inspector to the Congested Districts Board for Ireland?—Yes.

695. I think you might begin perhaps by telling us a little about what home industries there are in Ireland of which you have experience and where they are situated?—With regard to that I think I had better show you this map (*exhibiting the same*). These red spots on this map indicate Home Industries classes which were started by the Congested Districts Board. They are in Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Mayo, Galway and

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Chairman—continued.

Kerry. The blue portion of the map represents the congested area, the poorest part of Ireland. In all the blue part the Poor Law Valuation per head of the population is 30s. per head or under, and in some districts it goes down as low as 4s. 9d. per head of the population. With regard to that, I think it would be better to explain the principle under which these classes in the different industries are carried on.

696. I understand the evidence you are to give is exclusively about the congested districts?—Yes. The Congested Districts Board established these

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these

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Mr. WALKER.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

these classes in order to provide home employment for the people. The Board pays the teacher. They also pay for rent, fire and light, and the workers who come to these classes get the full amount which is paid for the work without deduction; so that so far as these industries are concerned, which principally relate to embroidery and lace, the worker gets all the money that is got from the retail or wholesale firm which pays for the work.

697. Have these industries been started by the Congested Districts Board?—Yes, at all those red spots upon the map the Board have started classes, and are responsible for the industry.

698. Did the industry originate with the classes that were started by the Congested Districts Board, or were the industries there to begin with?—With regard to that, 95 per cent. of those classes are lace classes.

699. Do the industries depend entirely on the classes, or were the industries there before the Congested Districts Board started the classes?—I should explain about that; 95 per cent. of those classes are lace classes, and there was no lace industry in the West of Ireland until the Board started it, but there was an embroidery industry, and the Board have only two classes in embroidery included in these red spots, so that practically all the work that is indicated by the red spots on the map is work started by the Congested Districts Board. There was an embroidery industry in Donegal, and these red spots which I now indicate represent districts where machine-knitting is done in the homes of the people. The old hand-knitting industry of Donegal, under the force of modern machine work at Leicester and other competition, had practically disappeared. The Board provides these workers with knitting machines at cost price on easy terms of payment repayable in three years, and the worker then is free to get work from the Donegal hosiery merchants, who were formerly engaged in the hand-knitting industry, and they work for whatever wages are given by piece-work from the hosiery merchants in Donegal. These red spots on this map (*indicating*) are in addition to the red spots showing the lace and embroidery classes on the other map. *That* gives you about the geographical distribution of these Home Industries in Donegal and the West of Ireland (*indicating on the map*).

700. Does the Congested Districts Board do anything besides providing the machines at cost price and giving instruction in the classes?—No, the Board buy nothing and sell nothing. The Board leave it to me or to the local people to find a market for the work, and we have got to get the best price we can for the worker.

701. Do I understand that all this industry is carried on in the cottages in rural districts?—Yes.

702. Have you anything else you want to say about the conditions under which the work is carried on before I ask you questions with regard to the proposals which are now before us?—No, except to say that it is favourable to the lace worker in this way—that the cost of administration of carrying on the classes and marketing work is not paid for out of the wages of the workers. They get it all. In the ordinary course of commercial dealing with workers there would be a deduction

Chairman—continued.

from the wages of the workers by the cost of administration, but in these classes started by the Board, the Board pays the teachers salary, and fire, light and rent, and all the money that is got for the work is given to the workers.

703. These classes do not affect the people who are working in the industries, do they? They are to teach the industry?—They are to teach the industry. Practically there was no lace industry in the West of Ireland, so it did not enter into competition with anyone. As far as giving instruction in knitting is concerned, the Board do not buy anything or sell anything; they leave that to the ordinary course of trade, and the work is supplied by the hosiery merchants, who pay the workers wages after they are instructed, and the only relation between the Board and the worker is repayment for the machine.

704. Would you tell us something about your view with regard to the two proposals that are before us? You are aware that there are two proposals we are in the main considering for dealing with home-workers, and the first is the licensing of the home-workers either by the local sanitary authority or by the Factory Inspector. Would you tell us any difficulties that you may see with regard to that proposal?—From my point of view, and if you studied the sanitary condition under which the people live, you would see that the enforcement of that, the proposed Act, would be practically impossible. I can best give you an illustration of that by stating, roughly speaking, what the sanitary condition is under which they live. In all the West of Ireland practically all the cottages, which are one-roomed or two-roomed, have earthen floors; in many cases the walls have never been plastered, so that they cannot be whitewashed; the roof is composed of sods underneath thatch, and is unceiled, so that any English Factory Inspector going into one of these cottages would immediately say: "This cottage is entirely insanitary; I cannot give you a licence." Further, if you take the extent to which they run "long families" in the West of Ireland, and the very limited space in many of these cottages, you will find that the number of cubic feet of space is entirely insufficient for the requirements of the proposed Act. The ordinary cottage will contain one room; that room will be 12 feet by 10 feet by 9 feet high, and that is 1,080 cubic feet. Where it is a one-roomed cottage, the bed has to be in that apartment. You require 400 cubic feet for each occupant, and you can only then have a maximum of two in that house, which I think I can prove to you is impossible in Unions typical of the West of Ireland. Taking Donegal, for instance (I am now giving you the figures of one-roomed hovels), in Dunfanaghy Union there are 567 one-roomed hovels (that is in a small Poor Law Union); in Donegal Union there are 289 (that is a much better off Union, and half of *that* district is not congested); in Glenties Union there are 1,071; in Oughterard there are 402; and in Belmullet there are 512. But that is not all. The average family in those cottages when all the people are at home and none are away in England on harvest work would perhaps be five, but in some of these one-roomed hovels,
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with about 1,000 cubic feet of air space, there would be as many as 12. I take that Union of Glenties, and I shall give you the figures with regard to it. I have said that in Glenties Union there are 1,071 one-roomed hovels. Of those, 180 are occupied by one person, 240 are occupied by two, 155 are occupied by three, 134 are occupied by four, 103 are occupied by five, 93 are occupied by six, 84 are occupied by seven, 45 are occupied by eight, 17 are occupied by nine, 11 are occupied by 10, five are occupied by 11, and four are occupied by 12 or more persons, because the Census does not take any note when it goes above 12. There are 4,058 people in that one Union occupying those cottages. Now, you would have to rebuild all those cottages in order to bring up the standard to the requirements proposed in the Bill. I have not referred at all to the two-roomed cottages, which are almost in every case sanitarily quite as bad. You may suppose that the large families have made some effort to live in two-roomed houses, and on that account the number of people in one-roomed cottages is smaller actually than the number that there would be in the two-roomed cottages. Then with regard to the qualification, the acme of qualification that you can possibly have in Ireland would be the standard of the new labourers' cottages proposed to be built under the Labourers Act in connection with the Local Government Board. I have here the plans that came out last week of the Local Government Board for the new labourers' cottages. I went into the number of cubic feet of space proposed in the new cottages, and I find that the first cottage shows that it would hold six persons.

705. I do not think we need go elaborately into this. Are there any of these cottages in existence now?—A few.

706. But very few?—Very few.

707. At any rate, your point is that if the sanitary standard proposed in this Bill which we have got before us were enforced, you would destroy the industry in your view, because there would be no place in which it could be carried on?—Absolutely; not only that, but supposing you brought all Ireland up to the standard of the new labourers' cottages on those plans, wherever you had got a family above six, seven or eight, they would not be provided with work, even in the new labourers' cottages. The Committee ought to note that it is always in a family that is large that the home industry is carried on, because as the girls grow up you will have three or four girls of 14, 15 and 16 able to work; there are as many boys as girls, and there is the father and mother, and generally the man's mother or the woman's mother; so that you could not even house them in the new cottage and come up to that qualification and standard.

708. Are there any other difficulties with regard to the licensing proposal which you can see?—The difficulty would be in the administration. Those 1,071 cottages are scattered over an area of 400 square miles, and if you administer that by the local authority, as it is a very poor Union it will put a shilling in the pound on the rates for the car hire alone. If you administer it by the Factory Acts, and if you multiply Glenties Union by the other Unions in Ireland included

Chairman—continued.

in the Congested Districts, not to speak of the other districts in Ireland that are not scheduled, and if you add to that all the insanitary homes in England and Scotland, you will bring up the cost of administration under the Factory Act to a sum that the English Treasury would never pass.

709. Have you any other point you wish to make on the licensing, or shall we now go on to the Wages Board proposal?—No, I think that anything else I have to say relates to the conditions under which the industry is carried on in reference to the possible establishment of a Wages Board.

710. Turning your attention for the moment to the proposal for establishing Wages Boards, would you kindly explain to the Committee what you think the difficulties are with regard to carrying out those proposals? I understand that you see difficulties about it?—There are very great difficulties, and one of the first difficulties you would encounter would be this: What is a manufacturer, and what is an employee? For instance, you would find in connection with the producing of homespun in Donegal that an old woman on the side of the mountain will have a few sheep, and she spins that wool into yarn and she gives it to a man to weave, who is supposed to be paid wages by her for weaving the cloth. She is the employee as far as she has produced the spun yarn, and she is the employer as far as she gives out this work to be woven to a weaver. Suppose that you had six of these old women and six of the weavers upon a Wages Board, and that the Secretary of State sent down a Chairman to preside over their deliberations, that old woman would explain that her work had been done at the rate of 4d. a day in the way of hand spinning, and that she had paid this bloated employee 12s. a week wages. She would naturally expect the Chairman of the Board to make a reduction in the wages, because she had walked 20 miles with that web down to Ardara Market, and as she was only offered 1s. 4d. for the web, while she wanted 1s. 5d., she had walked the 20 miles back again with the web, and intended to try again at the fair the next month. It would be utterly impossible there to discriminate between employer and employee. With regard to a girl, for instance, who makes crochet, she buys a spool of thread and she makes it into crochet, and she sells it at the best price that she can get. She is both the employee and the merchant. Suppose that a Factory Inspector says to her: "I will not allow you to take less than 3s. a yard for that," she says: "I cannot get it, it is not yours, it is mine, I will burn it if I like"; and that would absolutely upset any minimum wages scale that you could possibly arrange with regard to this industry, because in the case of these lace-workers the lace belongs to themselves, and they sell it in the best market they can get. Then with regard to embroidery and drawn work, that is a Belfast trade. Belfast merchants send down embroidery and drawn work to the West of Ireland to have this work done, and a Wages Board could never settle what the wages scale was to be. They would have to take into consideration carriage, and foreign competition, and I can show you that—

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711. Before you pass on to that, the trade you are now to speak about is one in which wages are definitely earned, is it not?—Yes.

712. The trade you have been speaking about, the crochet-work, is a trade in which it cannot be exactly said that wages are earned, and where the girls, I understand from you, are master and employee in one?—Yes, they sell for the best price they can get.

713. What they sell is not the produce of their labour, but a capital outlay of their own?—A very small capital outlay, because as a matter of fact, the work would be 95 per cent. wages and 5 per cent. material.

714. Then they are really employed by the shopkeepers?—With regard to that, the lace teacher, or some local agent, sends it away for them and gets the best price she can; but they have the right to say that they will not take that price, so that they are both employees and merchants.

715. Now, will you go on to state your difficulties with regard to the embroidery trade?—This Belfast linen is sent down to Donegal to be embroidered by hand, and what settles the price in that industry is not at all the price that the workers would like to get, it is not the price you would like to see them get, but it is the price at which it can be done perhaps by a machine. *There is a handkerchief (showing the same) which is embroidered by hand in Donegal, and that work is done for 1s. 9d. a dozen, which is 1½d. each. Here is a handkerchief (showing the same) embroidered in Switzerland; that is done at 1s. 10d. a dozen, and there is three times as much work on the Swiss handkerchief as there is on the Irish one. I could multiply these instances indefinitely. This one here (showing) is done in Donegal (I have marked an "I" on the Irish one) for 2s. a dozen, or 2d. each handkerchief, and a similar one with more work upon it is done for 2s. a dozen in Switzerland. This one here is 2s. 6d. a dozen, or 2½d. each, for the embroidery in Donegal, and this one, where there is more work, is done in Switzerland at the same price, 2s. 6d. a dozen, or 2½d. each. I come now to some better class ones. This cost 5d. in Donegal against the Swiss one, which costs 4½d. There is a good deal more work, as you see, on the Swiss one compared with the Irish one.*

Sir William Bull.

716 These, of course, have all been washed?—Yes; these are laundried in Belfast after they are done.

Chairman.

717. But, of course, you would not have to go to Switzerland for cases of competition?—That linen is sent to Switzerland by the Belfast merchant; it comes back from Switzerland, and that is the price per dozen charged for putting on the embroidery, and the Swiss merchant pays carriage both ways, from Belfast to Switzerland and from Switzerland back to Belfast. The next instance is 5s. against 4s. 11d. The 5s. is the Donegal hand-work, and the 4s. 11d. the Swiss machine work (*exhibiting the same*).

Mr. Arthur Dewar.

718. Do you say that the Irish is hand-work and the Swiss machine-work?—Yes, it is Irish hand-work, as against the Swiss machine-work.

719. If you take hand-work against machine-work in Ireland, does not the machine-work fetch less than half the price?—I have simply given you the price paid in Donegal for doing the work.

720. I quite see that, but my point is this: A lady who knows these things would tell you at once which was hand-work and which was machine-work, and would willingly give more than double for hand-work, whether done in Ireland or in Switzerland?—I think 90 per cent. of the people who buy handkerchiefs do not know which it is, and do not care; the machine-work is more perfect than the hand-work, as you see.

Chairman.

721. Your point is that there is not much margin for raising the wages if there were a Wages Board?—You cannot raise the wages when the whole world can come in and compete with you. *There is a different class of work; that is what is called "drawn work." That cost 12s. 6d. in County Donegal. That is what the manufacturer paid for it, and you see the quantity of the work upon that. That was a very good trade when I started it down in Donegal, but some philanthropic English ladies taught the people out in Teneriffe how to do it, and here is a cloth with more work upon it (showing the same), costing 7s. 2d. in Teneriffe as against 12s. 6d. in Ardara, County Donegal. The Wages Board would have great difficulty in a case like that. It is 7s. 2d. in Teneriffe with carriage paid back, against the 12s. 6d.*

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

722. Is it the same quality of work?—The Teneriffe work is finer.

Mr. Hugh Law.

723. Is it done in exactly the same way?—Yes, by hand in both cases. Remember the trade was very good in Donegal. I now show you what is being sold in London to-day wholesale. *Here is a table cover 36 ins. by 36 ins., and the wholesale price in London to-day (I can only give you the wholesale price, not the price of the work) is 44s. a dozen for the drawn work done in Donegal. Here is a Japanese table cover made at 37s. a dozen, and with a great deal more work upon it.*
724. In both cases again it is hand-work?—Yes.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

725. The Japanese is men's work, is it not?—I do not know who does it; I am only concerned about the Donegal girl. *This is an Irish cloth at 58s. a dozen (showing), and this is a Japanese cloth at 48s. a dozen (showing), with more work on the Japanese cloth. This is an Irish cloth at 50s. a dozen (showing), and this is a Japanese cloth at 42s. a dozen (showing).*

Sir William Bull.

726. Is that Japanese cloth supplied in the London market?—These are London wholesale prices

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prices to-day, which I got from a London wholesale shop yesterday morning.

Chairman.

727. I think we understand what you wish to put before us?—There is another point comes in there, which is very interesting, and I would like you to know it, because it bears tremendously on this subject. The Belfast freight down to Ballinrobe, in County Mayo, is 42s. 9d. a ton, and to Ballintra, County Donegal, it is 42s. 6d., and to Killybegs it is 35s. 9d., while the freight to Teneriffe in the Canary Islands is only 25s. The freight from Belfast to Japan is only 45s. per ton, and 10 per cent. primage, so that practically you may say that you can send Belfast goods to Japan for the same price that you can send them by rail to some of these places on the Midland and Great Western Railway, and the Donegal Railway from Belfast. Another thing I want to show you is the size of that Japanese industry. In 1902 Japan took 750,000 yards of linen, nearly all for this work; they pay duty on it going into Japan; but when they send it back from Japan the duty is remitted. Now, in 1902, the whole trade with Japan in linen was 750,000 yards, or a value of £22,471.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

728. That is exports from Ireland?—Yes, they import linen principally to do the work which I have shown to you upon it. In 1906, the imports of linen to Japan had gone up to 4,600,000 yards.

Chairman.

729. I think this is getting rather far from our Reference?—It shows you the extent to which Belfast is hit in that industry, and when your Wages Board comes to arrange the scale of wages for the drawn worker, you are competing with the yellow man.

730. I think you have made that quite clear, and what you want to put before us is that there is serious foreign competition in existence now, which, if the wages were raised, would, of course, be even a stronger consideration, and also you say the railway freight is a very serious consideration?—Yes, they are practically equal.

731. Those considerations would, of course, come before the Wages Board; it would be part of their duty to deal with all considerations of that kind; you realise that?—Yes, but there is no Wages Board could arrange any wages scale, because that is not Japan's last word. That is just to show that they are cheap, but you have not yet got down to the point of seeing what they can do.

Mr. Boland.

732. With regard to the handkerchiefs, do I understand that all the handkerchiefs from Switzerland which you showed us were machine-embroidered, or were some of them hand-embroidered?—Every one was machine-embroidered. Another industry engaged in is crochet, and that sample of crochet (*showing*) was made in Northern France. What the French girl gets for that is 20s. a yard, made by hand, while the

Mr. Boland—continued.

price we paid in Ireland for making *that* (*showing the same*) was 25s., and 1s. 9d. of a tariff duty; so that work can be made in France cheaper than we can produce it. I have a very interesting sample here. I have a class in a place which is about 45 miles from a railway station, and that class produced the piece of crochet I now exhibit to the Committee at 10s. a yard. Inside six months, when it was sold in Paris, the German manufacturer got it, copied it upon a machine, and he can produce the imitation which I now show you (*showing*) for 1s., as against 10s. for the Irish work, and very few ladies would know the difference.

Mr. Arthur Dewar.

733. Again, the one hand and the other machine?—Yes, the machine competes everywhere, and not only that, but there is competition in hand-work, as I have shown, in Japan and Teneriffe, and France also is competing.

734. To anybody who knows anything about it at all, is there the slightest resemblance between machine and hand-made lace, or embroidery either?—There they are (*showing the different samples*).

735. To any of us who are not experts they may appear the same, but a lady knows at once?—The man in the street does not know. The point I would like you to realise is simply this, that while there may have been a good living wage upon Irish crochet three years ago, before the machine-work came extensively into use, the machine-work may now come into such universal use as to stop the demand entirely for the hand-made work.

Chairman.

736. Can you tell us at all in any of these trades what the standard of wages is and what these women can earn in a week?—It entirely depends upon the American demand at the time. Owing to the financial collapse in America at present, the trade is in a great state of stagnation; but the embroidery that is done in Donegal would bring in anything from 3s. 6d. to 6s. 6d. or 8s. 6d. a week to the worker.

737. In cases where the wages are very low, is very much charity and out-door relief going to the people who are working in the industries?—It is precisely in those Unions where you have the most accentuated poverty that you have the smallest amount of relief, because they cannot afford it, and I think I can show you that. It cannot be pretended at all that out-door relief contributes in any way to reducing the worker's wages in Donegal, because in Glenties Union, with all the widespread poverty among its population of 33,000 people, the entire out-door relief paid last year was only £256, and although it was only £256 on account of the very low level of valuation, that amounted to 2·75d. in the £. In these districts if the Guardians give out-door relief to any large extent they raise the rates so high that it would be practically impossible to pay them. What you find is that where you have a large amount of home industry you have little out-door relief, and where you have practically no home industry you have a great deal of out-door relief. In Cahirciveen Union in Kerry, where

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where there is very little home-work, the out-door relief was £1,500 as against Glenties with a larger population and more poverty, where the total out-door relief was only £256. I say, therefore, that it cannot be pretended that the out-door relief goes to reduce wages at all.

Mr. Hugh Law.

738. Have you got the population and valuation in these cases?—Yes. In Glenties the population is 33,191, and the Poor Law Valuation per head of the population is 12s. 10d. Now that is not the last word about that, because that levels in pretty good places with bad places; but if you take Annagry Electoral Division, the Poor Law Valuation per head of the population is only 4s. 9d., and if you multiply that by 4, the size of the family, that would be 19s., which would be the rateable valuation of the house and land. I think that in Annagry Electoral Division there is not a single holding valued over £4, and it would be the aristocracy who would get up to that.

Chairman.

739. Will you tell us whether you have any suggestions to make with regard to child labour among the home industries?—With regard to that, it concerns the whole subject of education. In many of these electoral divisions I have been referring to, where you have got accentuated poverty, the number of illiterates runs to anything from 35 up to 70 per cent. You have 70 per cent. of illiterates in the electoral division of Lettermore after 70 years of national education, and 50 to 65 per cent. is very common. The reason is that, although we have had compulsory education recently, it is permissive for any single local authority to say whether they will have compulsory education or not. The result is that it is a dead letter. With regard to enforcing the Act, what you would find is that where the child is kept at home to do home-work, where the Education Act is enforced, the amount of the fine is so low, 2s. 6d., or something like that, and they are not able to fine the child again for another three months, it pays a great deal better not to send the child to school and to let them do home-work and pay the fine. With regard to the Congested Districts Board lace classes, every teacher of the Board has instructions to give no work to workers who are employing the children in the same family at home, and unless we hear from the National School teachers that the children are going to school, we very often refuse to give other members of the family employment in order to make the children go to school. You will never get over that enormous percentage of illiterates, in my opinion, without giving the children a meal in school.

Mr. Arthur Dewar.

740. How long did you say your Congested Districts Board's assistance has been going on for this home-work?—It began in a very small way about nine or ten years ago.

741. Can you tell us approximately how many people you have assisted with home-work in this way?—At present I think about 3,000.

Mr. Arthur Dewar—continued.

742. That is 3,000 machines you have given out?—No, I refer now to hand home-work; I do not refer at all to the knitting industry of Donegal, because those classes only last for four months.

743. Do you mean 3,000 individuals or families?—I would say 3,000 individuals, or possibly more.

744. Do you find it, on the whole, successful?—When I say 3,000, there were not so many employed last year; but at the lace classes alone they earned £24,000 last year, and I should say here that in this worst district of North West Mayo, a very poor district 40 miles from a railway station (the lace goes by parcel post, and that is how that industry can be carried on there), the whole Poor Law Valuation, which amounts to probably the rent, is £6,400, and they earned £7,000 by lace-work alone last year.

745. On the whole, do you find it successful?—It is very successful in this way, that if you have got two or three girls working in a house it provides them with the necessities of life, improves their standard of living very much, and civilises the people.

746. Considering it as a whole, are the people working in your view under satisfactory conditions, and at a suitable or living wage?—As regards lace?

747. Taking it all over, are you satisfied, firstly, with the conditions under which the home-workers work, and, secondly, as to the rate of wages they receive for their work?—I am satisfied—of course I would like them to earn more wages—as far as the economic limitations are concerned, that they are doing as well as under existing economic conditions they could be expected to do.

748. That is not what I asked; I ask whether you are satisfied with things as they are. You have told us all about these terribly small cottages, and I presume you do not think these are suitable places to carry on the work in?—No Irishman is ever satisfied.

749. Do you not think that the conditions are deplorably bad at present—you may not be able to make them better, but do you not think them bad?—The conditions are infinitely better since the home industry was introduced.

750. The conditions in the homes?—Yes.

751. With regard to sanitation, are they better?—Yes, everything improves the moment you introduce a home industry.

752. May I take it that you would like to see great improvement both in the sanitation and also in the rate of wages?—Certainly.

753. Have you anything to suggest whereby you might possibly get some improvement in both, or are you in despair?—I am very much in despair when I show you these samples from Japan and Teneriffe.

754. But for the foreign competition, do you think you could get directly better sanitation, and a better rate of wage, or is there anything else to prevent you getting both?—You cannot answer that question without asking where the goods go, and if your market is the entire world, and you have Japan meeting you in New York, I do not see how you are to raise the wages.

755. I quite understand that the districts over which you have control, or at any rate as to which you have knowledge, are very scattered, the
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houses are isolated and therefore would be difficult to manage; but is there anything peculiar in Irish conditions that does not obtain in any ordinary town, for example?—There is in regard to the housing of the people. I will pass round these photographs of the hovels, and you can look at them (*handing in the same*). These will show you the conditions under which we were working to begin with.

756. Is there anything peculiar about an Irish town, which would prevent you having either sanitation, or a Wages Board, which does not exist in an English, or Scotch or a Welsh town, or have you any experience of town home-work at all?—If you take the better-off towns, I think you will find them about upon the same level—in fact, I think your Manchester or Glasgow or London slum would have the worst of it; because, although the sanitary conditions in the Irish case might be such as an English Factory Inspector would be horrified at, I would rather take my chance of sleeping in one of these hovels than I would in a London slum.

757. Do you think it would be possible in an Irish town, apart from the cottages in the country, to have better sanitation in the houses?—It would, if the local authority had the money to spend to make the sanitary arrangements right.

758. Do you think a Wages Board might work in the Irish towns?—The Wages Board cannot raise rates against the competition that I have shown you exists in the home industry.

759. You are against Wages Boards economically, and from every point of view, I take it?—I am certainly, because the Wages Board, in my opinion, with regard to a good many of the manufactures, would simply destroy the industry. It would be practically in the hands of one man, the Chairman, who comes there to split the difference.

760. Your objections to the Wages Boards are not peculiar to Ireland, or confined to Ireland?—Certainly not.

761. Have you looked into the question of the Wages Board in Australia and New Zealand?—I have read something about it, but I do not see how it applies.

762. Do you think it does not do there either?—No, I do not say it does not, but, if you put on a scale of wages in Victoria for making shirts, the next question I would ask, is how many shirts do they export in the year?

763. You have not studied the conditions there, have you?—No, where your home consumption is such as to take up your production, you can under protection have a Wages Board; but where you are competing with the whole of the world, the Wages Board is out of the question.

764. You would need protection, you think, if you had a Wages Board?—Yes, but it does not do you any good, because you cannot get your manufactured products over the barrier of foreign tariffs, if you raise the cost of production by protection.

765. But do you not also find the rule universal, that the man who pays the highest wages, invariably competes successfully with all others who do not pay high wages?—I know that you could

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Mr. Arthur Dewar—continued.

pay wages which would extinguish the industry, and you would lose your capital.

766. Is not my proposition true—has not that been demonstrated, or have you not considered it—that the man who uniformly pays high wages, is always the most successful in his trade?—I suppose he pays higher wages because his industry can afford it, but he does not exceed that limit.

767. Suppose by some means or other this country could get these home-workers' wages raised higher, if the other rule be true about an individual employer, would it not also tend to advance the sale of the goods those people made, whatever the competition might be?—I do not think so at all.

768. Have you considered that carefully?—Yes, fairly carefully.

769. With regard to the difference between those hand-made and machine-made articles you showed us, surely there is a vast difference between hand-made lace and machine-made lace?—I have shown you the samples.

770. Do you represent to the Committee that there is not a wide difference between the two, known to the trade and to every lady who buys lace?—There is a wide difference to the person who knows, but the vast majority of people want a slightly thing, and they do not want to pay too much money for it.

771. Can you not buy Brussels lace, for example, up to pounds, sometimes up to a hundred pounds, a yard, and you will get something made by a machine which looks the same to all who are not experts for 2d. or 3d.?—Quite so, I admit that.

772. Surely that is well known in the trade, and would it not be a fraud to represent that those things you have shown us were identical either in quality or price, although they look very much the same?—Yes, but what you have to remember is that the hand-made Brussels lace trade has been tremendously affected by the low price at which the machine-made goods are sold.

773. That is not the kind of competition I speak of—the competition of machine-made with hand-made; you do not want to represent to the Committee that that is a danger in establishing a Wages Board, do you?—I want to represent to the Committee that any lady who wants a piece of lace and sees what looks practically as well made by machine as the piece that is five or six times the price made by hand, will save the money and very often buy the machine-made lace and wear it, where she would otherwise have bought so much hand-made lace.

Mr. Fell.

774. You say the Congested Districts Board has established these classes, where they teach knitting. Do they sell the products of these classes?—No.

775. They sell all that is made in those classrooms?—Yes, all the lace.

776. But they do not act as sellers for the work made at home, do they?—What is done is this: A girl goes and asks the teacher what quality she will make, and the teacher will say: "I have an order for a certain kind; make six yards of that,"

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that," and when it is made she sends it away, and the price she gets for that she hands to the worker. In the case of lace, the teacher acts as agent and saleswoman for the pupils in the class, and gets the best price she can.

777. The working in these classes is not what you call home industry; the work they do there is rather when they are learning. I suppose?—A great many whom we have taught are now teachers.

778. The people at these classes are not the home-workers we are referring to?—The home-workers, as distinguished from those, are the workers who take out work given to an agent in an Irish town in which the goods are supplied, we will say from Belfast, to be worked on by the worker for wages.

779. With regard to these hovels you have described, in which these people work (and that is where the real home-work is, as we consider it), you say they are insanitary, but you do not think they are so bad as they might be in a town in an upstairs room or anything of that kind?—No, because they are breathing clean air, and the people in the slum do not.

780. The door stands open?—Yes, and they are out all day; they do their work outside, to a large extent.

781. Then there is not much comparison between the work in a hovel in the country and work in a room in a town?—You cannot well compare them, because a great deal of your plumbing is laying on sewer gas into the houses in towns, and there is no plumbing or anything of the sort in the hovel; but, on the contrary, they have the mountain air.

782. You do not consider the conditions under which they work are so very insanitary?—No, but they would shock any Factory Inspector, because in many cases the cattle and pigs are in the houses along with the people.

783. That, I am afraid, is rather Irish, is it not?—I am afraid so.

784. To go on further, most of the specimens you showed us were hand-made as against hand-made?—Of the drawn work, yes.

785. The Swiss work which you showed us had a great deal more work in it than the Irish work?—Yes, and was quite as slightly in appearance.

786. They were about the same price?—Yes.

787. And there was much more show about the Swiss machine-made goods than about the Irish hand-made goods?—Yes.

788. Do they sell these two classes of goods, the Irish hand-made and the Swiss machine-made, in the same shops and at the same counters?—Yes, there is no discriminating mark.

789. These table-cloths which you showed us were hand-made as against hand-made?—Yes, that is Teneriffe against Donegal, and Japan against Teneriffe and Donegal.

790. You said that the Teneriffe ones were sold at 7s. 2d. against the Donegal ones at 12s. 6d., and that if anything there was more work in the Teneriffe table-cloth than in the Donegal table-cloth. Is it possible, then, to sell any Donegal table-cloths at 12s. 6d.?—Yes, they are sold because the manufacturers do not like to send goods so far, and when they get hurried special

Mr. Fell—continued.

orders the goods will be sent down to Donegal to be done and got back quickly. It takes longer for goods to come from Teneriffe, and much longer from Japan.

791. There is not much demand in Ireland, and they all have to be exported?—Practically they are all for export; and nine-tenths of all the goods made in Belfast are exported from the United Kingdom. The home consumption of the United Kingdom would not be more than one-tenth of the Belfast production, and, perhaps, not so much.

792. That would apply both to these Japanese goods, and to the Teneriffe goods? The Irish goods would have to compete with those in foreign markets?—Yes. In the case of these Japanese cloths, the Japanese merchant buys the linen, gets the work done on it, washes it, finishes it, and sends it to London or New York in competition with Belfast work.

793. He buys Irish linen, works it up, and sends it back to Europe?—Yes.

794. That trade is increasing rapidly?—I have given you the figures.

795. It has increased to about eight times the amount in four years?—Yes.

796. There is a good business in linen for export?—Yes; it is an enormous business, but that is not the fancy end of the trade.

797. But, I suppose, it is damaging the sale of the worked-up linen cloths?—It only affects the finer handkerchiefs and worked-up linen; it does not affect the enormous production, consisting of brown hollands, and ordinary linens, linings for coats, towels, and all that kind of thing.

798. You referred to crochet, and said there was a French example, but you did not follow it up, so far as I could understand: what was that example?—The French worker got 20s. a yard for making that crochet (*showing a sample*). That is hand-made, and the same sample made recently in Ireland cost 25s.

799. Where would those be sold?—The big market for every description of Irish crochet is Paris. It is there sold to the Americans; it goes to New York *via* Paris.

800. The Irish and the French compete in Paris for the New York trade?—Yes. This is quite a recent thing with the French; they have started a great number of girls upon that work recently, and we are only now beginning to feel the competition.

801. You have told us that there is this competition from Teneriffe and other places; has it had any effect in Ireland yet?—A very considerable effect; the drawn-work trade is very dull, and it is nearly impossible to get sufficient work.

802. You mean that the home-workers cannot get the work now?—They cannot get the quantity they want, and the wages have gone down.

Mr. Bridgeman.

803. I understood you to say that the machine competition that you disliked most is all foreign, from Switzerland, Germany and Japan?—Yes, the machine-produced lace is produced at Plauen, in Germany, I think.

804. Why is there no competition between British

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[Continued.]

Mr. Bridgeman—continued.

British machine-work of this kind and the Irish work?—I think the reason is that the making of machine lace means very great technical knowledge and patient endeavour by patient workers, who take extreme pains, as you can have in Germany. It will be difficult indeed to introduce that into this country, because it involves a vast amount of technical skill, with constant changes of patterns.

805. Why is that impossible in this country?—You are not as well technically educated as the Germans.

806. What are your suggestions for improvement? We have not heard any yet?—I look to Statesmen for that; I am living between the upper and the nether mill-stone of cost of production and foreign competition, and I must say that, although I have been a Free Trader all my life, I do not see my way out.

807. You do not feel able to suggest anything that would remove the difficulty?—I do not know; some day, when Japan begins to hit Lancashire hard, that question will be studied.

808. You mean economically studied all over the country?—Yes; it will not be studied as long as they are only competing with Donegal in the home industry, because it is not a big enough question.

809. Then I gather that you think that something could be done to help by the restriction, partially or entirely, of foreign competition?—If home consumption took up the demand, it would be all right; but what are you to do when you have to sell it to New York, and Japan sends it into New York behind your back by San Francisco? It is a very difficult problem.

810. Do you think that anything can or cannot be done in the direction I have indicated, or is it worth while to try an experiment in that direction?—It is a very difficult problem, and I must say when I see the economic tendencies and tariffs setting up a barrier against our manufactures all the time and the shutting up of markets that were formerly open, I cannot say that I feel the same absolute faith in Free Trade doctrines that I used to. All I can do is to look up to persons like Mr. Harold Cox, and simply have blind faith.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

811. Do I understand you to say that English machine-made lace does not in any way compete with Irish hand-made lace?—Not at all. English machine-made lace is principally curtains; Nottingham lace is an entirely different thing from any description of Irish hand-made lace.

812. I gather that there is absolutely no machine-made lace in the West of Ireland at all?—No.

813. And you have just given as the reason why there should not be that it is difficult to learn; are there any other difficulties? Is the machinery very expensive to set up?—As regards the West of Ireland and the introduction of machine-made lace, that has been based upon hereditary knowledge, and the fact that the worker's forefathers have been engaged in something similar being done upon machines with highly technical skill. You have not got to the beginning of that in the West of Ireland.

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Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

814. Supposing that the competition gets so great that Irish hand-made lace is crowded out, do you think it would be very difficult or impossible to introduce the making of machine-made lace?—You have to compete against Nottingham, and you have to compete against these very highly skilled, trained and educated workers in Germany.

815. It might be possible, but you do not think it would necessarily be successful?—It would mean sinking an enormous amount of capital to train the workers before you could reach a dividend-earning point.

816. It seems to me that it is possible that we might look for relief in one direction which has not yet been mentioned, namely, by reducing railway rates in Ireland, and bringing the railways there under some central control; is not that a possibility?—There was a time when I thought that, but the figures I have given you with regard to Japanese competition extinguish all hope from railway rates, because, roughly speaking, the agent in Donegal will get 10 per cent. of the value of the work done for giving out the work; that is to say, if she gives out £10 worth of work she will get £1, and of that 5s. would be absorbed in freight. Abolish the 5s. and we do not get over the difficulty; it is too insignificant to talk about.

817. Surely a difference must be made and would be made if instead of having the higher railway rates you had them very much lower?—For any description of work where the material in the work is relatively heavy to the work done it would materially assist, but lace is a thing where the percentage of work is so large to the amount of material that practically the freight does not count. You could not bring the jute or cotton industry to the West of Ireland on account of freight, but you could bring lace.

Mr. Hugh Law.

818. Talking of the sanitary condition of the houses, of course a good deal has been done by local authorities even in the poorest districts, say, in the Glenties Union, of late to correct that state of things; there is a great improvement in point of fact. We none of us are content, but still things are very much better than they were?—They are vastly better; I see a marvellous improvement in the cottages, in the surroundings of the people, and everything like that, in the last 10 years, and especially in Mayo and Galway, and in these spots where the home industries have been introduced they have assisted the people to do something in the way of having better housing conditions. Besides that, the bringing of the girl into the class in a clean and civilised place, and the fact that she must keep the lace clean, has reacted upon her home.

819. Our friends here must not assume that we all keep pigs and cattle permanently in our bed rooms?—I do not keep any myself.

820. One or two questions about the way in which things are done. I do not know whether you told the Committee whether there was any very great variation in the price paid to the home-workers in these trades as between different firms?—There is the most perfect automatic check

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upon that, and I will explain it. If you go to Ardara, or any of these little towns where there is much embroidery work or drawn work sent, three or four agents will be in the town, and each of these will be giving work for two or three firms. I will assume that you gave out some handkerchiefs to a Donegal girl and that she was getting 2½d. for the embroidery upon each of them, and we will assume that some other firm was giving 3d. each for them. Those workers know absolutely which is the work that pays them; they know the work they can get away upon, and the practical result is that a girl may get three dozen handkerchiefs marked 2½d., and from another agent or another firm she will have three dozen with the same amount of work marked at 3d., and she does the ones at 3d. and keeps off the others. Then a telegram comes down from Belfast asking: "How is it that the work has not been done?" The answer is: "The price is too low and you cannot get it done." The girl lies back upon that work at the low rate and does not produce it, and automatically it corrects itself, because the people will produce the work that pays them best, and they will hang back upon the work that pays them poorly for such a time that their employers have got to raise the wages in order to get it done at all.

821. The importance of the question is this,—that we have had a good deal of evidence here in regard to city home-work and arbitrary variations in the prices paid; we have been told that firms in the same trade, doing the same class of work, will pay their workers according, as one witness said, to the conscience of the employer; but that is not your experience with regard to the West of Ireland?—What I say with regard to that is that practically it automatically corrects itself.

822. You have spoken two or three times about agents. Who exactly are the agents?—As a rule, in the West of Ireland the agent is a small shopkeeper, and that shopkeeper writes to Belfast and asks some firm there to send him work in the way of embroidery, and it is not that they earn much by giving it out, because they have a lot of book-keeping and everything of that sort to do in connection with it; but it is an inducement to those people who came for work to enter their shops, and truck comes in there.

823. How are the agents remunerated?—The agent gets 10 per cent. on the value of the wages, out of which the agent pays carriage one way to Belfast.

824. Do you regard the agent as necessary? Is he a necessary part of the machinery?—I think he is absolutely essential, because he acts as the means of distribution and he pays the carriage. The agent is nearly always a woman, and she is the centre of distribution.

825. Could you make any suggestion as to the improvement of that system in any way?—At a time in Donegal when there were great complaints with regard to truck, and when the workers stated they never could get money, but only goods, the Congested Districts Board opened a depôt, which they have still, in one of these towns, and that agent always pays the full cash

Mr. Hugh Law—continued.

given by the Belfast merchant. If there are any aggrieved persons in that town who think that they are not getting fair play from the agent, or that they require to take goods in return for work, they have nothing to do but to go to this agent, and it is a perfectly open door.

826. Do you have an agent of that kind in every centre?—No; in Ardara, which is one of the principal centres.

827. It has been held with regard to truck that unless the worker specifically contracts to do work herself, she does not come under the Truck Acts?—I do not know about that, but I know that prosecutions have taken place under the Factory Acts in Donegal, where the agent was fined, and in both cases the Lord-Lieutenant remitted the fine; so that practically it was a dead letter. There is not very much truck, and I do not think myself that they are badly treated in that way.

828. I think you have something to say about a revision of the Factory Acts to cover the child-labour in home industries?—I think it could only be done by a kind of co-operation between the Educational Authority and the Factory Inspector, so that, in the first place, the fine would be sufficient to deter them from keeping the child from school, and the school authorities would report to someone in the district whether the child was at school or not, and, if necessary, the Factory Inspector would discover whether it was engaged on home-work.

829. In the majority of our western districts the compulsory clauses of the Act are not enforced at all?—No, it is a dead letter.

830. They are not even nominally in force?—That is so.

831. With regard to the Bills which are before this Committee, and the proposals which are made as to licensing and Wages Boards, I think you told Mr. Fell that a good deal of the work was done in the open air?—Yes.

832. I take it that you would agree with me that it would be utterly impossible, unless you were to license Croagh Patrick, because the work-place is as often as not the hillside, when the people are herding the cows?—You could not enforce the Licensing Act, first on account of the expense on the local authority, secondly, on account of the expense to the Treasury, and thirdly, on account of the fact that the public opinion of any district in the West of Ireland, where you went to enforce it, would be such that they would annihilate your Inspector.

833. I suppose, if the girl is working during the day on the hillside, it would be a little hard to prevent her finishing her work at the fireside in the evening, if there was not a sufficient amount of cubic feet in the room where she did the work?—It would be an unwarrantable interference with human liberty.

834. As to the Wages Board, there is one point which I do not know that you have yet quite considered. You say that the constant changes in design are such that in the case of lace, it would make it practically impossible for a Wages Board to work?—Yes.

835. I do not know whether you have read the evidence given here by Mr. Askwith, in the

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Mr. Hugh Law—continued.

case of Nottingham; but he gave us, and, I think, other witnesses have given us, the same particulars as to the tremendous variations between different classes of lace, and also the very frequent changes of fashion; he told us that in his opinion there was no insuperable difficulty in that respect, and that he thought a Wages Board being in being, would tend to adjust those differences?—I think it is utterly impracticable, so far as embroidery, drawn-work and hand-made crochet are concerned, because practically every order may be varied, and by the time you waited for the Wages Board to arrange for the scale of payment, the season would be over, and the articles would be out of fashion.

836. I suppose we have a very special case in the Irish rural districts?—Yes.

837. And you cannot very well compare them with the conditions in the big centres of population in this country. Would you agree also that home-work is very important to us in the West or Ireland, because it is the only thing through which we can hope to build up any industrial development of life in the country?—If you abolish the home-work in the West of Ireland, you abolish all possibility of later on having larger industrial developments founded on the hereditary skill and application of the trained worker accustomed to a Wages Scale. If you take Hawick and Galashiels, and even Lancashire, the entire industry there is based on the previously existing home industry developed by steam and power into the modern factory system, and whenever you find an industry such as in Darvel, or any of those towns in Scotland, you will find that the industry there has grown up from the previously industrially-trained population at hand-work.

Mr. Boland.

838. I take it you are absolutely against the possibility of the licensing system operating in the rural districts in Ireland where home-work is carried on?—Oh, yes; it is hopeless.

839. Now, as regards the lace question, I suppose it is only within recent years that in Germany and in other places machinery has been so developed that it is possible to produce crochet at all like the hand-made crochet; six or eight years ago the machine-made crochet was very poor compared with what it is now?—As a matter of fact the development of machine-made crochet is a development where a machine has been produced made with great ingenuity, to attain the end of cutting out hand work by machine. The beginning of the development with regard to machine-made crochet I date from the Glasgow Exhibition. We sent samples over to the Glasgow Exhibition and had show cases there, and the Germans came into that place, copied all these patterns, and took them home, and inside nine months we had them absolutely perfectly and slavishly copied and repeated to us as machine-work. It was a new industry.

840. And your fear is that in a few years' time, with the added perfection of machinery there would be such competition against the hand-made crochet in Ireland, with consequent reduction in

Mr. Boland—continued.

wages, that if a minimum wage were fixed now it would have to be reduced later on?—Yes.

841. With the inevitable result probably that the hand-made industry would die out altogether?—Yes, and your Wages Board could not act quickly enough, because it varies so. There will always be some ladies who want a piece of perfect hand-made lace, but it is a limited trade with a limited demand.

842. As regards these classes under the Congested Districts Board, I suppose it is practically only for six months or a year, or a year and a half, that the girls attend the class-room; after they have learned sufficiently they do all the work at home, and only come to the centre once a month, or once in two months, to get orders?—It amounts to this, that perhaps they attend three or four days in the week when learning, and after they have learnt they may come once or twice a week, or once in a fortnight; they come when their work is done to get paid for it.

843. But practically all your work is carried on in the home, and not carried on in the class-room which the Congested Districts Board has started?—In any well-organised class doing a fair turnover, nine-tenths of the work is done at home.

Mr. Brunner.

844. Is this work only carried on in the summer?—All the year round.

845. Is it then carried on by artificial light very largely, or is it only done in the day-time?—The bulk of it is done in the day-time, but a girl in a hurry to be paid for her work would probably do some at night.

846. You do not think, then, that on the whole very long hours are worked?—No, they may work late at night, but they do not get up very early, and it would just depend upon their natural inclination; some girls you could not make work, and other girls you could not keep from work.

Mr. Arthur Henderson.

847. I would like to ask you if you have any opinion you could put before the Committee as to how much a worker could make in a day or in a week in any of the cases you have brought to our notice, at the price current in Ireland?—These industries, as I have said, are very much cut by foreign competition, and it depends to a large extent upon the state of trade at the time. Just at present in embroidery in Donegal a girl might earn from 3s. 6d. to 7s. a week, but if trade were better I have known them earn as high as 7s., 8s. and 9s. a week. It depends on the state of trade to a very large extent.

848. Could you tell me how many hours per day, or the total number of hours per week a girl would have to work to make, say, your first maximum of 7s.?—I think she would work about factory hours—56.

849. Are there any of those trades you have brought before us this morning which you would really describe as sweated trades?—I really could not say they were, because sweating is a relative term, and it depends on the economic conditions.

850. Would

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Mr. Arthur Henderson—continued.

850. Would you say that as they are working for 56 hours, they are really getting a living wage according to the conditions in Ireland?—A great many of them are, but I might instance the hand-knitting of socks in Donegal, which went down so low that an old woman would knit a dozen pairs of socks for 10½d. by hand. That to an ordinary person is highly-sweated labour, but looked at from the point of view of Leicester competition and machine production, with a girl running three machines by power and turning out socks by the mile, you cannot call it sweating, because it has to compete with that.

851. You really admit that the first case you have given to me would be condemned as sweated labour?—That rate of pay, but still that rate of pay is absolutely settled and fixed by the machine.

852. We need not go into the rates of pay fixed at the moment. You consider that it would be sweated labour in that particular case?—Certainly; I say that a rate of pay that is only attainable at the rate of 10½d. a dozen for hand-knitted socks is sweated labour, but the ordinary acceptance of the term of sweating is the case of a person who gives out work at a sweated wage and who might pay more.

853. Have you any remedy whatever to suggest to the Committee for dealing with what people would be entitled to call sweated labour?—If a woman goes into an industry where she has to compete against a machine, she has just to take the hand-labour equivalent of that, and I do not see what else she can do.

854. Have you no remedy at all? Am I right in saying that you are against licensing?—Yes.

855. And you are against the Wages Board?—I think it would be practically unworkable.

856. Have you any remedy at all, or do you desire that these industries in Ireland should be left absolutely free to go on under these sweated conditions?—I think that if you touch them you will annihilate them.

857. I suppose I will have to take that as an answer: they will have to be left alone?—Yes.

858. In answer to one of the members, I think you said something about Protection; you are not quite sure that that is a remedy, are you?—No, I do not see that it is a remedy where your production is in excess of your home consumption.

859. I must conclude that your desire is that you should just be left where you are?—I would like you to improve us, but I want to see the economic way, and I have not been shown that.

860. We have brought you here to try to show us if you have any suggestion to make?—No, you brought me here to discuss two proposals, and I have discussed them. I have made no proposals.

Mr. Massie.

861. Have you had any opportunity of comparing the wages paid to home-workers for embroidery with the prices charged in wholesale shops, say in Belfast?—With regard to that, I would say that there was a fairly considerable margin of profit—I think you would find that if you bought these goods in New York you would not find that there was the whole difference of 70 per cent., the American tariff—that is to

Mr. Massie—continued.

say, the New York trader has a trade custom of selling linen goods at a relatively less amount of profit than the traders are in the habit of putting on linen goods sold in the United Kingdom.

862. I am speaking solely of wages for the embroidery work done and the price charged for embroidery work done. Did you ever hear that ladies in England have sometimes sent their work to home-workers not far from Belfast and paid immensely less than they paid for exactly the same work done through the wholesale shops?—I would expect that.

863. In reference to the competition which you thought was one of the causes of the evil state of this industry, you said, I think, that Japan took 4,500,000 yards of linen from Ireland in a particular year?—Yes, in 1906, Japan's imports came to that.

864. Does Teneriffe also take linen from Ireland?—Yes; Teneriffe took in 1902 227,000 yards, and in 1906 293,000, so that their rate is not increasing greatly, due to the competition from Japan.

865. Does Switzerland also take linen from Ireland?—Oh, yes.

866. So that on the whole, as Mr. Fell suggested, the foreign competition is very good for the linen trade?—That linen was going to be embroidered, any way; there was a public demand for it.

867. Still, the foreign customer takes the linen?—What we are dealing with is the embroidery of it.

868. What I wanted to put to you was this: you would not think that Ireland would be benefited on the whole if Japan were to sink beneath the sea?—That is a very drastic remedy to suggest, and I would not sink Japan for the sake of the Irish embroidery trade.

869. I think you also said that Nottingham competed?—No, Nottingham does not compete with us at all; we are rather friendly with Nottingham.

870. The remedy you suggest is a better technical education, and an education in the use of machinery, if that were possible?—Yes.

871. I suppose it would be much more expensive to teach the work by means of machinery; it would be too expensive for the locality?—It means an enormous sinking of capital, and it means an enormous previous sinking of capital in training the workers, probably more money sunk in training the workers than in providing the machinery.

872. So that you do not think it is really practicable?—It is not what would entice capital.

873. You spoke of the vast number of illiterates, and you suggested that there was no cure, except, perhaps, a meal a day; would that be as a bribe, or because the children are really starving?—I would put it from both points of view. These children are insufficiently fed; in the winter months there is no milk, and the children are fed upon black tea and dried bread, you may say from November to March. If you gave them a square meal at school, and taught the elder girls to cook that meal, you would build up the strength of the child, you would improve the population and you would bring them to education.

874. If

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Mr. Massie—continued.

874. If technical education, through machinery, seems impracticable at the present time, I suppose there is nothing else for it than to spread other industries that are not so heavily competed with?—The difficulty is to find what the other industries are.

Mr. Chiozza Money.

875. With regard to the samples of lace you have submitted to us, there is a hand-made lace at 10s. a yard, and a machine-made lace at a shilling a yard before me. You do recognise that these things are in an entirely different category?—So far as the expert public is concerned, they are; so far as the great mass of the public is concerned who would make the demand for the Irish lace, they are not.

876. I take the ordinary Englishwomen, I would not say of the upper middle classes, but even of the middle classes, and if you put these two laces before them, they would distinguish at a glance, as I was able to, which was the lace, and which was not the lace. Is there any suggestion that these goods are really in the same category?—They are so like one another, that when a lady wants to wear that upon her dress, when she is viewed at the average distance of 10 feet by a spectator, it does not make much difference.

877. I should have thought any man or woman of the upper middle classes, or of the middle classes, could easily have distinguished between these two, as they could distinguish between a water-colour and a print?—I do not think they can always distinguish between a water-colour and a print.

878. It is not possible, by means of Protection, to make *this* article compete with *that* one. *This* is a shilling a yard. How much per cent. would it be necessary to put on this in order to enable the other to compete with it?—That sample in your right hand would probably retail at 4s. or 5s. a yard, against the other at 15s.

879. And it would want a very high duty to keep out this article?—I do not propose to put a duty upon it.

880. At any rate, I may put this to you, quite apart from any view as to Protection; there is only one way to meet machine competition in any trade, and that is to work that trade by machinery. That is an obvious proposition, is it not?—It is, but for the people I am dealing with, it is not so obvious.

881. There is one other thing: Do you suggest that the amount of skilled intelligence and artistic taste which lies behind the production of this article *here* is not sufficient to produce this other article by means of machinery?—To produce that article by means of machinery involves a very much greater technical skill than to produce it by the needle.

882. Obviously the hands and brains which can produce *that* are of a sufficiently high order to enable them to be trained to produce *this*?—They are, but you will not get capital to wait for that consummation while they are learning.

883. With regard to the establishment of a machine industry which is obviously necessary to compete with *this*, would it not be obvious

Mr. Chiozza Money—continued.

that that machine industry would have to be established near coal mines; and, at any rate, to be nearer the coal than your part of Ireland is?—Yes, we are on the wrong side of Ireland for the coal.

884. So that you recognise that the economic difficulties are inherent to the situation of these industries?—Yes, our coal costs us 35s. there, as against 6s. at the pit's mouth.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

885. As a matter of fact, you are encouraging your protégées to compete against machinery, are you not?—The machine has begun to compete against us since we started.

886. As a matter of fact, they are competing against machinery?—With a certain class. Taking the class that is going to buy that lace, they want a good thing and are willing to pay for it. That class is a limited number.

887. The whole gist of your evidence has been to show that machine-made goods have reduced the price of your articles?—In all home industries machine competition has reduced the price of labour for hand-work.

888. Do you know any trade in which the hand is working against machinery which is not accompanied by sweated conditions?—It is the economic cause of low wages in the home industry.

889. I ask, do you know any trade in which the hand is competing against machinery which is not accompanied by sweated conditions?—No, I do not think there is such a trade.

890. Then why do you adopt that form of employment in the West of Ireland?—Because that is the only conceivable employment you could bring there.

891. Therefore, if it were suggested to you that the Congested Districts Board would be better occupied in endeavouring to improve the people's work, that would be a correct principle, would it not?—To improve it by the introduction of machinery?

892. Yes?—That means the introduction of such an enormous amount of capital that it is practically hopeless.

893. Have you taken any opportunity of consulting the Irish Department upon that question?—I have been in intimate relations with the Congested Districts Board for 10 years, and I know that the moment they propose to assist by a grant any industry in which machinery is employed, all the employers who are engaged in that industry get up and say: "How are we to compete against a State-aided factory of that sort?"

894. It is for the Irish Department to consider, but it seems to me that for the Irish Department to expend its money in an endeavour to improve the people by directing their attention to a hopeless form of trade in which there is no future, is a peculiarly narrow-minded way of looking at the question?—Yes, but what is enforced there is a great deal of wisdom after the event. I have fully explained to this Committee that it was the samples sent by the Congested Districts Board to Scotland to the Glasgow Exhibition which were copied by German manufacturers, which

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MR. WALKER.

[Continued.]

Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

led to the introduction of that machine-made crochet.

895. New conditions produce new limitations; it is not sufficient for the Irish Board to stand by and wring its hands; it must meet the conditions which now exist. Do you think it is for the public benefit that articles for human wear should be manufactured under the conditions you have described?—I do, if you consider that the conditions might be worse otherwise.

896. Do you think ladies would be satisfied to wear articles of hosiery produced in hovels in Ireland if they knew?—Ladies buy the article very often on that account, to help the people.

897. Coming back again to lace; is it not the fact that in consequence of the fashion Irish crochet lace has been in very great demand, especially in Paris?—Yes.

898. And that the price has risen very greatly?—The price is such, or was up till recently, as to give the home-workers better remuneration upon that than on any other description of home industry.

899. May I come back again to my question: Is it not the fact that Irish crochet hand-made lace, which, with all due deference to you, the machine cannot satisfactorily compete with, is a class of lace which has been in great demand in Paris recently, and that the price has greatly increased?—Certainly, but the price of every other commodity has gone up in the last two years.

900. Have you any means of conveying to your workers the information that that class of work is the best class of work for them to turn their attention to?—Our information depends entirely on the demand, and we very promptly tell them to go on producing, or to keep from producing, the same quality or the same patterns.

901. Why should the worker be engaged in producing an inferior kind of lace like that (*indicating*), a lace that can be copied by an inferior lace like that (*indicating*), when she can make better wages by producing the Irish crochet?—I think you misunderstand; that pattern there was produced at Foxpoint class, and that is the slavish imitation of the German manufacturer.

902. Where your workers are engaged in making lace in which there is practically no machine competition, they will earn a better wage than by being engaged in making lace like this where there is machine competition. What steps do you take to inform the workers?—You cannot inform the workers; any German manufacturer can get your samples and copy them.

903. What opportunity has the teacher of getting the market price for the lace?—She has the opportunity of dealing with several large wholesale houses and of selecting the one that pays the best prices.

904. And each teacher does her own business, as the case may be, in some remote corner of Ireland?—Yes.

905. How is she to know what is the best price to be got for lace?—That is a thing that corrects itself easily; I go round these classes about two or three times a year, and find out what prices they are getting for their work, and I sometimes

Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

say, "You should try to get them to give a little more for that."

906. Do you not think you would be able to pay higher prices to the workers if you had a central office for the sale of the goods and for the information of the workers?—We have an organisation of that sort in Dublin.

907. You do not seem to work from it?—We do.

908. You say that each teacher in the country sells the lace for the workers?—The organisation turned over £30,000 last year in lace, and they have always applied the entire profit made upon the sale of lace to extending the business, and and no person in connection with it has ever got a penny on their capital or any money for their services as directors. But even taking that organisation, I would prefer to put other places in competition with it so as to correct their prices again.

909. Can you tell us what are the average wages of those engaged in the making of linen in Ireland?—I think spinners would earn from 9s. to 10s. or 11s. a week.

910. Is that women workers?—Yes. Factory workers, weavers, would earn from 9s. to 12s.

911. Would it not be better for you to direct the attention of your workers to this better payment in the manufacture of the linen?—With regard to that, roughly speaking, all those spots on the map would average 15 or 16 miles from a railway station; there are no coals in any place in the West of Ireland, and if you brought the material to make the web of linen across Ireland by railway and brought it back again after it was made, the cost would be prohibitive.

912. There is the alternative of taking the worker to the mill?—If you brought the material to the worker and sent it back by rail, your margin would have absolutely disappeared, and a great deal of the worker's wages would go on account of freight.

913. You have the alternative of taking the worker to the mill?—They will not go to the mill; you could never move a worker in Ireland from one county to another; they will go to America, but they will not go into the next county.

Mr. Bridgeman.

914. Where did those figures of exported linen, which you gave us just now, come from?—I think from the Board of Trade; I got them in Belfast a day or two ago. If you like I will get you the source.*

Mr. Boland.

915. Probably they are given by the linen manufacturers themselves?—I think they are also to be found in the Flax Supply Association's reports.

Mr. Hugh Law.

916. You have been a great many years with the Congested Districts Board now?—Nine or ten.

*Annual Statement of Trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign Countries, 1906, page 237, vol. 2. This cloth is stated by Belfast merchants to be practically nearly all for re-manufacture and is re-shipped direct—Japan to America—which is Ireland's largest customer for linen.

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Mr. WALKER.

[Continued.]

Mr. Hugh Law—continued.

917. The Board, of course, makes no profit out of the work, and all its efforts are directed to get the best possible markets for the workers, and the best possible price?—Yes.

918. It needs a certain knowledge of Irish conditions really to appreciate this thing?—Yes.

919. A knowledge of Whitechapel is not likely to enable anybody to make suggestions that would be very valuable in connection with Ireland; our case is a very distinct one?—Absolutely dissimilar.

920. You would not describe the lace-making of the West of Ireland, or these other trades generally, as hopeless trades, would you?—No.

921. A wage which would be absolutely a starvation wage to a worker in a town might quite well be a very considerable and handsome addition to the general family budget of a family in the West of Ireland?—The average family budget in a West of Ireland district among that class of people would be an income of £15 or £20, and if you can only bring in £5 or £10 a year in addition, it boils the kettle.

922. So that really it is not quite true to speak of these trades as sweated trades?—You cannot describe the lace trade as sweated.

923. In using that term you have to take into consideration other things than wages. Sweated conditions, if I recollect the decision of the House of Lords aright, relate also to hours, and what may be called generally over-driving. You would not consider the people there over-driven, and they do the work very much as they choose?—I would call a sweated industry an industry where you have no competitors and where you were not bound by a low wage-scale. Take the hooks and eyes in Birmingham; I do not see that anybody is competing at all with Birmingham in hooks and eyes, or wants to make them, and that is the greatest sweated industry I know of. If you raise the price of those hooks and eyes in Birmingham, you will sell them just the same.

924. Do you think there are certain trades in which a minimum wage might be established, or, at any rate, in which the wage of the worker

Mr. Hugh Law—continued.

probably could be increased without destroying the trade?—There are.

925. But with regard to the West of Ireland you would say that the work in which people are employed there is done under such conditions as do not admit of that increase?—If you establish your Wages Board there and have to arrange a scale of wages that does not allow the thing to run economically, it disappears.

926. And the thing is valuable to the country?—Very valuable, even although the wages may be low.

Mr. Boland.

927. As the question of value has been raised, could you give us an idea of the annual output of lace from Ireland?—About £100,000, of which £95,000 would be wages.

928. And consequently the retention of that as a home industry is a very important question to Ireland?—It is very important, because it is precisely where it is most wanted that it exists.

929. Take the other very important one, the homespun industry; could you give an indication of the annual value of that?—I think about £15,000 a year.

930. We had a suggestion, I think, from Mr. Samuel that possibly the Congested Districts Board, seeing that machine-made lace is now competing with the hand-made lace of Ireland, should bend its energies to have machinery put up in the West of Ireland. Is it not the fact that if such a suggestion were made by the Congested Districts Board that its money should be spent in providing machinery, immediately the English machinery owners would object on the ground that money was being spent to foster or bounty-feed industry?—Quite so, and I have seen it done in the carpet industry when the Congested Districts Board proposed to give assistance for starting a carpet factory.

931. Consequently the Board, in doing its best to develop the hand-made lace industry, is acting within the limitations it has?—Yes, because it is not competing with anybody.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Wednesday, 11th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Ernest Lamb.
Mr. Hugh Law.

Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Parke.
Mr. Arthur Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Sir Thomas Whittaker.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. ALFRED SMITH called in ; and Examined.

Chairman.

932. You represent the firm of Messrs. Hart and Levy, Limited, of Leicester, I believe?—Yes.

933. Your firm are large clothing manufacturers in different parts of the country?—Yes, they are.

934. Will you tell us where you have factories?—We have factories at Leicester, Burton Latimer, Nuneaton, Colchester, and also a place at Brightlingsea and London.

935. So that you have a very extensive acquaintance with the wholesale clothing trade?—Yes.

936. As you know, we are investigating the conditions of home-workers, and they are largely employed in the tailoring trade. Would you give us a summary of your views as to how their conditions could be improved ; what is your view of the question generally?—The question of how to improve the conditions of home-workers in the tailoring trade without causing hardship is a very difficult one. Tailoring lends itself especially to home-work employment, so very little machinery being required, and some parts of garments require so very little skill, that it is to this that women invariably turn when left unprovided for and dependent upon themselves. Any obstacles placed in the way of easily procuring this sort of home-employment, that is, making it difficult to obtain, would cause very great hardship to a large number of people. Much, I think, can be done to protect this class from unscrupulous employers.

937. What would you suggest?—By a proper system of licensing and registration, by increased inspection, and by a Central Wages Board and District Wages Boards.

938. With regard to the Wages Boards, do you propose that they should fix a minimum wage?—With regard to a minimum being fixed for the tailoring, I would like to point out a few of the

Chairman—continued.

practical difficulties in fixing a minimum, and also the probable result, and to show that the real safeguards are the three mentioned, rather than the minimum.

939. Let us clearly understand : You recommend the Wages Boards?—And District Wages Boards.

940. If they did not fix a minimum, what would they fix?—I will come to that point gradually.

941. We should like to understand beforehand. What would the Wages Board fix if it did not fix a minimum wage?—It should control the wages.

942. How would it control them?—By the licence.

943. Do I understand, then, that you mean that a Wages Board would not fix wages?—Not fix a minimum.

944. What would it fix?—I take it that the Wages Board would take the place really of the Trade Union officials, to whom any home-worker could apply if they thought they were being sweated, or if they thought their wages were not as high as they should be.

945. What would the Board do then?—They would have the power to cancel the employer's licence to employ out-workers.

946. That would be practically fixing a minimum wage?—It would control it, not fix it.

947. If you did not allow a man to employ a worker unless he paid a satisfactory remuneration, you would have to fix the remuneration which would be considered satisfactory ; that would be practically fixing a minimum wage, would it not?—Not for piece-work. Take a trouser, how could you fix a minimum wage for a trouser? It depends on the amount of work put in.

948. I want to understand what this Wages Board would do, as you referred to a Wages Board?—every

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Mr. SMITH.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

—Every employer of out-workers should be compelled to take out a licence to employ out-workers, a copy of this licence to be sent to the District Wages Board, together with a schedule of the prices he will pay. If those prices are not satisfactory in their opinion, they shall have power to withhold his licence.

949. That is practically fixing a minimum wage?—Yes, but you leave it to the employer first to decide.

950. Obviously they must arrive at some decision as to whether the prices are satisfactory or not?—And if not satisfactory they would have power to act.

951. That means that they fix a minimum price below which they will not allow a man to employ?—Yes, but they do not fix a standard minimum.

952. They fix a minimum for that particular time?—For his particular class of work.

953. So that they do fix a minimum wage?—For his particular class of work, not for the country, and not for the district.

954. They fix a minimum wage for that particular job, for that particular employer?—No, they would leave it to him; they would refuse to grant his licence until he had fixed one satisfactory to them.

955. That would mean that, practically, they would decide what, in their judgment, was a satisfactory minimum wage?—Yes.

956. And, therefore, they would fix a minimum wage?—Yes, they would, practically, for that particular work.

957. You want to point out to us some difficulties in the way of fixing a minimum wage, do you not?—Yes. I take two articles only, a trouser and a knicker. The reason I take these articles is that they are very simple articles to make, and whatever objections with regard to a minimum can be brought to bear on these articles, the same objections can be brought against more complicated garments in a greater degree.

958. Do you wish to show them to us?—Yes, here are two trousers, the one made in the East End of London, and the other made by my own firm in Leicester. I will read an extract from the London trouser-maker's letter, which was sent to us last week, if you will allow me.

959. How did the letter arise?—We had a trouser sent to us last week from London, which was a very cutting trouser—very low.

960. You mean you had them sent to you by someone who wished to supply your firm with them?—Yes, and I would like to point out to you from that trouser, the difficulty there would be in fixing a minimum rate for trousers. The difference between our trouser and the one supplied to us is so very great, that I cannot see how a minimum can be fixed for any particular article of clothing. The trouser sent to us, he said, they could cut, make and trim as per sample at 7s. 6d. per dozen; that is to say, we estimate that for cutting and making this trouser, he would only pay 5d. We have a trouser here which has cost us 1s., and if you say that the minimum wage for trousers shall be 7d., what is to prevent the man who made this trouser from making ours for 7d.?

Chairman—continued.

961. Will you tell me what is to prevent him doing it now?—Nothing will prevent it unless there is no competition for one particular class of work, and there is competition for the other class.

962. Would not that apply now as then?—That he could make that trouser?

963. I understand your point to be that if a minimum price of 7d. or 7½d. were fixed for a certain class of trousers, the tendency would be to bring those trousers, for which more is paid, down to that price?—Yes.

964. Why not now?—Because there would not be the cheap trouser for him to make; by your fixing a minimum price for this trouser at 7d., it would prevent him making it altogether. We should be able to import this from foreign countries at a lower rate than we could produce it for.

965. That is another point for the moment, but I understood you to suggest that it would bring the price of the 1s. trousers, if I may so describe them, down to 7d.?—That is so.

966. I want to know why the fact that these trousers are now made at 7d. does not bring the 1s. ones down to 7d.?—Of course, that could be done; I do not say that does not happen; with sweated labour you can always get a low price for any article.

967. I want to elicit from you what it is that is in your mind when you suggest that the fixing of a minimum wage by a Wages Board would bring about this fall in the price of the better-paid article, looking to the fact that the lower-priced article now made does not bring about that fall now. I want to know what you think would be the reason for that; I do not follow your reasoning?—The one reason is that the sweater would not have this class of labour to work at, and they must find employment at some particular class.

968. Surely, the position is worse now; I understand that that worker gets less than 7d.?—He gets 5d.

969. If the work could be done at 5d., surely it would be more likely to bring down the price of the 1s. article than if it were done at 7d.?—I say that if the price fixed for the cheaper trouser was 7d., it would not be produced.

970. Then, if the article were not produced, the other article would hold the field at 1s.?—Yes; he would turn his attention to the better class at once, and it would cause the wages of the higher-class articles to be dropped gradually to a lower level.

971. Can you point out to us the difference between those two trousers?—Nearly the whole of the cheaper trouser has been made by machine; a great part of the other one has been done by hand. I am not saying that the people who made this trouser for 5d. would not all of them be able to earn a very fair living by machinery; if they had proper machinery and were proper workers, I am convinced they would earn a very fair livelihood even at that low price. The difference is that there is more hand labour in the one than in the other.

972. So you wish us to understand that these trousers you had offered to you at 7½d. each for making?—Cutting, making and trimming.

973. You

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Mr. SMITH.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

973. You were to supply the material?—Yes.
974. And they would make them for 7½d.?—Cut, make and trim them.

975. I understand you to suggest to us that although that price seems very low, you think that people could earn a fair wage at it?—A fair livelihood at it.

976. Because the whole of the work is done by machinery?—Nearly the whole.

977. And is not particularly high-class work?—Not carefully done.

978. That means that low prices paid do not necessarily mean low wages earned?—They do not; and another thing is that by fixing a minimum in the tailoring you could not fix a maximum amount of work to be done for that minimum.

979. When the people make these trousers there will be a price fixed for making them; is there a price arranged between the employer and the work-women?—Yes, there would be; there should be.

980. Is there any more difficulty in a Wages Board fixing that price than fixing it by the individuals themselves?—Except that if a low minimum wage is fixed by Government it will come to be recognised as a legal rate of pay, and firms who do not go in for this low class of work would, if the Government fixed a minimum, be tempted to go in for it.

981. Government would not fix it; the Wages Board would?—That means that it would be a perfectly legal and just payment if they fixed it.

982. I understand you to say that the payment yields a fair wage?—Yes, it would.

983. Then what is there to deter anyone who wishes to go into that trade from doing so now?—Nothing, except that it is a class of trade that is not worth cultivating.

984. Would it be made worth cultivating if a Wages Board fixed the rate?—If you fix a low minimum rate firms who pay a higher rate for the same work might come down to this low level.

985. Why do they not do so now?—Because they are fair and honest straightforward employers, I suppose.

986. Would they cease to be so if a minimum wage were fixed?—If the minimum wage fixed were very low prices would have a tendency to come down.

987. I confess I do not quite follow the reasoning?—Shall I explain?

988. I should be very glad of any explanation of the point. I understand your point to be, that although this work is done now at a low rate, if the Wages Board fixed a low rate the fact that they did fix it would tend to bring all wages down for trouser-making to that rate?—Yes, I think it would have that tendency.

989. I want to know why it should?—The cost for finishing this trouser would not be more than from ½d. to ¾d. a pair; the cost of the other one would be quite 3d. to 3½d.

990. It is not the detail of the price, but the principle you are laying down—that the fixing of the price by the Wages Board for a low class of work would tend to bring the price of the better class of work down to that figure; I want to know why?—I think in any district where a low rate of wages is fixed it has a natural tendency to reduce wages.

Chairman—continued.

991. I understand you that a low rate of wage is now paid, and therefore it does exist; why does it not bring down the payment now?—There is no doubt it does gradually.

992. Then a Wages Board would make no difference?—Not as regards fixing a minimum, and if they fixed a minimum I think it would have the tendency to reduce wages.

993. Would you pass on to the further difficulties you consider are in the way of fixing a minimum wage; you speak of the method of giving out the work?—Another difficulty is that trousers or knickers for home-workers are given out in so many different ways: either to be made complete, or to be finished only, or to be finished and pressed off, or to be button-holed and pressed off. The trouser also is either lined or unlined. That is to say, to specify a minimum price for home-workers for trousers would mean that a minimum would have to be fixed for each operation, and this would mean at least a dozen minimums, and how could you fix a minimum for finishing a trouser?

994. In your works, you sub-divide the work in this way, I presume?—We do.

995. You have a price for each of these processes?—Yes, we have.

996. Is there any difficulty in similarly having a price for such of these processes, if the work be done at home?—Not with us.

997. With anyone?—The difficulty that I see is this, that the difference in finishing is so very great, and the quality of the work put into it is so very different by different firms, that it seems to me impossible that a minimum can be fixed for any article in tailoring. *This* trouser costs from about ½d. to ¾d. per pair for finishing, and this other one costs 3d.; what use, therefore, would a minimum be, if it was fixed for this article?

998. The different works doing different classes of work will have different rates of payment now?—If you specified the different rates of payment for trousers alone, you would want 30 to 40 minimums. There are flannel trousers, which take more labour in some parts of the making than tweed trousers, and you would have to have a minimum for those.

999. You mean the scale would be a very complicated one?—Very complicated indeed.

1000. Still, such complication already exists; these variations of price exist in different works from different employers for different classes of work?—Yes, and the state of fashion continually changes.

1001. Still, you have to fix the prices when the fashion changes?—The employer does at once.

1002. And the Wages Board would do so?—It would be very difficult to fix one all-round, because the style does not change equally with all firms.

1003. You are not under the impression, I imagine, that if a price were fixed for a certain class of work for finishing trousers, for instance, that would apply to whatever kind of trousers were made?—I take it, you would have to fix the lowest price you considered fair and just for finishing a trouser.

1004. For a particular class of finishing. There are

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

are varying prices now paid for finishing trousers, are there not?—Very varied.

1005. And they represent very different work?—Yes, very different.

1006. Then, there would have to be a minimum price for each of these different kinds of work?—And each manufacturer's minimum would be different from that of the other?

1007. Not for the same work?—But they do not put in the same work.

1008. If the work varied, the price would be different, would it not?—The Wages Board would have a most complicated business.

1009. That is really your difficulty,—that the work would be very complicated?—Very complicated: for instance, one man might put on his buttons securely, and another might not.

1010. Now, with regard to fixing the wage, what effect do you think that would have? Would it draw work from any district, do you think?—Yes, I think if a high minimum wage were fixed in any district, work would gradually be withdrawn from that district.

1011. I presume you understand what the suggestion is as to the constitution of the Wages Board—that half the membership be elected by the workpeople, and half by the employers in the locality?—Yes.

1012. Do you think that they would be likely to fix a wage that would drive the work away from the locality, so that they would lose it?—No, I do not.

1013. Then the danger of the work being driven away by that high rate of minimum wage is not a real one?—It would be if the minimum wage fixed were higher than you could get it done for in any other district.

1014. But I understood you to agree that if the wage were fixed in the locality by the employers and workpeople, they would not fix such a high wage?—But it is a well-known fact in the tailoring trade, that you can get work done cheaper in some parts of the country than in others.

1015. My point is that I understood you to admit that the employers and workpeople constituting this Board in the district in which they lived and worked, would not be likely to fix a wage which would drive the work from their district?—I do not suppose they would.

1016. Then there would not be that danger?—If it did happen, that they did fix it high, there would.

1017. But they would be most intimately concerned with the work, and it would be their interest to retain the trade in their district?—Yes, it would.

1018. Therefore, they would not be likely to fix a wage which would drive the trade away?—Except that I think it is being done now; that very thing which you suggest would not happen, is happening at the present time in Leicester.

1019. That the workpeople and the masters are driving the trade away?—No, but the Trade Unions in Leicester have fixed a minimum rate of pay in the hosiery trade.

1020. This rate would not be fixed by the Trade Union, but it would be fixed by the Wages Board, half of the members of which would con-

Chairman—continued.

sist of employers, and half of workpeople, with an independent Chairman?—This minimum is also fixed by arbitration by the Masters' Federation and the Union officials, and the minimum fixed for the town of Leicester is certainly a shade higher than they can get the work done for in the outer districts, and trade is gradually and surely leaving the town for that very reason.

1021. You would wish to modify your reply now, and to say that people interested in the trade would be likely to fix a wage which would drive the trade away from them?—That would not be their object, but they would have a tendency to fix a high price for their particular locality, and the price for that locality might be higher than the price fixed for any other locality.

1022. Still, they would be open to modify that, if they found it was driving the trade away?—They might be.

1023. It is their own interest to keep the trade there?—We always find that when a wage is once established, you can never drop it; it is a most difficult matter.

1024. You have factories in different parts of the country, and you say that a certain trade is being driven, or likely to be driven from Leicester; does that mean that you would do in other parts of the country, at your other works, the work you have hitherto been doing at Leicester?—I cannot say what would occur, but that, no doubt, is the tendency at the present time in Leicester in the other industries; whether we should be tempted to follow that example, or not, I cannot say.

1025. You think others are drifting in that direction?—It is a well-known fact in Leicester that because the minimum fixed there is higher than in a certain outside area, manufacturers are removing their works, and building others outside the area affected.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

1026. Are you referring to the tailoring, or the hosiery trade?—The hosiery and shoes, where a minimum does exist.

Chairman.

1027. When the manufacturers moved their works to other districts, there would be a Wages Board there, probably; would not that tend to put the wage up to the rate which was paid in places like Leicester?—I suppose it would come to that gradually.

1028. Therefore it would rectify itself?—In the course of time.

1029. Have you to meet any serious competition in low-priced goods made in Ireland?—Very cheap blouses are made there, boys' sailor blouses and tunic suits, and also very cheap washing suits.

1030. The cheapest class of things are made in Belfast, are they not?—Yes.

1031. Are prices lower than you can produce them for here?—At prices lower than we can produce them for at Leicester, any way.

1032. Do you represent that that is because the payment for making them is lower?—We take it that it must be so.

1033. Then your proposal, as I understood, was

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

was that every employer must take out a licence?
—Yes, that is my proposal.

1034. From the Wages Board?—From Government, I presume; the Government would license him to employ out-workers.

1035. Then, the Wages Board is to have power to withdraw that licence?—Yes.

1036. If the Wages Board does not grant it?
—I do not know if that would make any difference.

1037. When I asked whether the Wages Board would grant the licence, you said, No; that Government would do it?—I think that is a matter of detail.

1038. It is rather important, as I want to get at what your plan is; your plan, I understand, is that the employer is to be licensed, but that the Wages Board is to have power to withdraw that licence, if the wages paid are, in their judgment, unsatisfactory?—Yes, I take it that the Wages Board would be appointed through Government authority, and by Government really.

1039. No, the proposal for the Wages Board is that the members of the Wages Board shall half of them be elected by the workpeople in the district and half of them by the employers in the district, so that Government would not appoint the Wages Board, but the people in the trade would appoint it?—The Government would have to grant the licence in the first place, and the Wages Board would have power, if the schedule of prices is not satisfactory, to cancel that, subject to leave to appeal.

1040. You would leave it to the Wages Board to decide in case of complaint whether the payment was a fair and adequate one or not?—Yes, I would.

1041. Do you feel that the Wages Board would be able to deal with all the complications and technicalities of the trade to which you have referred?—No, I do not think they would.

1042. Then if they could not do that any more than they could fix the rate of wages, how would they be able to decide whether this was a fair payment in the particular case?—I think they would have to investigate every separate complaint that came to them. Take our own place in Leicester: we should have for our outside workers at least 150 different prices, and how could the Wages Board say which was a fair price or not in looking through the list?

1043. Still, you are going to ask them to do so?—No, I say that any complaint that comes to them they ought to investigate. I attach very little importance to their seeing the price list, because I feel sure there is no Board could pick out any bad case of pay through looking at the price list. The only thing to do is to send for a sample of the garment and to judge from that.

1044. Have you any other observations to make upon that part of your evidence?—Yes, I think out-workers should be licensed also.

1045. What would the licence imply?—For every out-worker engaged by a manufacturer the employer should fill up a form stating that he is engaging her as an out-worker, with the name and address, and send this form on to the District Wages Board.

Chairman—continued.

1046. Who would license the out-worker?—That would be her licence to work.

1047. Then the employer would license her?—Yes, subject to the District Wages Board's sanction. They have already sanctioned the employer to employ out-workers.

1048. This really would not be a licence, then; it would merely be a certificate that he was employing that person?—As an out-worker, and on this licence I would state that if any out-worker considers she is unfairly paid for any work, if she appeals to the District Wages Board they should investigate her complaint.

1049. Have you any knowledge or opinion with regard to the work given out by middlemen?—I think sweating is more prevalent when given out by middlemen than when given out separately by employers to single out-workers.

1050. Do firms like yours, who have workers like your own, give out work through middlemen?—They give out to a few men more work than these men can do themselves, and they have to employ others to help them.

1051. Is that where the sweating occurs, do you think?—I think more sweating occurs through the employment of middlemen than in any other way.

1052. Have you any suggestion to make with regard to middlemen so employed?—I think every middleman ought to be licensed the same as a single out-worker, and every middleman ought to keep a register of the hands he employs, and a register of the wages paid for at least six months. With the inside hands of a contractor the course must be different. Half the labour is frequently piece-labour with him, and half day-labour. The piece-labour should be effectually protected. Every price list for piece-labour in these workshops should be signed by the firm for whom the work is taken out. Thus the firm themselves become responsible for their paying a fair rate of wages for the article they really produce.

1053. Would it be your aim to encourage and foster home-work? Do you consider it desirable, speaking generally?—Yes, I do, if it is under a proper system.

1054. You lay great stress on the difference between controlling prices and fixing prices?—Yes, I think there is a great difference.

1055. What is the real difference?—That the responsibility rests with the employer, in the first place, and if he fixes them too high, the District Wages Board do not interfere at all, but if he fixes them too low, they have that power.

1056. Of course, if the Board fixed a minimum wage, they would not interfere with the men who paid more?—But there is no man would pay more, if the wage were fixed by law, or by the Wages Board.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

1057. Have you any figures by which you could inform the Committee what is the average amount you pay your women out-workers a week?—For trouser and knicker finishers, the average wage paid would be about 12s.; they would average 12s. a week. For blouse hands outside, in
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[Continued.]

Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

the town of Leicester, the average wage is 16s. a week.

1058. Is that piecework?—All piecework.

1059. May I ask: Is the 5d. trouser you showed to the Committee made by women? Is it finished by women?—It is made by men. We were so convinced when we heard the price paid for that trouser that it would be made by women, that when we got their letter we sent down to this particular place to see, and the report we had was most satisfactory: the trouser itself was made in a well-ventilated room, and made by men.

1060. You showed the Committee another trouser; is that the only class of trouser you make in your factory?—We make dozens.

1061. Why did you bring that especial one?—Just to illustrate the difference, and the difficulty of fixing a minimum wage for finishing.

1062. Is it not the fact that there is a variety of different finishings of different trousers? From your own factory, could you not have brought us another trouser, in which the difference would have been quite as great as that which you showed us between *this* one and *that*?—Not as great—nothing approaching as great.

1063. Do you attribute the low price to the greater use of machinery?—Altogether.

1064. Then, it is again the fact that the hand is competing against the machine; in finishing trousers with the machine in the making of the cheaper trouser the woman or the man-hand, who is making that trouser entirely by hand, is competing against the machine?—Yes, they are.

1065. Do you know any trade, where the hand is competing against machinery, in which adequate wages are earned?—No, I do not know that I do.

1066. There is another question I wish to ask you. You stated to the Committee that the price for finishing trousers varied in different parts of the country?—Yes, it does.

1067. Do you pay the lowest price in the country for finishing trousers in Leicester?—Oh, no.

1068. Why does not the trade go away from Leicester, then?—Because we make a better class of work in Leicester.

1069. You told the Chairman that if the Wages Board fixed different rates in different parts of the country, the trade would leave Leicester, and that it was leaving Leicester in the hosiery trade. When I asked you if you had the lowest price, and you said, No, I then proceed to ask you why the trade does not leave Leicester, and you say it is because you make a better class of goods. If the Wages Board fixed the wages in different parts of the country, would not that apply just as well as at this moment? Can you not give me an answer?—I should like that repeated.

1070. If you do not pay the lowest price in Leicester, and the trade does not leave you now, why should it leave you under the Wages Board?—Because I think that in fixing a minimum rate of pay in towns, there would be a tendency to make the minimum rate high, and the manufacturers would gradually take their trade into places where no minimum existed.

Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

1071. Why do they not do that now? Why do you retain your trade in Leicester, when people are paying lower prices than you are?—We do our best to retain the trade there by producing a better article.

1072. You stated you would recommend that, if a woman worker objected to the wages she received, she should appeal to the Wages Board. Do you think it likely that an employer would give work to a woman that had appealed against him to the Wages Board?—If any serious case of intimidation could be proved against any employer, I would propose that the Wages Board should have power to cancel his licence to employ out-workers.

1073. There are various reasons why an employer does not give work to an employee, and although that might not be the ostensible reason, some other reason would be found to give what is vulgarly called the "sack" to a woman-worker who had complained to the Wages Board against her employer. Do you not think that would be the result?—Why should the employer know?

1074. The employer must know; the matter must be investigated, as you stated?—But she could send her letter to the District Wages Board, and her name could be kept secret.

1075. Do you think the employer would have very great difficulty in ascertaining which worker it was?—I think there would be great difficulty in causing her much trouble. If you take the case of Unions just now, immediately any intimidation occurs, on the man appealing to the Union, they all come out on strike.

Mr. Arthur Richardson.

1076. I am not quite clear respecting the Wages Board. Whom do you say would nominate the Wages Board?—That is a point I have not thought out.

1077. But do you believe that Wages Boards would be a good thing in the interests of the home-workers and of the employers themselves?—Yes, I do—if they did not attempt to fix wages. I think the very right that the out-worker has to appeal to a Board would cause manufacturers to be very careful.

1078. What would be the business of a Wages Board if they did not fix wages?—They would act almost the same as trade unions do; they do not fix prices—the manufacturers fix the prices.

1079. Then your view of the work of a Wages Board is not to fix wages?—Not to fix wages; I do not think they can in the tailoring trade.

1080. How about licensing? Who should grant the licences?—I certainly think Government should grant the licence to the employer.

1081. Then would you license anyone else?—I should license the out-worker.

1082. Whom do you mean by the out-worker—the middleman?—Both the middleman and the single out-worker.

1083. Are there not children sometimes employed in out-work?—Do you mean by the firm?

1084. I ask a plain question. Are not children sometimes employed as out-workers, actually doing the work at home with their mothers?—They are not employed by the manufacturer.

1085. No, but are there not some children actually

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Mr. Arthur Richardson—continued.

actually doing the work? Is not some of the home-work actually done by the children?—Possibly it may be.

1086. Who should be licensed in that case—the child?—The mother, or the one who applies for the work, the same as now: the employer would have nothing to do with the employment of children.

1087. That would be the middleman who takes the work from the factory?—I was talking of single out-workers; I thought you meant the single out-worker employing her own children in the production of an article.

1088. I want to know how we are to get over this difficulty about licensing, if there are children employed, if the actual home-workers have to be licensed. Would you license the children?—Oh, no.

Mr. Bridgeman.

1089. Did I understand you to say there was a trade union of out-workers in Leicester?—No, not that I am aware of.

1090. Your idea was simply that the Wages Board would take the place amongst out-workers which the trade union does in connection with the in-workers?—Yes, to give them some protection.

1091. You employ both in- and out-workers?—Yes.

1092. Can you tell us at all whether more profit is made out of an article made outside or in?—In most cases you get the work done cheaper outside; I should say the majority of people do, but I went into the matter before coming up, and I found in connection with a lot of our goods that we actually paid more for outside work than in, although for some we paid less. I certainly think that if it was understood that the prices paid outside for actual work done were the same as those paid inside, the out-workers would have very little cause to complain.

1093. I do not quite follow whether you think that more profit is made out of a pair of trousers made outside or in; that is what I want to get at, if you can tell us?—I should think more profit is made on a pair made outside than on those made in, but this does not apply to all garments.

1094. Is there very much difference?—With ourselves very little, but I do not think that is the general case. I think in some cases firms pay much less for out-work than for in-, for the same amount of work done.

1095. You mean that in other firms you imagine there is more profit in proportion made out of the out-work?—I think so.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

1096. Do you know a large number of the home-workers who apply for work personally?—Yes.

1097. Would you say that among them could easily be found, say, six who would be capable of intelligently representing the interests of the home-worker on the Wages Board in your own locality?—Yes, certainly I could find six.

1098. Do you think they would be able to speak with authority, not only on the particular work they do themselves, but on all the questions

Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

which would come up before the Wages Board?—No, I do not think they would.

1099. Therefore they might be intelligent in themselves, but they would not fulfil the purpose and the function which the plan of the Wages Board assigns to the workers?—I do not think they would; they have just a knowledge of their own particular class, without a knowledge of the whole generally.

1100. Have wages fallen in your own employment, say, during the last five years, or have they remained steady?—Steady; I should think they have rather increased than not.

1101. Does that mean that foreign competition in the tailoring trade has not affected you at all?—It has not affected us at all.

1102. Either in Leicester or London, or at any of your other branches?—It has not affected us in any way whatever.

1103. Do you export a good deal of your stock?—Most of our trade is done in England.

1104. But you do export a good deal?—Some—not very much.

1105. Would you say that a considerable number of your home-workers are what may be called pocket-money earners, that is to say, people who do not have to depend for their entire livelihood on the wages they earn in your employment?—Some of them are, but I should think the vast majority of them are in a great measure dependent upon what they earn. In many cases you may say they are widows, and in other cases I know of they have their own mothers living with them; the husbands have died, and their mothers look after their household while they do their work, and a lot are single girls who prefer to work at home rather than inside.

1106. Is the work fairly steady all the year round, or is it affected by seasons very largely?—Certain work is steady all the year round, with a slack time, which everybody has, about Christmas. The blouse trade, in which we have a number of out-workers, is a season's trade.

1107. Supposing the rates of remuneration were raised by the Wages Board, would that, in your opinion, encourage more people to become home-workers than there are now, owing to the raising of the remuneration, and would it specially tend to encourage what we call pocket-money earners to come in and take up a certain amount of the work?—I should think it would encourage both.

1108. Therefore it might possibly tend to make it harder for the existing home-workers to get as large a share in the work done at home as they get now?—Yes, that might happen.

Mr. Parkes.

1109. Is the reason you do not suffer from foreign competition because you make a higher class of work than is usually made?—I think it must be, but I do not think at the present time that there is much danger from foreign competition in clothing. We do not experience much of it.

1110. You said just now, in the course of your evidence, that a certain class of these goods comes from abroad at a certain price?—A certain class; there is a certain quantity of blouses made in Ireland,

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Mr. Parkes—continued.

Ireland, and there is also a quantity of what you call washing-tunic suits made there.

Chairman.

1111. When you speak of abroad, do you mean Ireland?—No.

1112. In answer to Mr. Parkes' question, you said that some articles came from abroad—from Ireland?—Yes.

1113. Do you include Ireland when you speak of abroad?—I take it that no Wages Board would be fixed for there, and therefore I do call it abroad.

Mr. Parkes.

1114. Do you not also include the Continent, where these goods come from—Germany, or France, or Belgium?—Yes, but we have not experienced any foreign competition.

1115. Are your workers mostly out-workers or factory-workers?—Mostly in-workers.

1116. Do you know the rates of wages your out-workers are paid?—Yes; for trouser and knicker finishers, their average is about 12s. per week; blouse hands average 16s. per week as out-workers, and they are our principal out-workers in Leicester.

1117. Do you know how many out-workers you have altogether?—I cannot say for other places, but I can say for Leicester, and I know that we have in Leicester from 140 to 150.

1118. Is that in the town or in the suburbs?—Taking everything together.

1119. Are your wages in Leicester fixed by a Trade Union or Board?—They are fixed entirely by ourselves.

1120. What about the middlemen? Could you do away with the middlemen?—So far as we are concerned, we could do away with them.

1121. To whom do you pay the money—the middleman or the workers who make these goods?—What I mean by a middleman is a man who has a workshop and takes out work to make at a price. Then, of course, the middleman is paid for that work.

1122. But you do not know what his workers get?—No, we do not.

1123. You cannot tell what his workers get?—No.

1124. Supposing you had a Wages Board, and you had still a middleman in existence, could you be sure that the man or girl, or the woman, who made the articles would get the money you paid?—What I stated was that the employer should be compelled to sign the middleman's price-list, which is by law compelled to be stuck up in his room.

1125. That would not guarantee that the money was paid to the person who made the articles, would it?—I ought to have stated that the wages of each middleman should be kept for at least six months, and if there was a District Wages Board, they could examine his wages.

1126. You do not meet my point; that would not guarantee that the wages you fixed with the middleman would be received by the worker?—It would not guarantee it with us.

1127. How would you find that out, supposing a minimum wage were fixed?—You could find

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Mr. Parkes—continued.

that out by appealing to his wages book that he kept.

1128. That would not find it out?—I take it that if any hand did not receive the money she had earned, it would soon be a question of the Law Court or Wages Board.

1129. Could you make a general rate of wages suitable for different districts, different conditions, and different garments? Would that be a difficult thing?—I cannot see how it could possibly be done.

1130. Would it be an insuperable difficulty?—To my mind it would, to do it satisfactorily.

1131. So that you think Wages Boards are almost impracticable?—If they are going to fix the rates. What I think the Wages Board might do is that they might act more like Trade Union officials act towards the body of workers they look after.

1132. How many times would they have to keep on altering the wages for the different classes of articles?—New classes are coming out every six months, and probably oftener than that.

1133. So that they would have to be constantly altering the rate of wages?—Employers have to get out fresh prices every six months.

1134. Is there a tendency for machinery more and more to take the place of hand labour in factories? Is the tendency to do more of the work in the factories than outside?—There is that tendency, but I do not think machinery in tailoring will ever be what machinery is to other trades; there is always obliged to be a certain amount of hand-work done, especially in the better-class work.

1135. Do you get machinery in the home, as apart from the factory, sometimes?—They may have a sewing-machine, but beyond that nothing.

1136. When you refer to machinery for trousers, I suppose you mean a sewing-machine?—*This (indicating a pair of trousers) is made in the factory.*

1137. But when you refer to machinery, you mean a sewing-machine?—Yes.

Mr. Chiozza Money.

1138. Power-driven?—I do not know whether this was driven by power or not, but ours are driven by power.

Mr. Parkes.

1139. You have got one article made at 1s., and another made at 7d.; how does the public discriminate between the hand-made and the machine-made article in buying it?—They cannot, except that one looks better than the other.

1140. So that you might as well have the article made at 7d. as at 1s., as far as the public is concerned?—It is not as good, and does not give satisfaction.

1141. So far as the public is concerned, I say?—And the material is not so good.

Mr. Fell.

1142. You said you had factories or businesses in five or six towns in England. Do you pay the same prices at all of those towns?—The prices vary; we have not quite the same prices.

1143. You have a different scale for different towns?

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Mr. Fell—continued.

towns?—They do different classes of work in different towns; in one place they might make coats, in another they might make suits, and in another they might make knickers. One factory would never have any coats, and another would never have any vests to make.

1144. You do not make complete suits, then, at any factory?—Yes, at our own at Leicester, and one or two of the other factories. One factory does not always get the same class of work as another.

1145. Do you think the home-workers who are employed by your different factories earn about the same amount, or do they earn different wages?—The rate of pay would vary; it all depends on the quantity of work given out, the manner in which it is given out, and the way in which it is done.

1146. Do you employ labour which works casually, that is to say, which does only a day or two's work a week?—Not that we are aware of.

1147. We have heard of a great deal of work done at home where they only work during the last three days of the week to get some money by Saturday, and where they do not do any work on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday?—I have not come across that with any of our out-workers in Leicester; they are the most respectable body of people I have ever met.

1148. Yours being steady work, and they make good pay?—Yes.

1149. They do not work for the purpose of earning a little surplus money in the tailoring trade?—The vast majority of them work because they are glad of the money, most of them do it for a livelihood, some who help their husbands, and others are widows.

1150. The large proportion of your out-workers are men?—The vast majority are women.

1151. I thought you said those trousers were made by men?—Yes, but *these* (*indicating*) are not our make.

1152. The others were made by women?—Yes. Of course there would be men employed in pressing off in that class of work; the machinery and the finishing would be done by girls, and the pressing off would be done by men.

Mr. ABRAHAM LEVI called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

1166. You are, I understand, President of the Mastor Tailors' Improvement Association?—That is so.

1167. And you wish to give some evidence to us with reference to evidence we have had from one or two witnesses, Miss Squire, Mr. Daly, and one or two others?—Yes.

1168. Will you kindly call our attention to the statements made by Miss Squire to which you would like to refer?—I suppose you have no objection to my looking at the Report?

1169. Certainly not?—Shall we deal with Mr. Daly's evidence first? I refer to Mr. Daly's evidence at page 163; there is a question, No. 3288, where Mr. Daly says: "The deterioration

Mr. Fell—continued.

1153. Those are the women who are earning 12s. and 16s. a week?—Yes.

1154. About what age would they be?—All ages?

1155. Eighteen?—Forty, 30, 20, and 18.

1156. These are the women's wages?—Yes, not men's.

1157. You have trousers there made at 5d., and others at 1s. I think you said that if a minimum of 7d. was fixed, or 8d. for trouser-making, it would tend to bring the price down; the cheap ones would be given up entirely, and the 1s. ones would not be so largely used, and would go down to 7d.?—Yes, that is my opinion.

1158. That is why the fixing of what I may call the middle price would make that almost the maximum price?—I think it would have that tendency.

1159. So that putting up the price for the making of trousers would have what effect, in your opinion?—It would have the tendency to bring the higher class of work down to a lower level.

1160. Down to the middle or medium prices?—Yes.

1161. And therefore that was one of the reasons why you could not advocate the fixing of a minimum price?—Yes.

1162. You said that altogether it was too complicated, in your opinion?—I think so.

1163. You also say that trousers are almost the simplest article to deal with in that way?—Yes, to fix a price for.

1164. But even in the case of trousers, you think it is not possible?—I do not think it is possible; if you fixed a minimum price for finishing the cheaper trouser it would be absolutely no use for the better trouser, and the price fixed as the minimum for the cheaper would be very low; in fact, you would have to touch a minimum we have never touched in Leicester, and one we would never think of touching.

Chairman.

1165. What would be the price of the material of these trousers?—1s. 2½d. to 1s. 3½d. per pair. The finished trousers would be offered to us at 1s. 10½d. to 1s. 11½d. per pair.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Chairman—continued.

in the tailoring trade is mostly due to the Jewish element." Now I want to deal with that particularly, being a Jew myself, and being what we have heard about so much in evidence—a middleman. I am a manufacturer myself, and I will give you facts from experience. Mr. Daly distinctly tried to give this Committee to understand that the trade was very much deteriorated from the time when the Commission sat under Lord Dunraven, and I wish to deny that statement as a whole. With regard to the better-class trade, the influence of the middleman has been to a great extent to put the trade in a position of greater advantage now compared to the time referred to by Mr. Daly, owing to certain differences in the tailoring

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Mr. LEVI.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

tailoring trade which I will give you later on in evidence. There are several other questions with regard to which I have made notes, but I do not think it is quite wise to go through them as a whole.

1170. Your main point is that the Jewish element in the tailoring trade earn a good rate of payment?—Yes.

1171. Would you say that they earn equal to the rates earned by, say, our own countrymen?—I say, better.

1172. You say that the Jewish element earn a better wage than the English tailor?—Yes, I might say to about 20 or 30 per cent. better.

1173. Would you say that was general through all grades of the trade?—It is general in the better-class trade, and also what you may call the slop-work. That, of course, we will deal with later on, in my evidence.

1174. Do I understand you now to be referring to what we may call good middle and best-class tailoring trade?—Yes. I wish to give you to understand at the outset that there are four grades in tailoring at the present time; there is, first, what you call the very cheap work, then what you call the cheap bespoke work, then the bespoke work, and then the high-grade work; and I wish to prove to you that in all these grades of work the Jewish out-worker is employed, and, as my figures will show, in nearly all cases where they are employed in the very cheap work, and where they are employed in very high-grade work, almost within a fraction the wages are practically the same, and the hours of labour are almost the same.

1175. Would you like to refer to the figures now?—If you please. We have here on the first leaf, Harris's, 75, Greenfield Street. He is a middleman, and he makes a very cheap class of work.

1176. He is a manufacturer?—Yes, he gets work out from the factories, but he does not manufacture his own clothes. The work is given out to him from the factories to be made.

1177. He is a middleman?—Yes, he is a direct middleman.

1178. This is Greenfield Street, in the East End?—Yes. You find there that the class of work made is a very cheap class, from 11d. to 1s. 4d. for jackets, and then we have overcoats from 1s. 4d. to 2s. 4d. If you will kindly go down the list, you will find out that the wages (and these are facts which can be proved from the wages book) received by the men and women are exceedingly good.

1179. Will you state the wages?—It is advisable that you should understand this. The machine-work is carried on in most cases under the system of piece-work. The principal machiner will take over the work that comes into the workshop to be done, and he employs, according to the requirements of the situation, three or four under-machiners, and the prices are as follows:—Taking the first machiner on piece-work, he would earn about 7s. 6d. to 8s. a day; the second machiner (which is a fixed wage) would earn 6s. 6d.; the third, 5s. 6d., and the fourth, 4s. 6d.

1180. Are these fixed too?—It is a fixed rate, but the man on piece-work is the leader, and he has to look after the quality of the work.

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Chairman—continued.

1181. Now, then, take the pressers?—There are two, the principal presser and the second presser. The first presser takes this work, which is piece, and his average earnings are 7s. to 7s. 6d., and the under-presser takes 5s. a day, which is fixed.

1182. Then there is the tailor. What is the difference between the tailor and the machiner?—The machiner only works the machine, and nothing else; he does not sew with the needle, do basting, button-holing, or anything else. When the machine-work is done, he is finished with his work. Then the tailor works it according to the plan of sub-division of labour.

1183. The tailor is almost a finisher?—No, he prepares the work for the machiner; when the machiner half completes it, it comes back to the tailor, and he completes it. In the meantime he gets women to do the minor work connected with such garments.

1184. Now, as to the wages of the tailor?—The first tailor would get from 6s. to 6s. 6d., and the second tailor from 4s. to 4s. 6d., fixed.

1185. You speak of employing girls or women; what do they earn?—You have four girls earning 3s. 3d., 3s., 2s. 6d., and 2s. 3d. per day.

1186. In earning these wages in this particular case, what hours would they work?—They are working at this workshop from 8 in the morning till 9 at night, with an hour for dinner and tea and breakfast allowed, which they have inside the house, and not in the workshop.

1187. That is 13 hours a day, and then the deductions come off that?—Yes.

1188. How many hours a week would they work?—That is a very difficult question to answer, one that handicaps us a great deal with regard to fixing a regulation rate of wage, because our work is practically a season's work.

1189. Are you allowed to work these girls for these hours?—In most cases you will find these girls may work 2, 3, 4, or 5 days, and in very busy times they will only work 6 days. These girls, you will recollect, are working only from 8 in the morning till 8 at night, because they are protected labour, and they work under the Factory Acts. The men in this place work from 8 till 9.

1190. Those hours strike me as rather long?—They practically are universal; in some workshops men also work from 8 to 8 but it is universal at the present time to work from 8 to 9 with an hour for dinner and an allowance made for breakfast and tea.

1191. An allowance of time, do you mean?—Yes, they go and have it.

1192. Is there any night work in this?—Not in this class of work.

1193. That is a very cheap class of work, and you can say that is a fair sample of that kind of work?—Yes.

1194. The next instance you have given me here is Mr. Barnett, also in the East End?—Yes.

1195. Are these workers in a workshop or at home?—Workers in a workshop.

1196. Small workshops or large?—They vary considerably, of course; they employ something like 15, 20, or 25 hands.

1197. These are not home-workers?—According to Mr. Daly's evidence he gave you to understand that he would like to do away with this class of

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work, and he said that all work should be done in factories.

1198. A workshop is a factory from our point of view, but are these the prices that are paid for home-work?—No, this work is done inside, in the factory or in the workshops.

1199. Our inquiry is into home-work; have you any information as to the prices paid for home-work?—Practically, in this class of trade, I want to point out that there is very little home-work attached to it.

1200. The tailoring work?—In this class of work.

1201. Which class?—In the class of trade I am quoting now there is no home-work practically; there may be here and there a case where a woman would take home some button-holes to be made, and in that case she would be earning a very good wage.

1202. The class you have been referring to is a cheap class trade?—Yes, the first class (that I submitted is the cheapest class) is machine button-holes, and there would be no home-work for that class of work.

1203. So that Mr. Harris does a cheap class of trade?—Yes.

1204. In these other cases you give us, running my eye over them, the payment runs, as a rule, better than that which you have been giving us in Mr. Harris's case?—Yes, because it is better-class work.

1205. The wages run up one shilling or two shillings a day more in each case?—Yes.

1206. I do not think I need take you through these details, because you have given us the cheaper class of trade and in the better class of trade, in an English workshop, the wages run still higher?—Yes, but I should like to prove to you, or particularly to point out to you, what are the true facts, as a great deal of evidence has been given to you with regard to this question, to the effect that the men making the cheap class of work would constitute a great deal of sweating. Evidence has been given by Miss Squire, and Mr. Daly as well, that this cheap class of work that is being made by middlemen constitutes a great deal of sweating.

1207. That is home-work?—Yes.

1208. Can you give us any evidence as to the home-work?—No, except what I have got here, and, as I told you here, there is very little.

1209. This is not home-work; this is work in workshops?—As regards that, it is very easily reckoned out that this evidence is not required.

1210. What I gather your evidence amounts to is this: that you are showing us that in the work done in the workshops, which is given out by the employers in various classes of trade, good wages can be earned?—Yes.

1211. What we should like to have information about, if you can give it to us, is what are the wages paid for the work that is given out to be done at home?—I have not got it here, but I could, of course, get you that.

1212. You wished to correct some evidence that has been given; that was the main point. Is there any other point in the evidence you wish to correct?—All this evidence I have here leads up to the same thing, because on page 163 Mr. Daly

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says that an unskilled man comes over here, is taken on at a very small wage, and is allowed to sweat and get his work done for the benefit of the master.

1213. Does such a man go into these workshops?—Very rarely, and if he does it does not show that he is unskilled; tailoring goes on in every other part of the country besides London, and if he comes over here he has known something about tailoring, although he may not be up to a high class of work. He practically knows what he needs to know; and you find that the wages he receives are very fair.

1214. Do I understand it to be your point that the statements that Jews from Poland, Russia, and elsewhere come here and take work at very poor remuneration, under very unsatisfactory conditions, until they pick up their trade are not true?—That is not true; Mr. Daly could not bring any evidence to prove that.

1215. That is your point—that these statements as to Jewish workers working under these unsatisfactory conditions are not true?—Yes, quite untrue.

1216. You say there are no such workshops?—Unless it is a domestic workshop, which we really do not know anything about.

1217. You do not know about the home-work?—No.

1218. You are speaking only about the workshops?—The middleman and his workshops, where he employs labour.

1219. What this evidence on that particular point really amounts to is this, that in the workshops where a decent class of trade is done by competent men, good wages can be earned, and are earned?—Yes.

1220. We have had it indicated to us that some of the goods made for the West End are made at very low rates, and sell at very high prices; have you any knowledge on that point?—It appears that we do not see much of these big profits in the annual balance sheets. I wish to say that there have been quoted some figures to the effect that about 100 per cent. profit is made, but that is hardly feasible—it is not true.

1221. Take the case of Mr. Pearl, at 11, East Street, Bloomsbury; what are the wages he pays?—He is a man living in the West End of London and doing a very fair class of trade—the trade which Mr. Daly alleges that the Jew has taken from the Englishman. There he starts from 7s. 6d. to £1, and sometimes a little more.

1222. Per day?—No, per coat, for coat-making. He pays 10d. for his principal machiner—piece-work for making a coat—and that machiner earns at the rate of 12s. 6d. a day. The plain machiner gets 5d. per coat, and he can earn 7s. 6d. a day. The presser and the under-presser earn 12s. 6d. and 7s. 6d. respectively.

1223. And the tailors?—The tailor has a fixed day's wage; one tailor receives 10s. 6d., another 9s. 6d., another 8s. 6d., and another 7s. 6d. Then you have girls, and I may point out to you that they are all Gentiles—there are no Jewish girls employed in this workshop—and they are getting 5s. 6d., 5s., 3s. 6d., and 3s. a day.

1224. And the hours there are the same?—They are from 8 to 8, with an hour for dinner and tea and breakfast allowed.

1225. Would

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1225. Would you put those before us as a fair example of middle-class and best-class tailoring?—This is practically a great deal of the best-class trade.

1226. Are we to gather from you that the suggestion that this best class of tailoring work is done under very poor conditions and at a poor rate is not correct?—That is so.

1227. And that wages like these which range from 7s. 6d. to 12s. 6d. a day are fairly general?—Certainly. Mr. Daly quotes himself that when he was on the Board he earned £2. I take that from the evidence given by him, and to earn that £2 must have meant about two or three coats that he made per day; he must have worked hard to make these three coats himself. Here you find a man getting 12s. 6d. a day, and probably his wages would run to £3 10s. a week.

1228. You have a note here with regard to Miss Squire's evidence. Have you anything to remark with regard to anything she said?—Yes. I wish to say that Miss Squire's evidence mostly is only evidence she has gathered from hearsay, and I do not think, if Miss Squire was put to the test to prove certain statements she made, she could do it without great difficulty.

1229. Are there any further answers you would like to call our attention to?—There are a great many with reference to that cheap class of work. The particular one I would like to point out is that she particularly pressed the Committee to understand that the home-work is done under a great deal of sweated conditions and insanitary arrangements. Now, about the insanitary arrangements, I am afraid that probably that does exist somewhere with the domestic home-work. I should think there might be some other means of dealing with that matter, but they say that in the factories low-priced wages are given more than they are given in the case of the home-workers outside; in fact, the last witness quoted that they give out the work to the middleman at a cheaper rate than they do it for in the factory. That is not true—I mean to say that his own statement shows that the girls earn from 12s. to 16s. a week, not regularly, while you find from my statement that in our workshops they earn a great deal better wages than they do inside the factories. The same refers to Miss Squire's evidence. The greatest difficulty of all I see in connection with this Committee is with reference to the domestic workshop; that is the great evil, and no one will doubt that for a moment.

Mr. Chiozza Money.

1230. Do you not think the home which is not even a domestic workshop is a still greater evil than the domestic workshop? The domestic workshop is known to the law, but the worker at home is not known in that sense?—Yes, practically all these workshops are under the Factory Inspector, and they are under State control. I use the term domestic workshop when people take out work to make up at home under different conditions from what we should like to see it carried out under.

Chairman.

1231. Have you any knowledge of the remunera-

Chairman—continued.

tion paid to home-workers in the tailoring trade?—I do not think for the moment I have, only that they earn practically the same price for making that we do.

1232. Am I right in gathering that one of the main objects of your coming to give evidence before us is to repudiate any suggestion that the wages are cut by Jewish workers?—Yes.

1233. Your contention is that the Jewish worker —?—Will not work for the price that the English or the Gentile workers will work for at the present time.

1234. And if there be sweating, it is not amongst the Jews?—No.

1235. That is the main purport of what you wish to put to us?—Certainly.

1236. Have you any views to express to us with regard to the proposals that have been made for improving the conditions of home-workers, by Wages Boards, for instance?—As regards the Wages Board, I think we Jews would welcome that if we could find a way by which such a Wages Board could become properly constituted. Taking the way I have heard mentioned, that the Wages Board would consist of a few masters and men, to my mind that would be a very awkward position, and it would lend itself to a great deal of corruption and a great deal of favouritism. If we leave this in the hands of a few individuals to work out a certain rate of wages, we have always got that difficulty to take into consideration.

1237. What would you suggest?—That in each district an independent gentleman—I do not know whether he would be from the Home Office or otherwise—should arbitrate between the master and the working men as to what should be a fair price to receive. To leave it entirely in the hands of the masters and the men would be much like a cock-fight.

1238. The suggestion is that there should be an independent Chairman, and where the opinion was equally divided it would practically amount to an arbitration?—Then, again, how would you deal with the different classes of work, which vary very frequently in our trade?

1239. That would apply the same whether you had a single arbitrator or a board?—I can only say that if it was guaranteed that this Board would come into proper working, I think we would have no objection to welcoming such a Board.

1240. You see no objection to it?—None whatever.

Mr. Trevelyan.

1241. I just want to be quite clear about your evidence. I understand your evidence is that in the workshops, as far as you know them in London and elsewhere, where a fairly large number of people are employed, the wages are, as you think, adequate, and the hours not too long?—I should like to see the hours greatly reduced.

1242. And as far as the workshops are concerned, you consider that there is not any sweating?—No.

1243. But you do not go into the question, or give us any figures at all of the same kind with regard to home-work; you have not offered us any figures, and you do not offer us any figures with

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with regard to home-work?—I was under the impression that home-work would mean the work that the middleman takes home; it is practically home-work, because it is carried on in the houses sometimes in the same way.

1244. But most of the evidence we have had given to us is about home-work, which is a different thing from work in the workshops. For instance, Mr. Evans, in, I think, the next evidence to Mr. Daly's, dwells almost exclusively on the home-work, and does not deal to any extent with workshops?—I cannot agree with you.

1245. I think I understood him to say so, and he begins his evidence on page 176 by saying this, speaking about West London: "The most noticeable feature is the general adoption of the out-workers' system. I have noticed that in West London, in particular, workshops are being gradually closed during the past ten or twelve years, and the occupiers are resorting to the out-work practice." That is the evidence which he gives. I do not want to go into the question of what the condition of the workshops is, but do you deny that proposition at all that the out-work practice is increasing?—I can give you an idea why he said that. We middlemen, as a rule, demand a certain price for our work, which will give an adequate wage to our workpeople and leave us with a fair share of profit for our work and responsibility. The shopkeepers and warehousemen are in the habit of cutting down their prices as they go along. One of these warehousemen cannot come to me and say—that he is only prepared to give me a certain price for a certain class of work, because I have great responsibilities and I have a great expense to pay, and therefore I could not do it; but the out-worker, when he shuts up his workshop and finds he cannot go any further, will do that work, and will take it to do in his own home with just one or two helps, probably his wife and a child.

1246. Then you do not wish to set yourself against Mr. Evans's evidence when he says (and this is his experience in the West End, where he has been an Inspector for a great many years) that there is a distinct tendency to increase the out-work in substitution for the workshops, about which you have been giving evidence to us?—Yes, I should think there is that tendency, principally on account of the high rates.

1247. You do not give us any evidence with regard to the rates which are paid to the home-workers; that is to say, you do not rebut Mr. Evans's evidence, and that of other people, that the home-work rates, which is quite a different thing to workshop rates, are very low. You do not give us any evidence to that effect?—Either I read wrongly or I do not quite understand it, but I believe both Mr. Daly and Mr. Evans admitted going there at the same time.

1248. I do not want to go into it; you have not brought any evidence to rebut what they have said with regard to the home-work?—If you do not consider this home-work, I have not brought any. There is very little home-work in that sense carried out amongst the Jews at the present time.

1249. And in fact you rather agree with Mr. Evans. You say that the domestic workshop, by which you mean, I understand, the home-

Mr. Trevelyan—continued.

work as well as what is technically a domestic workshop, is regarded by you as a great evil?—Yes, and the shopkeeper and the warehouseman take a great advantage of that.

1250. He passes over the workshop which you approve of and goes to the home-worker and lets the work over the heads of the workshop to the home-worker?—Yes; it is to his interest financially.

Mr. Fell.

1251. These middlemen you speak of are so totally different to any middlemen we have heard of and whose practices have been brought to our notice previously, that I would like to ask: Who are they the middlemen between?—The middleman is the man who takes out work from the shops, manufactures it and sends it into the shop again complete.

1252. He really is a manufacturer?—Yes. He does not cut the stuff in most cases; the cutters in the shop cut it and send it to him, and he puts it together. It is tried on in the usual way.

1253. He has a factory for the sewing and making of these clothes after they have been cut at the shop or manufactory?—Yes.

1254. That man would be classed as a manufacturer as opposed to the out-workers we have been discussing?—Yes.

1255. The question has always been as to whether the prices are the same in factories as they are in the homes?—I should think they are very much worse in factories.

1256. You have not any experience of the work done in the homes?—No, because, as I have mentioned before, amongst the Jews we have very little home-work you can term home-work. The married women very seldom work at home; you will not find one in a hundred. And the girls, if any, find employment in these workshops.

1257. These are very high class in comparison. What language do they talk in the workshops?—They are not very high class. I have very cheap work here, some starting from 11d. a coat.

1258. What language do they talk in the workshops?—They speak English very well.

1259. We have had evidence that they come over and get about a shilling a day, and that they cannot talk a word of English?—That is not true.

1260. It is not so in your business; I think you are the first Jewish gentleman we have had before us, and I am glad to hear your evidence, because we have had evidence that these people come over, not able to speak a word of English?—Supposing a man came in who was looking for a job and that he had worked at tailoring in Russia or Germany or wherever he may have lived, he is taken in and tried, and if he proves that he is capable of doing the work we will not discharge him because he cannot speak English. He gets the same amount of pay as another one who has been working two or three years in the same workshop, and after, say, a year or two, we usually find that he picks up the language quite well.

Mr. Parkes.

1261. Surely there is another kind of middleman to the

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Mr. Parkes—continued.

to the one you refer to; the one you refer to is the one who takes the work home, who contracts for it and employs men in workshops?—Yes. The man you refer to takes no responsibility in connection with the work whatsoever.

1262. There is another kind of middleman who does not take his work to a workshop but distributes it among home-workers?—I have never come across them.

1263. There are no middlemen who take the work to home-workers?—I have never come across them in all my career.

1264. Then there is no use asking you any questions about home-workers?—Not what you call home-workers.

1265. It is a well-known fact that there are middlemen who take work to home-workers, but you say you have no knowledge of them?—You mean that a man may go into a factory and take a certain amount of work and distribute it outside among other people to be made.

1266. Amongst home-workers, yes?—That may exist amongst some other trades, but I doubt if it exists in the tailoring trade in London.

1267. We have heard that home-work is increasing in the West End of London?—Again you are mixing up home-work with the case of this man who works at home singly.

1268. There are two kinds of middlemen; the one you refer to who takes his work to a kind of workshop and does it himself with assistance, and the other kind, who takes the work and distributes it amongst home-workers?—I do not quite see what you are alluding to, myself, because it is almost impossible with the class of work I am quoting.

1269. But you have no knowledge of the other kind?—You mean with the very slop-work for the big manufacturers.

1270. I understand you have no knowledge of this kind of middleman I refer to?—No.

1271. You have no knowledge of the poorer class of work going on in London; your knowledge is only as to the best class of work done in workshops?—Not necessarily; I quote 11d. coats, and yet that man is in a workshop employing about 25 or 30 hands, and his workers getting very good wages.

1272. Do you think Wages Boards would settle the rate of wages at these workshops?—I do not think, myself, we require much arguing about the question of wages; I think they are pretty fair. It is a question whether we should get the work out from our firms if you fixed a standard rate of wage. They would wish to raise the standard of wages right round, and give us an opportunity of working shorter hours.

1273. There is no demand amongst the workers you refer to for a Wages Board?—I hardly see it with the wages as at present.

1274. Do you recommend any remedy for the present state of things at all?—Only that the domestic workshops, what you would term home-workshops, also should be licensed in a proper way, because we are under the Factory Acts provisions. The home-worker and the domestic workshop should, in my opinion, be licensed, because we come under the Factory Regulations, and have to send to the Factory Inspector notice when we

Mr. Parkes—continued.

move and give him the address where we live. We are in all probability seen very often by the Factory Inspectors, whereas the men working in a domestic workshop, or what you would call the home-workman, goes into a shop and takes out a coat, waistcoat, or pair of trousers, which he takes home to his back garret and makes at home, and he is not known. The shopkeeper will not give you any information, even although there is a clause in the Factory Act that he should notify the Factory Inspector the names of the people he gives the work to. That is not carried out as it should be. If you were to put on some penalty to the effect that the shopkeeper would have to bear the brunt of giving out the work to be made under sanitary conditions, it would alter a great deal of what you call the bad conditions of the home-work.

1275. You think it would be a difficult matter to get the Wages Board to deal with those domestic workers?—I see no difficulty at all if it can be arranged; these things ought to be arranged, but I do not agree that it should be cut up between the masters and the workmen.

1276. You would prefer an independent arbitrator?—Yes.

1277. How would you supply the demand for the many men who would be required with the knowledge to give an intelligent judgment upon these things?—There are trade societies, and men could be picked up from these who could at all times give evidence where necessary. You could notify the working men, and find out what they had been receiving.

1278. You would bring them into it?—Yes.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

1279. You have told us that high wages are paid in the trade of which you have been speaking, but is the work pretty regular all the year round?—No, that is the great misfortune; it is a season trade, lasting about six months in the year, and in some trades not that.

1280. So that they have to earn in those six months enough to keep them during the other six months?—Which they do.

1281. Is a good deal of your trade for export to foreign countries?—This cheap class, yes; the better class, no.

1282. Do you feel affected by foreign competition?—I have not felt it, but the wholesale warehouseman must feel it somewhat when he cuts down the prices, which he usually does.

1283. But it is not a very serious factor in your own experience?—No, the work is carried on in the manufactory on the principle of the sub-division of labour, so that at present it is not felt so much.

1284. Would you say that prices have gone down or tended to remain much about the same during the last five years?—There has been a slight decrease in the number of warehousemen giving the work out to the middlemen to be made, but notwithstanding that the wages are higher to-day than they were five years ago.

1285. All round?—Yes.

Mr. Bridgeman.

1286. How did you select the particular workshops you have quoted?—I instructed the secretary of

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Mr. Bridgeman—continued.

tary of our organisation to go round and get the information from their books, and give it to me.

1287. How do you know they are fair samples?—They are open; there are the names and addresses in the Chairman's hands and he is free to make any inquiry he is disposed to make.

1288. Are we to understand they are average cases, or have you taken three or four of the best?—No, I have taken rather very low ones, as you see from 11d. to 1s. 4d. would not be a high price for a coat. I have taken four or five grades of work so as to give you a clear idea how it is done.

1289. You think those are fair average samples?—I do.

1290. You think the Wages Board might have a good effect in raising wages and shortening hours?—I think it would, because it would then become a universal thing that a certain price shall be paid, and then one man would not have to compete with the other so keenly with reference to the prices.

1291. Where would the money come off?—The manufacturer would have to see about that; if I get a better price for my garments I can reduce the hours and give better pay.

1292. The consumer would have to pay more?—Naturally.

1293. How would that affect the competition?—It is clearly understood that the more you tamper with these things the higher the prices must go up. It is because there has been no legislation that the thing has come to the state it is in at present.

1294. But if the prices go up there is more danger from competition?—Yes, it is clearly understood that the majority of this trade was brought from foreign parts into England a great many years ago when the Jews came over to England; in fact the cheaper-class trade is really a trade which the Jews themselves founded.

1295. You said you were a middleman yourself; does that mean that you keep one of these factories, or that you distribute work?—I distribute no work at all. I make all the work inside.

1296. Are you in the same position as some of these people you have quoted to us?—Yes, but I did not give you mine; I could give you mine with more advantage, but I did not do it.

1297. You are in a similar position to the people you have referred to?—Exactly.

1298. You said you did not think it was true to say that there were cases in which very high prices were paid in the West End for goods, and very low prices paid for the making of them?—Excuse me, but if you were a tailor you would not take that into consideration; you would know differently. It has been said that if a man went in to buy shilling or tenpenny trousers he would not know the difference, but I think gentlemen do know the difference.

1299. In the course of making a pair of trousers of the best West End sort, how much would each person concerned get, starting with the material?—The best-class trousers are mostly made by the Germans, and usually they get very good pay; that I do know.

1300. What I want to know is where all the money goes that a man would pay, in an expensive

Mr. Bridgeman—continued.

West End shop, for a pair of trousers?—There is the cloth and the cutting and trimming.

1301. Can you give me any idea as to what each of these items would be?—No, I could not, but it is cut very fine; I know that. When we are working for a firm and get out a pair of trousers, we get 3s. for the making, and those trousers are sold at 10s. 6d. or 11s. 6d., and there is not much profit out of that.

1302. But I am speaking of a pair of trousers at 30s.?—Then they pay 8s. or 9s. for the making, and the cloth will probably cost 8s. or 9s. a yard. You buy the West of England goods in that case.

1303. You think the difference is mostly in the cloth?—It is different work entirely.

1304. You cannot deny that there are much larger profits divided among the middlemen in those expensive articles?—I do not wish to deny that at all; I wish to say that the man who makes the better-class work will earn equally as much as the man who works with the common work, which I can prove, because the man who makes the best-class trousers could not attempt to take the cheaper-class work, because he would be too slow. The man who makes the cheaper-class trousers would be very quick at his work, and his work is not looked at, and therefore they are made according to the price. Notwithstanding that, he can almost earn the same money as the man making the good trousers.

1305. You say that the middleman has exactly the same amount out of the work in either case, but he gets a very much larger profit, according to my contention, over an expensive pair of trousers than he does over the cheaper pair?—This man would not make the cheaper pair; he could not.

1306. I do not talk about the man who makes them; what I am trying to get at is, where the money goes—the difference between a very expensive and a very cheap pair of trousers as sold at the shop. I want you to say whether you think all the difference goes in the material, and in paying more to the people who do the work?—Yes, it does.

1307. And none of the difference goes to the middleman?—No, it is practically on the same average.

1308. You said that the Jewish tailors were able to earn 20 per cent. more wages than other people on the same work?—I should not like to term it the same work, because the one is work made solely by themselves and the other is work made by the subdivision of labour.

1309. Doing the same work as other people?—Certainly.

1310. Then do you employ nothing but Jews?—I employ three Gentile girls myself.

1311. Is the number of Jewish workers increasing in your opinion in this trade?—No, I do not think it is. I may say at the present time when the work becomes brisk we have great difficulty in getting good workpeople.

1312. Could you say what proportion of them are foreigners recently?—Very few recently.

1313. In the last ten years?—I would not go so far as that, but if you say the last three or four years, I do.

1314. Why are there fewer now?—They go to

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to Canada, America, South Africa and so on; they find there is not sufficient work, or probably not sufficient encouragement to stay here.

1315. And you maintain that there is practically no work done in the actual home by the majority of Jews?—Not by the majority of Jews distinctly; there may be a case here and there.

1316. And if they work at all they prefer going to the factory?—Yes; it is distinctly understood that the Jewish married woman does not go out to work and her husband provides for her. The girls again work indoors, although there may be a case here and there where a girl would take button-holes home.

1317. The mother does not work at home?—No.

Mr. Brunner

1318. The name of your Association is the Master Tailors' Improvement Association?—Quite so.

1319. Who are in it?—Master tailors, middlemen.

1320. What is its object?—To improve the conditions of the trade in general.

1321. That is to say your Association is an Association for keeping up the prices?—Directly.

1322. That is to say it is an Association for preventing the warehouseman cutting down rates?—That is right.

1323. Do you have conferences now upon the wages paid to your workpeople?—We have formed such a board, but owing to the lack of organisation on behalf of the workpeople we had to drop it; we could not go on with it.

1324. But you can organise among yourselves in regard to keeping the prices up paid to you by the warehousemen?—I am afraid not; that is what I have quoted to you with regard to the domestic workshop being a great evil, because there is no great expense incurred by working at home, and the worker there works under unsatisfactory conditions; the shopkeeper or warehouseman does not care two straws where the work is done as long as it suits his price, and we have practically no control over the domestic workshop.

1325. I understood you to say that your Association endeavoured to keep the prices up in the articles you take from the warehouse?—Yes; but supposing we say this would be a fair price for coat-making, the manufacturer would probably think differently. He would not ask any big master tailor to take work on a lower scale, but he would try to get other people to do it, and it would be at once a domestic workman who would take the work on a cheaper scale, because his expenses would not be so great as those of a man working in a workshop.

1326. The tendency, then, is for the warehouseman to go past you?—Certainly: it pays him financially.

1327. You said that the wages were higher on the average now than they have been for years past in the small workshops which you know. Is that due to improvement in machinery having made the workers more efficient?—It is due to the magic of the subdivision of labour; one man

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Mr. Brunner—continued.

does not depend upon his own exertions, but upon the others who set the work going.

1328. About the hours. You say the girls work from 8 to 8 and the men from 8 to 9?—Not in all cases.

1329. How is it possible that such hours should be worked, because they are illegal for girls?—I did not say girls.

1330. I thought you said girls worked from 8 to 8?—Yes, from 8 to 8, but that is an acknowledged thing by the Factory Act.

Mr. Hugh Law.

1331. I think you spoke of 11d. to 1s. 4d. being paid for the making of a coat, but do I understand that was the price paid to the worker or to the middleman?—To the middleman, and he has to pay his workers out of that.

1332. Do I understand that the middleman who is paid at the rate of 11d. to 1s. 4d. a coat can still pay the wages of his workers?—Yes, that is what I particularly wish to bring before your notice.

1333. You have given the Committee figures?—Yes.

1334. Do I understand that in those cases when you speak of good work and wages, you are speaking both of men and women?—Both.

1335. I understand the men of whom you speak are Jews?—Mostly.

1336. And not the women?—Not all the women; they vary.

1337. You have told us that the Jews coming to this country had brought with them the blessings of ready-made importers of this cheap clothing, but is there any actual import of ready-made clothing into the country?—At the present time I think there is very little; they can manufacture it quite as cheaply.

Mr. Robinson.

1338. With regard to these hours, there is no short day in the week, is there?—I will give it to you in a better way; this work is carried out practically not as week's work, but as day's work, and they very seldom work a week's work, unless it is when they are very busy, and then they just barely make a week's work. The Jews in most cases work five days a week, because we have Saturday and we have Sunday. The majority of Jews do not work on the Saturday; those work on the Sunday and not on the Saturday. The Sunday we constitute a half-day, because we do not work on Saturday, and Sunday as a rule we make a half-day.

1339. At what time do you stop on the half-day?—Four o'clock.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

1340. I want to ask with regard to these hours per day; is it not the fact that very few of the workers get five days' employment?—It is a season's trade.

1341. But even in the season?—In the season I am pleased to say they make full time.

1342. Five or six days?—Five and a half or six days according to the circumstances.

1343. Therefore you would say that these persons

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persons

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Mr. LEVI.

[Continued.]

Mr. *Stuart Samuel*—continued.

persons you give as working for six months of the year are working six days a week?—Yes.

1344. Is the use of machinery increasing in your trade?—In the cheaper-class trade, yes; in the better-class trade, no.

1345. Is not button-holing now done by machinery?—In the very cheap articles.

1346. Are the inferior button-holes made by machinery?—Yes.

1347. I think you saw some trousers shown by the previous witness made by machinery?—Yes.

1348. You would know that was inferior work?—Yes.

1349. By “inferior” do you mean that the life of the trousers would be considerably less than that of the better class?—Yes.

1350. It is inferior work and inferior cloth?—Yes.

1351. But still this cheap machine-made article does compete with the hand-made, although superior, article?—I do not think a gentleman would wear a pair of trousers like that.

1352. It is according to people’s pocket, I take it; people who can only afford the cheaper article will buy it?—Yes, they cater for the wants of people who cannot afford to buy anything else.

1353. You say that the home-worker practically does not exist?—Not amongst the Jewish element.

1354. Still you say that the home-worker keeps down the prices and that the warehouseman goes past the middleman direct to the worker in his home?—Here we get a little bit mixed up, because we do not quite understand the meaning of the word “home-work” and what a domestic workshop is.

1355. May I tell you that I understand the home-work, and that it means a man or a woman who takes work home to his or her own home where no others are employed?—He would be called a home-worker.

1356. I should call him a home-worker?—There are a great many of these home-workers if you call them home-workers. Mr. Bridgeman distinctly told me that they were not home-workers; I asked whether he meant a domestic workshop

Mr. *Stuart Samuel*—continued.

or a home workshop. We call it a domestic workshop.

1357. You would agree with Mr. Daly’s evidence, therefore, that there is an increase in the number of those who take their work home to their own homes?—Yes.

1358. With regard to the evidence of Mr. Evans, the Factory Inspector, he told us that the price for a coat was 6s. right through in the West End, and that it did not matter what sort of coat it was, that the shopkeeper drew no distinction between a 20-guinea motor coat and a five-guinea Chesterfield, that they paid one price, namely, 6s.; you agree with that?—Of course not; it is idiotic; it can be nothing else, and the man ought not to have given such evidence. It is entirely wrong.

1359. In your opinion a 20-guinea motor coat would not be made for 6s.?—No.

1360. What would be the proper price for that?—Two or three guineas for the making.

1361. And there would be a difference between a 20-guinea motor coat and a five-guinea Chesterfield?—Certainly.

1362. You would not be prepared to make a 20-guinea motor coat for 6s.?—Hardly.

Mr. *Bridgeman*.

1363. With reference to what you have just said in answer to Mr. Samuel, you told me that Jewish women never did any work in their own homes?—That is what I told you.

1364. And you have told Mr. Samuel that they do?—I did not; Mr. Samuel asked me whether a man would take work home to make it there with the assistance of his wife or a child. No Jewish women take work home from the shops direct.

3165. The men do?—Certainly.

1366. I am afraid I must have put my questions very badly?—I can quite see that we got mixed up in connection with the home-work and the domestic workshop. When a man takes work home to the house he lives in, I call it a domestic workshop.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Thursday, 12th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Bridgeman.
Sir William Bull.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.

Mr. Massie.
Mr. Arthur Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Sir Thomas Whittaker.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. MORRIS COHEN called in ; and Examined.

Chairman.

1367. You are a wholesale mantle and costume maker in Bishopsgate?—Yes.

1368. You have come primarily to give us some evidence, I think, with reference to some statements which were made before us by Miss Tuckwell, which you wish to comment upon?—Yes.

1369. Will you kindly refer us to the particular statements which you wish to refer to?—Miss Tuckwell makes the statement that a costume made at the Union rate of wages costs for making 30s., while a similar one at the non-union rate of wages is 1s. 7½d.

1370. In the table which Miss Tuckwell put in there is a statement that a lady's costume is made at trade-union rates with very little extras costing 30s., but at the non-union rates the same work is 1s. 7½d.?—That is so.

1371. What do you wish to say with regard to that?—That I have been connected with the trade for 28 years; I started in the East End of London, and have been there ever since, and to my knowledge no costume has been made for less than 3s. 6d. in the East End, and also, admitting that there are costumes made costing 30s., they would be absolutely different; the 30s. costume would be sold up West at from 7½ to 10 guineas, and the costume made at 3s. 6d. would be sold in a poor neighbourhood at 12s. 6d. or 16s. 6d. I noticed in one of the papers last week that a lady's costume made for 1s. 7½d. is sold up West for 50s. That is absolutely misleading, and it is ruinous to the trade. People in the habit of going up West for their costumes and in the habit of paying 50s., should not be misled that the costume was made for 1s. 7½d. It is absolutely ruinous to the trade, so I thought it was my duty to come forward and contradict it; if there are costumes made at 1s. 7½d. they would not be made in the East End, and then it would be sold for 10s. There is a totally different market for it. I have brought here two specimens.

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Chairman—continued.

1372. I understand you to say in the first place that, so far as your own personal knowledge goes, you do not know that costumes are made at 1s. 7½d. at all?—I do not.

1373. The lowest price you know is 3s. 6d.?—That is so.

1374. The next point I understand you wish to make is that that would be a very different costume indeed from the one for which 30s. would be paid?—Quite different.

1375. And consequently it is not accurate to say that what is made at 30s. by trade-unionists is made by non-unionists at 1s. 7½d.?—Absolutely unfounded.

1376. They are altogether different articles?—Absolutely different. I have two articles here to show which were made at my own factory, one at 5s. 6d. and one at 18s. 6d., to show the difference in the articles (*showing the same to the Members of the Committee*). That is a costume made up of a coat and skirt.

Mr. Bridgeman.

1377. The price you have mentioned does not include the material?—No, making only; the price for selling would be 82s. 6d.

Chairman.

1378. We do not want you to give us any names of firms or anything of that kind, but if we may do so, might I ask you what would be the wholesale price of that?—I should say the increase would be about 40 per cent. to the consumer.

1379. The retail price would be 40 per cent. above your prices?—Yes; perhaps 40 to 50. In a better class of goods they would put on a bigger profit.

1380. What would you say would be the selling price of that?—I am selling it at 82s. 6d.

1381. That is the wholesale price?—Yes.

1382. And

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

1382. And it costs for making to you what?—The making of that costume cost me 18s. 6d.

1383. The retailer's price would be 50 per cent., say, above your price?—50 per cent. above 82s. 6d.; that would not be one profit, but two profits, namely, I am supplying wholesale, and the wholesale man would have to supply to the shopkeeper. One business would not make the 50 per cent.

1384. Still, out of that they have all their expenses to come, rent and everything else?—I sell to A, and A sells to B.

1385. And B is the shopkeeper in the West End, where the expenses, of course, are heavy?—Yes, and being an expensive article, the profit would have to be larger to cover the risk, because the more expensive the article the more risky it is.

1386. I suppose a certain proportion of those things get damaged in showing?—Yes.

1387. And also will be left at the end of the season?—Yes; you would have to sell it for a reduction at a sale.

1388. I am putting these questions because I want to see what you say as to the suggestion that enormous profits are made on the small cost of making?—I have here a circular from a West End house which is selling costumes, and they are illustrated at 21s., and I am quite sure these costumes were never made for less than 4s.

1389. That is, the labour of making would not be less than 4s.?—That is so, but the price of that article is about a guinea or 19s. 11d.

1390. You have another costume there?—Yes (*exhibiting the same*). Of this one the selling price is 22s. 9d. and the price for making 5s. 6d.

1391. When you say the selling price, do you mean your selling price?—Yes; and the same costume I have here in a cheaper cloth, the making of which would be the same, and the selling price 19s. 11d.

1392. Can you give us any idea from your own knowledge as to what the maker of these things could earn; take the one which cost 5s. 6d.?—The 5s. 6d. one would not be made by the same worker—not by so skilled a worker—as the one made at 18s. 6d. It would have to be made by subdivision of labour; one person would not make the costume, and it would have to go through four different hands, and the one who does the principal part and is more skilled would earn more money than the ones not so skilled. I should say the principal part would be made by the one called a baister getting it ready for the machine, and he would earn about 7s. a day.

1393. Would that be a man?—A man—yes.

1394. What would be the other workers?—There would be a machinist—it would not be necessary that it should be a man, it might be a woman machinist, and she could earn 5s.

1395. What would be the other process?—The felling, the minor part, the hooks and eyes, and the woman doing that would earn from 2s. to 2s. 6d. a day.

1396. Would these earnings be at home or in the workshop?—In the workshop.

1397. What hours would they work?—The women would work 10½ hours, according to the Factory Act; the men would perhaps work an hour later.

Chairman—continued.

1398. Would you say that the employment was fairly regular, or is it seasonal?—It is seasonal.

1399. And there would be a lot of lost time?—That is so.

1400. So that that cannot be taken as an average wage for the year?—Well, I should say not.

1401. Have you any experience of home-workers in connection with this sort of work?—Personally I have not. I also give out-work to out-door tailors, but they have workshops of their own and employ their own hands in the workshops. For perhaps a minor thing, such a thing as button-hole making, a machine costs £20, and a small man cannot afford the outlay for that, and he would send out the button-holes to the button-hole machinist to be made; but everything else would be done in his own workshop.

1402. You do not employ any home-workers directly yourself?—No.

1403. Do any of the people to whom you give out the work?—No, except in the exceptional case of button-holes.

1404. Then you do not know what home-workers earn doing this kind of work?—The home-workers would make a lower class costume than 3s. 6d., and it would be very unskilled labour. It would be done by women wanting to look after their own home, and they would be satisfied to earn less money certainly. Those who can give their full time to do the work would not stop at home, but they would go to the factory and earn their 2s. and even 5s. a day.

1405. They would be less skilled workers?—Women who can give the full time to the work, instead of working at home, would go and work in the factories, and they would be less skilled than the people making the better costumes. In my statement, I explain the action taken on seeing a certain costume at an exhibition.

1406. I think you mean that you have challenged a statement which was made at the Clarion Guild and Handicrafts' Exhibition?—That was so.

1407. What you might call an exhibition of sweated industries?—I should call it an exhibition of sweated industries.

1408. And you complain of some of the statements made on the labels there?—Yes.

1409. Will you tell us what they were?—It was a costume with a big ticket on it, about 9 inches square, describing that the worker gets 1s. 1d. Then they describe the worker is the machinist. Then another item was 2d. for the finisher, and they said that the forewoman and cutter got well paid. I read on the label "Machining and Finishing," but no other branch of the trade, and the total of the two together made 1s. 3d. I called the attention of the woman in charge to the fact that it was misleading to the public, because that costume could never be made for 1s. 3d., and said that if they could prove that that costume was ever made for 15d. I was quite willing to give £100 to the League; further, that I wanted to be introduced to that part of the industry, and was quite willing to pay 3s. 6d. for the same thing.

1410. What was the result of that?—First, after 20 days, I received a letter informing me that

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

that they had placed the matter in the hands of their solicitor. I replied that it was not a case for a solicitor (I have attached copies of my correspondence to my statement, which you have), and that all I required was proof. The proof I required was the name or names of the workers, and I wanted to see the books to find out what quantity they had made, because when it comes to one, a person could make it for nothing, but I wanted to see the quantity, and also I wanted the name of the manufacturer, which I undertook to keep secret, and not to divulge.

1411. Did they offer to give this information in the presence of Mr. Askwith?—I will come to that. After that, instead of forwarding me the proof I required, they sent me a letter stating that they had placed the matter in the hands of an arbitrator, Mr. Askwith. I replied again that it was not a case for an arbitrator, as there was as yet no dispute; and I added: "When you furnish the proof and a dispute arises, you saying that it is proof while I say it is not, then it is time for an arbitrator, but until then, there is no arbitrator needed." As to the first letter I made a mistake in not giving them the date within which they should furnish the proof, but finding after three or four weeks that there was no proof forthcoming, I wrote a letter, giving them seven days to furnish me with the proof, and they have not furnished me with any proof. After that date expired, they wrote to me a letter, stating that they had the proof in their possession. I therefore wrote back saying: "The date has already expired, and if you are so sure you can substantiate your proof, I am quite willing to give you an extension of time of a fortnight; but under these different conditions, that should you fail to establish the proof you should give £25 to a charity of my choosing." Then the matter dropped, and they have not furnished me with any proof, and the greatest complaint I have is, that I presume the Exhibition was held for the purpose of showing up sweating.

1412. Was there any risk of the name being made known?—None at all, absolutely none; I gave an undertaking that I should not divulge the name, I wrote that in my letters. My complaint is that that article was exhibited for the purpose of showing up sweating. That article was said to have been made for 1s. 3d., and when a man was willing to come forward and pay 3s. 6d. for the same thing, I maintain it was their duty to supply me with the names of the people, and if they could have done so, why should the people work for 1s. 3d. if I was willing to pay 3s. 6d.? Instead of that, nothing was forthcoming.

1413. I suppose we may take the outcome of this to be that you, speaking from such knowledge and experience of the trade as you have, do very strongly state that such a statement cannot be accurate?—Absolutely not. I do not say that no costume is made at 1s. 7d., but I have no knowledge of it, and if it is made it is absolutely a different article and you cannot compare the one thing with the other. The comparison is the same as if you were to take a painting painted by an artist to be hung in a gallery and the painting of the individual who paints on the paving stones to induce people to throw pennies to him.

Chairman—continued.

1414. May I pass on to another phase now, and ask you what you think would be the effect of the institution of Wages Boards in these trades? You understand what the suggestion of a Wages Board is—that it should be a Board, half of whom should be elected by the workers and half by the employers, with an independent Chairman, and that they should fix a minimum rate of payment in certain classes of industry?—Yes; if that could be established I must say it would be an excellent thing, but in certain classes of the fancy trade the articles vary so much that it would be almost impossible to gauge a price, because there are certain times in the year when goods are not wanted, and you have to force trade, and in order to do that you have to sell a little cheaper. A Wages Board to arbitrate upon that would be very good if you could possibly have it, but they would have to be practical men in case of a dispute arising. It would not be necessary for the Board to fix a wage; the worker and the master could arrange the wage, but should the worker be dissatisfied and the master think that he could not possibly pay more, then I should say if a Board could be established to decide between them it would be a good thing.

1415. But the suggestion is that the Board should fix a scale of payment. I imagine that at the present time you have certain scales of payment for certain classes of work?—We gauge it according to the time it ought to take.

1416. You have that fixed?—No, I cannot say that we have, because it varies so much, and one article will have a little more work on it than another.

1417. You mean that with each varying class of article you change the price?—Yes. It is different in coat-making, in making a coat or trousers you can class them A, B, C, and so on, say in six classes; but when it comes to costumes and such articles, instead of six classes I should say 60 would not be too many.

1418. We have had before us evidence from Mr. Askwith and others, showing that in some rather intricate and complicated trades scales of payment have been fixed?—Then, of course, extras arise, because the more work there is the more extras there are.

1419. Of course, the Members of the Board would be practical persons, actual workers most likely and actual employers?—I should not think there would be any harm in trying it, but how it would actually work I do not know. Another thing you have to consider is the foreign competition. At the present time there are still a great many agents in the City of London, and also in the West End, who only have an office or show-room, and the goods are made abroad.

1420. Still, would not that be met by the fact that the employers and the work-people who would fix the rate of payment would themselves be more closely interested than anybody else would be in not fixing a rate that would cause them to lose the trade?—If that could be done; but the fact is that the work-people do not know much about Free Trade or Fair Trade; a worker will say: "I want 5s. for that article," and if you tell him: "I cannot pay you 5s., and it will go abroad," he says, in many instances: "Let

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

"Let it go." The Board would have to study that, and not the worker.

1421. I am speaking of the Board?—If the Board would study that it would be all right.

1422. The Board would consist half of representatives of the workers, and we may assume that those representatives would be the more intelligent of them; they would also be sitting with the employers, and they would talk the whole thing over. Do you not think that they would be very careful not to fix rates that would kill their own trade?—Yes. In my opinion, with regard to the mantle or costume trade, the Board would be very much occupied.

1423. May I take it that, broadly speaking, your view is that personally you see no objection to the Board on principle; you think it would be useful if it could be established, but your doubt is as to the practical difficulties of working it?—That is so.

1424. But you have no objection to offer to it?—None at all.

1425. And you think that the Board might apply to work in workshops as well as work at home?—Those people who take out work to do in workshops take it out from a warehouse or from a manufacturer, and the Board would also have to look after the man who takes out the work from the warehouse, so as to see that he should receive a certain amount for making that article. Then they would also, by looking after his interests, look after the interests of the people whom he employs, but it would not be possible to look after the interests of the people whom he employs in his workshop and not to look after his interests also. The Board would have to do both, because the City warehouseman or manufacturer will say to the man: "I can get it made for 5s.," although there is 8s. worth of work in it.

1426. Still, when the Board had fixed the rate it would not be permissible to pay any worker who actually did the work a lower price than the rate that had been fixed?—If the Board could establish the prices which the man who takes out the goods from the warehouse should receive and also fix the price which he should pay to his employees, that would be desirable.

1427. As I understand the suggestion, it is that the decision would affect only the actual employer of the person and the person who did the work?—That is it.

1428. Other people would not be concerned; for instance, if it were given out to a middleman?—The middle-man in many instances, I should say in 80 per cent. of the whole, is a worker himself.

1429. But he would also be an employer?—Yes.

1430. As an employer he would have to pay no less than the rate fixed by the Board?—Then what about those who employ him? Should they be free to pay whatever they like? If you are to restrict what the middleman should pay to his worker, I should say that the same Board ought to look after his interests, and he should be paid so much by the one who finds him the work.

1431. So long as he is a worker?—He is a worker; I should say in 90 per cent. of the cases, or perhaps more, they are workers. The only thing is that they employ others to help them.

Chairman—continued.

They could make, perhaps, two articles a day by themselves, and instead of that they employ five or six more to assist them; they do the principal part of the work themselves, and they pay the others for the work they do.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

1432. I believe you were the first to introduce this class of trade into this country?—Yes.

1433. You and your family have really established this class of trade in this country?—Yes.

1434. How many work-people would you say are now employed in it?—I should say no less than 20,000. I am not speaking of London, but of England.

1435. What proportion of work-people do you have—Jews and non-Jews?—In my factory we have altogether about 160, and half of these would be British born.

1436. Is there a trade union amongst your workers?—I believe so, but I do not ask any questions about there being a trade union or not; if I want a man, and he suits me, I find him the work.

1437. I am now speaking of women?—I believe the women are connected with the union.

1438. We have had a vast body of evidence to show that the women-workers are incapable of organising themselves?—I am speaking of what has actually happened. About 18 months ago I sent a man away, and all my people struck because I sent that man away, and the women joined with them.

1439. You have stated that your workers earn what is apparently a satisfactory wage; would you feel inclined to attribute that to the fact of there being a trade union in existence?—No, I should not say altogether; I should say the supply and demand regulate everything, but I am in a position to say that I have got the same men with me now as I had 15 years ago.

1440. I speak more especially of women workers?—I have had women with me for 24 or 25 years.

1441. Still, it is a contributory fact, is it not, to their receiving satisfactory wages that there is a trade union in the district?—There is one.

1442. Did I understand you correctly when you told the Chairman that there are no home-workers in this class of trade?—Not among the Jews in the East End of London. The only thing is that they have assistants of their own who help them to do their work, and what they would send outside would be button-hole making.

1443. Are there not what we call domestic workshops, where they work in their own homes?—Attached to the houses, yes; they live in the houses and perhaps have a building in the rear, in which they work.

1444. By a home-worker, I mean a woman or a man who takes an article and works at it in their own room?—I do not know of such a thing in the East End of London.

1445. When you speak of the East End of London, popular imagination connects the East End of London with the cheapest work; do you suggest

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Mr. *Stuart Samuel*—continued.

suggest to the Committee that there are other parts of London where the work is done at lower rates?—Yes.

1446. Where would you say?—I should say a lot of garments are made in North and South London by Englishwomen on a lower rate of wages. They go to the City for the stuff, or they send their boy or girl with a more or less dilapidated cast-off perambulator which they push home full up with shirts, or mantles or skirts, which are taken back to the warehouse when finished. They take that stuff, and do the work at home.

1447. Can you say that they accept a lower rate of wage than is generally current in the East End of London?—Yes, because they work at home and can look after their children, and they are satisfied to earn 5s. or 6s. a week.

1448. If you are offered a large order for these costumes at a lower price when trade is slack, and you go to your workers and ask if they will take it, and be willing to accept less, do you find them willing to accept less or not?—In many instances no, and in many instances yes.

1449. What about those who do not accept less?—They do not need to take it, and they wait for a better job.

1450. Am I right in concluding that the fact of there being practically no home-workers in this trade is because it is rather a high-class trade?—I should not consider a 5s. 6d. garment a high-class trade, but perhaps others would. As far as I am concerned, in my factory I have never seen one made at less than that.

1451. In your opinion, do the lower-class costumes at a lower rate of pay exist?—Yes, there may be such, but they would be made as I have stated, mainly by women workers at home.

1452. Those workers at home only give a proportion of their time to the making of the costumes, I take it from you?—If they could give their full time, they would not stop at home, but would go into the factories.

1453. With regard to the middleman, if the middleman by the Wages Board were compelled to give the same price as those who employ him, would not he be crushed out?—The middleman would be absolutely crushed out if the Board did not look after his interest as well as looking after the interests of those whom he employs. You must class him as a worker, because he is one.

1454. I want you to reply to my question: if the middleman employs other workers, and they receive the same wages as the manufacturer pays, the middleman has no margin for profit?—Those middlemen do a better class of trade; the perambulator trade would not interfere with the man doing the better class of trade.

1455. You are not answering my question: if the middleman has to pay the same wages to his workers as the manufacturer pays him, the middleman can have no margin of profit, can he? I will try to make it more plain. You are a manufacturer, and you pay a certain rate of wages according to the Wages Board to your workers indoors?—Yes.

1456. The middleman has to pay the same wages also by the Wages Board to his workers?—I

Mr. *Stuart Samuel*—continued.

would not give out the same class of goods as made indoors to the outside; I would give out the cheaper class of goods, an entirely different class of goods. My factory would be filled up with the better class of goods, and I would give out the cheaper class.

1457. Therefore you would be willing to pay the middleman a profit for taking a lower class of work which you yourself did not do?—In fact, he makes his own price; he says: "I want so much for making."

1458. Consequently, if the middleman said he would be crushed out, you do not consider that would be correct?—The middleman would be crushed out if the Board treated him as a middleman. If they treat him as a worker and look after his interests, as well as after the interests of those he employs, he will not be crushed out.

1459. I am merely speaking of the middleman who is not a worker himself, who is what I might call a sub-contractor?—In the trade which I am connected with I know very few people capable of taking out goods from a warehouse and getting them made by other people without doing any work themselves and still getting a profit. I do not know of any; they all have to work quite as hard as the workers they employ, but they do the principal part of the work themselves and employ others to do the minor part.

1460. I have only one other question. I understood you to tell the Chairman that you offered to give the worker, who was mentioned in this Exhibition as having made a costume for 1s. 3d., 3s. 6d. for the same amount of work as was in that costume?—Yes, I did, and I say that even 3s. 6d. would be a sweating wage.

1461. Still you offered it?—The article was marked 1s. 3d., but it would still be a sweating wage at 3s. 6d.; if, however, you can introduce me to that class of industry, I am quite willing to pay 3s. 6d. for the same thing. There is a great margin.

Sir *William Bull*.

1462. I do not think you quite understood Mr. Samuel's question. He put in one case the hypothetical case of when this Board was established, that is to say, he wanted you to imagine what would happen under a Wages Board. You were answering him as if circumstances were as at present. I want to try now to make this clear to the Committee; you want the middleman protected by the Wages Board?—If he is a worker. I say that the middleman is a worker himself in 90 per cent. of cases.

1463. But it must be perfectly clear to you that if there must be a minimum wage to all workers, if the middleman is to receive any profit for the trouble he takes in distributing the work to others, the middleman must be paid rather better wages than the man who is paid direct?—There are two different classes of people who take out work. What you call the middleman is the man who takes out the goods to his own home or to his own workshop and distributes them to others to do the work. There is another middleman who takes out work from a warehouse, and he has a workshop of his own and employs people in his own home

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Sir William Bull—continued.

home, and he works with them—would you consider him a middleman? That is what I want to find out, which would you consider the middleman—the man who simply takes out goods and distributes them or the man who does the principal part of the work himself; he sits with his people in his workshop and works; he fits up and gets one worker to do one thing and one another, and works himself. Would you consider him a middleman?

1464. We will take the case of the man who does some part of the work himself, and distributes it to his family. That man would receive the same rate of wages as are paid to all direct workers. Therefore, you assume that he is able to make a profit because those whom he employs he arranges with himself?—The only way in which these men make a profit is this, that instead of making a coat or other article right out himself, he employs others not so skilful as he is to do the minor part of the work. If he had to do that minor work himself he could only make one coat in two days, but by employing others to do button-holes and the felling he is capable of making four, and he makes a profit, because his time is worth a shilling an hour, say; while for the minor part of the work, 3d. an hour or 2½d. an hour would be enough. He makes the profit in that way.

1465. Therefore he makes a profit in the difference between his own skill in organising labour himself and the work of those whom he employs?—Yes.

1466. Although you think that those whom he employs can be paid the minimum wage?—Yes, you could make a minimum wage, and yet enable him to pay these people. The only way you could do so would be by looking after his interests; he should receive a minimum price for making the article. If the manufacturer who gives him the work out is free to do as he likes, to get the work done as cheaply as he can, you cannot go and restrict that man or you would have him bankrupt in 24 hours.

1467. You have come to the point I thought we should arrive at, and that is, that you are in favour of the man who does part of his work himself, receiving a minimum wage, but you think it is impossible to superintend and see that the people he employs get the minimum wage?—I did not say so; I said if you do one thing you can do the other. That is what I said.

1468. Do you see that a profit can be made between the two?—Oh, yes.

1469. You are satisfied that would work?—Yes, I am satisfied that if a woman is worth 3s. a day, she should receive 3s. a day, and if she is worth 4s., she should receive 4s.

1470. You are satisfied that the Wages Board could make that work satisfactorily?—I do not think there is any harm in trying. I should not like to say it will be satisfactory, but there is no harm at all in trying. Nothing is accomplished unless you try.

1471. I was not here at the commencement of your evidence, but I understand you said you were the pioneer of the trade in this country?—In this class of trade.

1472. What do you call this class of trade?—The better class of ladies' costumes, and jackets,

Sir William Bull—continued.

which formerly had to be imported from Germany principally.

1473. You now make these in this country in your own warehouse?—I should say there are no less than 20,000 people employed in the trade. I have been 23 years in business, and I have two brothers, and various other people who have been with me who have started out for themselves. Therefore, I say that there are not less than 20,000 people employed in the trade.

1474. That was not quite my question. In what particular direction is it that you are the pioneer of this trade?—In the better class of trade.

1475. Do you mean to say these things were never made in this country before you came here?—I should say not; if a lady wanted a particular costume made, or a jacket, she would, of course, go to a tailor's shop and have one made; but the bulk of the goods for City warehouses and to supply shop-keepers used to be imported.

1476. Mr. Samuel asked you how many Jews there were in the trade, and you answered that a certain number were British born; but do I take it that the majority are Jews, whether British born or not?—I should say, out of the 160 about 25 or 30 are Gentiles

Mr. Massie.

1477. I just wanted to ask two questions. You did not seem quite certain whether there was a Union in your trade or not?—There is one. When my people went out on strike because I discharged one man, the Union wanted to compel me to replace the man I had discharged. There was no other dispute, but there was a certain man I did not want.

1478. I understood you to say at first that there might be a Union, but now you say there is a Union?—There is a Union, because when I discharged a man, the others wanted to compel me to restore him, and I would not. The Union called them out on strike.

1479. I quite understand you to mean that it would not be worth while to be a middleman unless he made a profit out of those to whom he gives certain parts of his work?—If you call him a middleman; I do not.

1480. So far as he is a middleman you mean he should make a certain profit out of those to whom he gives out certain parts of his work?—The minor parts, otherwise, if he were to do it himself, these people who do the minor parts would not be employed at all. The man who does the principal part of the work naturally can do the minor part, but the person who can only do the minor part, if there is no one to do the principal part, cannot be employed.

1481. Do you suggest that the Wages Board ought to see that the middleman is paid rather more for the goods he puts out than his employees are paid?—I did not say more; I said that the Wages Board, if they want to look after the interests of the people who work in his workshop, can only do it by also looking after his interest, and he should receive a fixed minimum amount for making the garment. If they could look after the man who takes out work from the warehouse, certainly

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[Continued.]

Mr. Massie—continued.

certainly they could look after and better the position of his workpeople.

1482. I wish to come rather more into detail, because it comes to this, that if he is to make a profit, the Wages Board must see that he gets rather more for the items he puts out to work than those to whom he puts them out?—He does not put them out altogether; he works in his own workshop.

1483. I mean those to whom he gives the work?—Those who help him in his work might receive a better wage if they are not receiving a good wage now; but their condition could only be improved by looking after his interest also.

1484. I will put it once more, and if I cannot get it more clearly I will desist. He has certain workpeople, and to those workpeople he gives certain items of work to do?—Yes.

1485. You say that the Wages Board must look after his interests as well as the interests of his workers?—Yes.

1486. That is to say, you suggest that they should arrange that he should get more for those particular items than his workmen get?—Yes.

Mr. Bridgeman.

1487. Did I understand you to say that you think it is possible that these costumes you referred to at the beginning are made somewhere at 1s. 7½d.?—I did not say it was possible, and to my idea it is not, because the price is absolutely out of the question.

1488. Your lowest price is 3s. 6d.?—I never made a costume at 3s. 6d. I said, I have known of costumes being made at 3s. 6d.; but in my factory I have never seen such a thing as a costume at 3s. 6d. I have heard of costumes being made as low as 3s. 6d.

1489. But you have never heard of anything lower?—No.

1490. I understood you to say that if these 1s. 7½d. costumes were made at all, it was not in the East End of London?—That is so; if they were made, they would be made by home-work, by women who look after their homes, and who could, perhaps, put in three, four or five hours during the day. They are satisfied to earn a small wage, but they would be very unskilled people, and that costume would be nothing like the one at 30s.

1491. Can you say that sort of thing does not go on at all in the East End of London?—No, there is not a costume made in the East End of London by aliens at the price of 1s. 7½d.

1492. Or by anyone?—Such places as Stratford, which may be called the East End, are not included. I speak as far as the alien industry is concerned, and in the costume trade there is not a costume made at 1s. 7½d. If there are such made, they would be made by English-women in their own homes, but I doubt it.

1493. You employ no people who work in their own homes or outside workshops?—That is so.

1494. They do not work in the rooms they live in?—No; they may have a building in the rear or have a floor up above reserved for the work; they may have a house of eight rooms and three or four rooms occupied for working.

1495. You call it the alien trade. How many

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Mr. Bridgeman—continued.

of your workers have come from abroad? I think you said about half were British-born and the other half have come from abroad?—Yes.

1496. Recently?—Oh, no. I have stated that I have got workers with me who have been with me 15 to 20 years.

1497. Are fresh ones coming now from abroad? Is the same number of new hands coming from abroad?—No, we are suffering in that way. I might also say that I have advertised three or four days in the Press, wanting a certain class of hands called baisters, and I have also posted bills, not less than 50 in number, in the neighbourhood, and I have not had one applicant whom I could engage to do the work. I have had some, and tried them. You cannot get any English people to do the work, and if I advertised in the "Daily Telegraph" for five weeks I could not get one.

1498. Is that because they will not do it or cannot?—You would not get an Englishman to take to the needle; an Englishman would be an engineer, a carpenter, and so on, but you would not get him to sit down and do needlework.

1499. In answer to Sir William Bull, did I understand you to say that now since your trade has reached the stage it has no imported clothes of that sort are sold in England?—I did not say so; I say there are still many agents in the City and West End who are only agents for foreign manufacturers.

1500. If a Wages Board were established, would it in your opinion raise the wages of the people employed or shorten their hours of work?—In my opinion in that particular trade (there are trades in which the wages are not so good) the people are not suffering from low wages, but mostly from slackness of trade. That is where the suffering comes in, because, being a season trade, you cannot make stock.

1501. The seasonal character of the trade has been going on for years, I suppose?—For many years the fashion did not change so often as it does now. At the present time the fashion changes more rapidly than it used to; formerly we could make stock, but now we cannot.

1502. What is the reason for that?—The change of fashion.

1503. You have no opinion as to whether it would raise the price or not?—In certain cases prices could be raised where German competition does not come in, but in certain articles they could not.

1504. The only chance of raising the wages and prices would be in those cases where there is not that competition?—It would have to be gone into; where there is no competition you could raise the wages, but when there is foreign competition, as soon as you raise prices 10 per cent. my agent or traveller would find himself at the side of the German manufacturer or traveller, and he would lose the trade.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

1505. In connection with these clothes you showed us at the beginning, I gathered that you said that the price to the public was about twice the price you yourself get when you sell them?—I said 40 to 50 per cent. more.

1506. In any case you said that was explained by the

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Mr. COHEN.

Continued.

Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

by the fact that there were two profits between you and the public?—Yes.

1507. Why should there be two; why not only one?—I can also explain that; being a fancy article, no manufacturer could send travellers out to the country to sell mantles, because the traveller would have to take with him the goods of 10 or 12 different manufacturers. Say that one manufacturer makes 100 different styles, the traveller could not go out with 100 different styles, but he would want 300 or 400. He must have a collection of different classes of goods, and I should say he must have at least 15 or 20 different manufacturers' goods. The manufacturer himself could not go to sell to the retail trade he has not a sufficient variety, and it would not pay him to send out travellers.

1508. What is there to prevent some large West End shop, for instance, with a very large output making an arrangement with you to take your goods direct and so eliminate the second profit?—In many instances that is done with large drapers, but I am saying that the bulk of the trade has to go through the City to a merchant who collects the goods from various manufacturers and sends out travellers. If a City man were to open a huge factory and manufacture for himself, he could not send out his travellers with the goods because he would not have a large enough variety.

1509. I want to be quite clear about foreign competition. I gather that you have been very successful all these 28 years in competing with large classes of German goods which originally held the market?—Yes.

Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

1510. Would you say that the competition in this case has increased again during the last few years?—I should say not; I should say we manage to hold our own at the present time.

1511. I suppose a large quantity of your goods goes abroad?—Yes, mostly to the Colonies. We could not send them to Germany or to France.

1512. Would you say that the export in your trade is quite as big in point of value as the import in the same articles?—Oh, no.

1513. The import is much greater than the export?—Yes, because it is an old business, the importation of these goods into this country, and Germany exports direct to other places just as we do.

1514. One question about the Trade Union; I cannot see exactly what good the Trade Union does to the people. I gather that it has no minimum rate for its people?—No, it has not.

1515. And no out-of-work fund, of course?—I think they have a fund in case there is any dispute; if an employer discharges a man, for instance, they ask him to be put back again, but beyond that they do not do anything.

1516. It is really a sort of advisory association and does not actually help these people?—No, it does not.

1517. Either to get a good wage or to help them when they are out of work?—No, it does not.

1518. In other words, it is no practical assistance to the work-people themselves?—None at all.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Wednesday, 18th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewai
Mr. Fell.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

Sir Thomas Whittaker.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. WILLIAM BRIDGETT called in ; and Examined.

Chairman.

1519. You are Chairman of the Directors of William Bridgett & Sons, Limited ?—Yes.

1520. They are one of the oldest lace manufacturing firms in Nottingham ?—Yes.

1521. You have been engaged in the lace trade a great many years ?—About 30 years.

1522. You are a member of the Council of the Nottingham Chamber of Commerce ?—Yes.

1523. And of the Nottingham Finishers' Association ?—Yes.

1524. You are appearing as the appointed representative of the Nottingham Chamber of Commerce, I think ?—Yes.

1525. Will you give us a short description of the classes of employers in the lace trade ?—Generally speaking there are two classes, the maker and the finisher. The bulk of the goods is produced by makers who sell to the finishers in the web (*i.e.*, in the brown unfinished state). The finishers are known and described as "Lace Manufacturers"—the term generally used in the trade, although they are not manufacturers, but only finishers of the lace.

1526. Are you finishers ?—We are both makers and finishers, and some other firms are both makers and finishers. I mean they finish the goods which they themselves make.

1527. What is the kind of work that is done by home-workers ?—It is principally the drawing, scolloping and clipping of lace. A small portion of the home-workers are engaged in jennying—another process of finishing the lace—just putting it into cards ; but these are few in numbers.

1528. Do I understand that mainly the home-workers are engaged in what you would describe as the finishing processes ?—In a part of the finishing processes—drawing, scolloping and clipping.

1529. Does your own firm employ home-workers ?—We employ home-workers, yes, for that portion of the business.

1530. That is for the portion which home-workers usually do ?—Yes.

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Chairman—continued.

1531. From your knowledge, what would you say is the condition of the home-workers in the lace trade ?—They vary considerably. In one portion of Sneinton and also in a portion of Byron Ward, known locally as "The Bottoms," the conditions are not good. The male relations of the home-workers in this district almost entirely belong to the casual labour class, and homes are poor and frequently very dirty, although some are kept in a fairly clean condition. During the last three years the population in these two slum districts has greatly decreased, important tramway extensions having necessitated the removal of a large number of houses, and at the present moment many others are unoccupied, probably owing to a desire on the part of the people to live in better surroundings. Whatever the cause may be, it is satisfactory to note this decrease of houses and population in the slum districts.

1532. And that is where the insanitary home-work, so far as it exists now, is done, I understand you to say ?—A very small portion of the home-work is done there ; but there is some home-work done in that district at the present time.

1533. Then you would say in the other districts the conditions were satisfactory ?—Very much so, I should say.

1534. Then you think the conditions under which the people live and work are good ?—They are, of the great majority of the home-workers.

1535. What would be, do you think, the effect of licensing home-workers ?—I think that if the heads of families in whose houses home-work is done knew that they could not obtain a licence for home-work unless their homes were clean and healthy, it would be an incentive to them to keep their homes cleaner than is the case at present. It is, however, difficult to improve these conditions by legislation. The personal visits of health officers should result in gradual improvement, but I think that our elementary schools are the places in which the best work can be done to help to remove this unsatisfactory state of things. It should

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should

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Mr. BRIDGETT.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

should be the great aim of all teachers to raise up the children to a higher state of cleanliness, and if this subject were brought more frequently before the children, I think a very beneficial effect on home life would be obtained.

1536. With regard to those homes where the conditions are unsatisfactory or dirty, as I understand you to say, how does that affect the work? What is the condition of the lace when it comes from there? Is it dirty or clean?—I should say that there is a very, very small proportion of the lace returned to the warehouses in a dirty state.

1537. Then, although the homes are dirty, they manage to keep the work clean?—Well, there is such a small proportion of the lace done in these dirty homes. I may add that many of the middle-women who give out lace to the other hands in the homes are very careful to see that the worker keeps the work clean. But if they give it out, and find it is dirty, they take good care as far as possible not to give work again to that woman except in very great stress of business, when it has to be returned quickly.

1538. Is there much child labour in the homes?—No, I think the various statements which have been made upon that point are grossly exaggerated. I know cases in which parents in poor circumstances will not allow their children to do any of this work, although the money would be very useful to them. Some of the work is very easy, and I can well imagine children doing it more as a pleasure than as a duty—in fact, what children would call “helping mother.” This answer was given to me on several occasions where I visited houses where the children were, as it is called, “helping mother.” Among so large a number of workers there are some who would probably make their children work in order to earn more money, but I am convinced that these form a very small minority, and the whole body of home-workers should not be condemned on account of the few.

1539. We have heard something of the middle-women in Nottingham—that is those who distribute the work to the home-workers; and it has been suggested to us that they are a very necessary part of the trade and work. Will you tell us what is your view upon the question of middle-women?—As far as Nottingham is concerned, it is absolutely necessary to have the middle-women.

1540. Are they always women?—In nearly every case they are women. She fetches the work from the manufacturer. The work is given her in webs containing a number of breadths, varying from about 20 to 250, according to the width of the lace. I may explain this. A web consists of breadths, of from 20 to 250 across the machine, according to the width of the lace. She divides this web among her workers, giving to each one the number of breadths which she is capable of doing in the time allowed. When the web is completed, she takes it back in breadths to the manufacturer. If the goods are urgently wanted, she may have to send the breadths to the manufacturer as quickly as they are finished, thus having to make several journeys in connection with one web.

Chairman—continued.

1541. And she really delivers and collects the work?—She delivers and collects the work.

1542. And thereby saves an enormous amount of work in going backwards and forwards?—And saves the people the necessity of leaving their houses and families.

1543. What sort of payment does the middle-woman get for this? Does she arrange payment with the home-worker, or does the manufacturer pay the home-worker direct?—No, he pays the middle-woman.

1544. Then the middle-woman arranges for the payment of the home-worker?—Yes, but every home-worker knows very well the tariff under which the work is paid for.

1545. Then may I put it in this way—the middle-woman pays the home-worker?—She pays the home-worker.

1546. And is the person responsible to the manufacturer?—And is the person responsible to the manufacturer.

1547. And is also responsible to the home-worker as far as the money is concerned?—Yes.

1548. Does the worker get one price from the manufacturer, and then pay also one to the home-worker, or is their remuneration a kind of percentage on the total?—I have made very minute inquiries as to this from nearly every manufacturer I know in Nottingham. I have also questioned 50 or 60 home-workers and middle-women, and I find the remuneration for the middle-women averages from 20 to 25 per cent.

1549. Is it deducted in the form of a percentage, or is it merely that one price is paid to the middle-woman and then she pays another price to the worker?—In some cases it is in this form. For every five clips the middle-woman receives 1½d. and pays 1d. to the home-worker. No doubt some middle-women pay less than this, but from reliable information I have received, I am convinced the majority pay at the rate I have named.

1550. You do not consider that there is anything that could be described as sweating about it?—Not at all.

1551. But you consider that it is a fair payment for the services rendered?—It is a very fair payment for the services rendered.

1552. Have you seen any indications that there is such a thing as truck payment in connection with this work?—No. I have made careful inquiries into this question, and have not found a single instance. Of course, there may be a few isolated instances which I have not heard of.

1553. We have had evidence from Mr. Askwith here that you have a minimum tariff in the lace trade at Nottingham?—Yes.

1554. How is that working?—I assisted in convening the first meeting of manufacturers at which the tariff was adopted. It was then decided to publish in the local newspapers for a whole week the minimum scale of pay, thus giving every home-worker, both first and second hand, the opportunity of seeing what the prices should be; also a list was printed of the manufacturers who agreed to pay the prices. In that way home-workers and every woman who does any work whatever should know what she ought to receive from the middle-woman.

1555. What

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Mr. BRIDGETT.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

1555. What should you say was the object of fixing this minimum tariff?—It was in the interest of the home-worker. We formed this Association owing to the reports that we had seen and also from evidence which we had heard had been given before your Committee, that the home-workers in Nottingham were being sweated.

1556. But was not the minimum wage fixed before this Committee was appointed?—I think not.

1557. When was the minimum wage fixed?—I do not think I have the exact date.

1558. What year was it?—Last year—last autumn. It was after one of our members, Mr. Richardson—I think he is a member of your Committee—came and saw us at the Chamber of Commerce, and read the evidence which Miss Squire had given. We took it up, and the Chamber of Commerce and I and several others made very searching inquiries through the town before we decided that I should come up to represent them on the matter. Then it was found in some instances manufacturers were paying very much less than the minimum tariff which we adopted. But those were the commoner class of goods, which are in very strict competition with foreign markets, such as Calais and Caudry and places in Germany where they manufacture lace; but we were anxious that the home-workers should receive a fair remuneration, and we thought it only right that every manufacturer should pay the same price.

1559. Then, I suppose, the second object would be to see that those manufacturers who were paying what you considered a fair price, were not being undercut by others who were paying a lower rate?—No. It was not with that object so much as with the view of helping the home-worker, and to refute the charges brought against the Nottingham manufacturers, that they were sweating the home-workers?

1560. Has the tariff been generally adopted by the manufacturers of Nottingham, or have you many standing out?—There are about 180 so-called manufacturers in the town, and 100 to 125 of these signed that paper; but we have good reason to believe that several who did not sign it are also paying under that tariff.

1561. How many, do you think, altogether are not paying on the tariff?—It would be rather difficult to say.

1562. 40 or 50?—I could not, of course, guarantee that even those who had signed are still paying.

1563. There is, of course, no means of enforcing it?—There is no means of enforcing it; it is only a matter of a word of honour, but it is really the fault of the home-worker, if she accepts a price under what the tariff published.

1564. May I ask you if those who are standing out are the larger or the smaller employers, or employers doing the better or the cheaper classes of work?—I know in some cases they are makers of commoner grade of goods, but, as I have said before, they have to compete with the foreign competition.

1565. Is it possible for you, speaking very generally, of course, to give us any indication of the average rate of wages that the worker can

Chairman—continued.

earn under that tariff?—I think the work can be divided into three grades. The first grade is the drawing, which is the unskilled part of the labour. Perhaps you wish me to illustrate this?

1566. No; that might be a little too technical?—This requires little previous experience, and a number of the drawers are old persons. Opinions as to the amount per hour earned by them vary considerably, probably averaging from 1½d. to 2½d. per hour. I have these figures from the majority of the leading manufacturers in the town. The second grade is what may be termed the average clipping and scolloping. This includes the common and medium qualities. The majority of the workers are occupied with this grade, and the prices for the work vary according to the quality of the lace. I should say the average amount of wage which can be earned in this grade would be from 2d. to 4d. per hour. The third grade comprises the best qualities and most extreme styles. This work must be done very carefully, and only the most experienced workers do it. Consequently the rate of payment is higher, averaging from 3d. to 5d. per hour.

1567. Do the people who do this work at home work pretty well all day; I mean are they doing it steadily or is it at only general intervals in their household work?—It is quite impossible to answer that question, because in some cases a home-worker might have very much to do with her household affairs and her family, and only be able to put in two or three hours per day, whilst others could work several hours per day.

1568. Do you know what amount per week a woman would be likely to earn who depended for her livelihood upon this trade?—That would depend on the amount of work available. The work is very irregular. Business in one part of the year is much quieter than in another, but the greatest cause of irregularity is the continual change in the style of lace. One year a style of lace will be in demand which will give employment to every available worker, and another season a totally different class of goods would form the prevailing fashion, which would give very little employment to the home-workers. The styles of lace vary so considerably that one web may give employment to home-workers amounting to £3 or £4, whilst an equally large and valuable web might only give employment to the value of 3s. or 4s. In fact, it is quite possible for a manufacturer to do an equal amount of business in two successive years, and yet in one of the years to pay two-thirds less for drawing, clipping and scolloping than in the other year.

(The Witness exhibits specimens showing the different classes of the work.)

1569. The main point, I think, is that the work is irregular, and variable according to the class of lace that is being used?—It is very irregular. In the busy part of the season it is most important that orders should be quickly executed, and it frequently happens that a part, or even the whole of a web, given out to the middle-woman in the morning, must be sent away by the manufacturer on the same day, possibly to America, or anywhere in the world. It has to be despatched the same day that the order is received, otherwise it is cancelled

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cancelled. Consequently the whole web could not be given to an individual worker, who might not be able to complete it in less than a week, or even a longer period. The webs would have to be divided by the manufacturer into a number of small parts, according to the capabilities of the worker—and if the home-worker were obliged to receive the work direct from the manufacturer—that is, if you did away with the middle-woman; this could not possibly work under the present existing conditions of the work—for one worker might only be able to devote two hours per day to the work, whereas another could give a whole day to it. The majority of warehouses are situated within a small area known as the “Lace Market,” and whilst a number of the home-workers reside in the immediate neighbourhood, a still larger number reside from one to three miles away. In many small districts from 20 to 30 women may have work from one middle-woman, so that instead of one woman making the journey of one to three miles twice a day, as is the case under the present system, it would probably necessitate 20 women from the same neighbourhood making the same journey for a similar quantity of lace.

1570. I think that is obvious?—Yes. I consider the scheme would result in a considerable loss to the home-worker, and would be absolutely unworkable for the manufacturer.

1571. What would be the effect of driving this home-worker into the factories—that is, if the manufacturers had the women in their factories to do this work instead of depending upon them to be available just at times of rushes when they want them?—It would be a very difficult matter. A manufacturer doing a fairly large business would probably give employment to 20 or 25 middle-women, all of whom would visit the warehouse once or twice a day. Instead of dealing with 25 women he would probably have to deal with 250 per day during the busy part of the season. At this period he would most likely give out 50 webs or more per day. Should the work be given out direct to the individual worker, he would have to employ a staff of girls to divide the web into small portions. Besides this, he would have to rent a large room for the purpose. Then, when the quiet season of the year arrived, most of these girls would have to be discharged, and the manufacturer would be paying rent for a room which he did not require.

1572. It comes to this, to a very large extent, the home-worker relieves the manufacturer of the risks and costs of the seasonal trade, and that the home-worker has to bear that burden instead of the manufacturer?—I will explain a little farther on what I mean by this. It would also cause another class of middle-women to come into existence, and a home-worker would not come into the warehouses or factories unless regular work was certain to be supplied; and as I have explained before, the class of work given out to the home-worker is so irregular and so dependent on fashion and styles that it is impossible to guarantee every home-worker regular employment; therefore she would not leave her home or be at the trouble of going one, two or three miles simply to be told that there was no work to do. She would go into other businesses, and the trade

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Chairman—continued.

itself would suffer, and it would not only affect the home-worker, but it would affect a considerable portion of other branches of the business, as every branch of the lace business depends on another minute part. We cannot do away with one part without doing away with some of the others.

1573. Of course it is very much simpler in seasonal and varying trades for the manufacturer to have people out doing this work; that is perfectly obvious. But is it not also clear that this method, while it is so much simpler and cheaper for the manufacturer, is throwing a very considerable burden of uncertainty of employment upon the workers?—I do not think they would get any more regular employment if they came into the factory.

1574. Is it not very similar to the case we had an illustration of in London in connection with our docks when they employed casual labour every day; but since then they have employed a large number more regularly, to the very great improvement of the condition of the workers? Is it not a case of the employer throwing the responsibility and risk of the seasonal portion of the trade to a very large extent upon the worker?—I do not think so at all. I think it would be an utter impossibility, and it would be a ruination to thousands of home-workers in the town, if they were compelled to go into a factory to work.

1575. No one would suggest they should be compelled?—I mean if this class of work could only be done in factories there would not, to begin with, be anything like the accommodation at the present time, nor could it be done in the near future.

1576. Do you suggest to us that it would be beyond the organising power of the lace trade to complete the production of lace in factories and workshops?—Yes; quite beyond its power.

1577. We have had it suggested to us that sometimes people who are not entirely dependent for their livelihood upon what they earn in this way may be disposed to take work at low rates from the middle-woman, and thus tend to cut down the price earned by those who have to depend upon it. Have you any experience of that?—No. The rate of payment is so well known by all classes of home-workers that none would be willing to accept work at a lower rate, and least of all those who are not dependent on it for a livelihood.

1578. You would say, then, that there is nothing in the suggestion?—No, nothing whatever. When trade is bad, as it is at the present moment, and there is a very limited quantity of work given out, you could not prevent some of the relations of the home-workers saying: “I will do this at such and such a price; give it to me. I have no money this week, and I am in very poor circumstances,” or something of that sort. You could not help that. But it is not generally done.

1579. Taking into consideration all the facts of the case—the rate of payment which you have mentioned to us, which seems to be about 2d. to 3d. an hour, and that sort of thing, and also the fact that the trade is uncertain and the earnings are irregular, do you think a woman who is a lace-worker at home could earn all the year round a decent livelihood?—I think if a woman can devote her

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her whole time to the work, and could obtain regular employment, she would undoubtedly make a very comfortable living; but if she had to give a considerable portion of the day to her household and family matters, as the majority of them have to do, I do not believe she would in the remaining time make anything like sufficient to maintain her home.

1580. If she could devote to it a reasonable amount of time per day (that is a good day's work), and the work is sufficient—that is one question; but in view of the fact that the work is uncertain and irregular, could she earn sufficient to make a good livelihood?—Yes. Those who are dependent on it, and do it regularly and not just casually, or just when household duties permit them, can do so.

1581. Do you think there are women in Nottingham working in the lace trade who earn sufficient to provide a decent livelihood all the year round?—Yes, I do.

1582. At 2d. an hour?—I would not say at 2d. an hour, because they vary the work. They do not always have the same class of work given to them. They have one day perhaps the commoner grade, and then a better class. These different grades are all being finished, and there is not one particular kind of work being done at one season, and another at another.

1583. But you think they get work sufficiently regularly—that is, a sufficient amount of work—to enable them to make a decent livelihood for the whole year?—Much depends upon the quantity of lace that is in demand, and on what is given to them. If the work was sufficient—

1584. I want to take the actual facts. Is it your experience that the workers do, as a matter of fact, earn sufficient in the year to provide a decent livelihood?—I could not answer that because of the uncertainty of the quantity of lace that is given out. It is such an uncertain quantity that it would be impossible for anybody to say that any woman could earn a certain amount a year unless we knew how the trade was going to be. It varies from week to week.

1585. Take last year?—Last year she could undoubtedly. If she had given her whole time to work she could have made a very comfortable living.

1586. Trade was good last year?—Trade was good last year up to the end of September.

1587. Now it is slack again, I understand?—Very quiet indeed.

1588. And you would suggest now that an ordinary woman would have some difficulty in getting sufficient work to enable her to earn sufficient?—It is very difficult to find work for one-tenth of your hands at the present moment in all branches of the business—not only the home-workers, but those who come inside, and do the work inside—very difficult indeed.

1589. Now with regard to the Wages Board; would it be any advantage or would it be practicable to put the arrangement (which you have on a voluntary basis in force in Nottingham) on a compulsory basis, so that it should be illegal for any employer to pay a lower rate than the scale decided upon?—It might be practicable,

Chairman—continued.

but I do not think it is necessary as far as Nottingham is concerned. Generally speaking we pay fair prices, and although no definite action has yet been taken by the recently formed Lace Finishers' Association to compel everybody to pay to the minimum tariff, I have spoken to a great number of the manufacturers, and there is a decided feeling that the Association should take such action at once, in order to control and improve as far as possible the conditions for home-workers. Also, if possible, to pay not less than the minimum scale of tariff as per tariff issued. But if a Wages Board were introduced, it would be most essential that the rate of pay be fixed so as not to prejudicially affect the trade generally in its competition with foreign lace centres; for it must be remembered that Nottingham has no longer a monopoly in the class of lace which we are now considering.

1590. But you have a tariff now. Do you think it desirable that all should pay according to that tariff?—I do.

1591. In fixing that tariff I assume that the masters and men did bear in mind the question as to foreign competition and other things that you have referred to?—There are no men concerned in that part of the finishing.

1592. The masters and the workers did bear this point in their minds?—Quite so.

1593. Therefore, really, the only practical issue is whether it is desirable that there should be the force of law behind this Association. I understand you to suggest that you think it desirable that all makers should pay this tariff. Now, what we should like to hear is your view as to whether it is desirable that the law should compel them to do so?—I do not think it would be practicable for Nottingham at all. There are certain classes of finishing which the home-workers do as to which it would be impossible for any Wages Board to arrive at a price per hour unless the Board were constantly at it during the whole of the busy season.

1594. Then do I understand that your tariff of prices, if I may so describe it, does not cover all these items and processes?—Not the most expensive goods. That is left to the individual home-worker and the manufacturer to come to a price between themselves, and it is usually based on the highest rate that I have given per hour for the best class of goods.

1595. Do you suggest that it would not be possible to fix all the details and all the prices?—I do not see how it would be possible in a fair season or in an average season, when you consider the number of manufacturers. We are getting out new patterns almost daily; and it would take a Board sitting from very early in the morning till late at night every day during the year to arrive at the prices. It would be an utter impossibility.

1596. If any of us have been under the impression that the tariff of prices which was fixed at Nottingham did really cover the whole trade and all its details, we have been under a misapprehension?—The tariff fixed was for everything except articles which you cannot fix the price of until you know the amount of time that it takes to do.

1597. And

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1597. And you would say that those articles about which a price has not been fixed are so numerous and variable that it would take a Wages Board every day from morning to night during the season to fix prices?—Probably it would if the trade were good and there were many patterns coming out. In an average season there are so many patterns of this kind coming out which would want fixing that I do not know any masters or work-people who would be willing to give up their time to it.

1598. You have not fixed the prices, then, for these new patterns and designs?—No. We fix them in the place. We get two reliable hands to do a certain portion of the work—say, a dozen yards; and we take the time of the girls. Then we give them to the out-door worker and let her do the same. If she finds she can do so much in the hour she names a price, and if we are anywhere near it, we give it to her. I am speaking now of the better class of goods where we could quite afford to give somewhere near what they would probably ask for it.

1599. That would not be in the tariff?—That could not be put in the tariff. You could not fix a price beforehand. The tariff was formed merely for the sake of goods which are mostly in demand—I mean that are regularly given out.

1600. Is there much home-work in Nottingham in other trades?—There are a large number of home-workers engaged in the finishing of hosiery.

1601. Is home-work as necessary in connection with the hosiery trade as it is in connection with the lace trade?—I have spoken to several of the largest firms, and to one of the largest firms of hosiery in existence either here or in any other country, and he told me himself that if home-work were discontinued the hosiery trade would be practically paralysed.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

1602. I understand you to say that this tariff came into effect, or was made in consequence of the evidence given before this Committee?—In consequence of some of the evidence.

1603. I gather that the manufacturers of Nottingham do not deny that there is a certain amount of sweating, but that they proceeded on their own initiative to endeavour to improve their position?—Yes, that is so.

1604. What have the manufacturers done to improve the home-workers' position?—The majority of them have agreed to pay to this Association.

1605. And is that on a better scale than previous to this Committee sitting?—A great number of the manufacturers were already paying to that; but it gave to every home-worker a knowledge of the prices she ought to receive.

1606. And did she receive them?—I suppose she does now. It is her own fault if she does not.

1607. As a matter of fact your agreement made the bad-paying master pay practically the same as the good-paying master?—We did not make them; we asked them to do it, and they agreed to do so.

1608. May I ask you why you waited until this Committee sat—how it was that the manufacturers of Nottingham did not on their own initiative

Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

introduce such a system?—I do not think the majority of the manufacturers knew it was existing. I personally did not know that such prices were being paid, or that there was any sweating being done in the town. We pay a fair price, we always have paid these prices, and in fact we paid more in some instances; I am quite sure the majority of the manufacturers do the same as we do.

1609. Do you think if the Report of the proceedings of this Committee were more widely diffused, that other trades might perhaps take the matter into consideration?—I think they would look into their household affairs the same as we have done ours.

1610. The object of my question was to ascertain your opinion as to how far a voluntary rather than a compulsory payment of the home-workers might perhaps be found conducive to their interest. Now, I wish to ask your opinion from the compulsory point of view. If there were a Wages Board at the present moment existing at Nottingham, and the tariff were the same as is now existing, would that have the effect of bringing in the dissident manufacturers?—If a Wages Board were compulsory, the law would enforce it.

1611. I am coming to that, but I want you to give me your opinion as to whether, if the tariff were as it is now and the Wages Board were compulsory, those manufacturers who now stand out would come in?—They would be obliged to come in.

1612. Do not you think, from your own point of view as a manufacturer, that it would be of great advantage to have a Wages Board?—I do, decidedly.

1613. You mentioned that in Nottingham they were getting out new patterns almost daily. Is that a figure of speech, or is it an absolute fact?—No, it is not a figure of speech; it is an actual fact.

1614. Do you make any Nottingham-pattern lace similar to that made under the Congested Districts' Boards in Ireland—the Irish pattern?—Ours is all imitation lace—machine-made lace.

1615. Do you make an imitation of the Irish lace?—We make imitations of all kinds of lace—of every kind.

1616. Do you make imitation of the Irish hand-made lace in Nottingham?—Yes, it is an imitation.

1617. Is it a good imitation?—We consider it so.

1618. The reason why I ask you is because we have had one witness here who said that Nottingham did not copy the hand-made lace of Ireland?—We try to copy every real made lace that we possibly can. That is quite legitimate.

1619. You mentioned that you had personally visited a large number of those who worked for you?—Yes; and also workers who worked for other people. I have spent over three months in going round and getting as much information as I possibly could.

1620. Did you, in the course of your investigations, come across any large proportion of the workers in receipt of parish relief?—I came across, I think, three or four instances.

1621. Out of how many?—I could not tell you exactly

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exactly the number I did see; but I made inquiries also. I sent other men round to other districts—some of my own men—to make inquiries, but I found that what had been put forward by the Board of Guardians was entirely wrong. At the meetings of the Nottingham Board of Guardians some members have asserted that as some home-workers receive poor relief, the lace trade is really subsidised by the rates. This is entirely wrong. In the majority of cases where poor relief is received, they are not needy lace-workers who are unable to earn enough at their own trade to maintain themselves, and consequently have to be assisted by the rates, but they are persons who from a variety of causes find themselves in straitened circumstances, and have to obtain assistance from the rates; and in order to supplement this assistance, they turn to a certain class of easy lace-work which does not require any skill. So by doing this lace-work they really lessen the rates, for without this work some of the women would need greater assistance from the public funds. I have also heard that, in order to obtain greater relief, some of them state they earn much smaller wages by home lace-work than is actually the case.

1622. Have you any figures as to the percentage of those working in receipt of parish relief?—I have not any figures, but it is very small indeed.

1623. About 2 per cent. do you think?—I could not tell you the percentage; the home-workers are a great number in the town—seven or eight thousand.

Mr. *Robinson*.

1624. A large number of new patterns are continually being made, you say. Now, supposing there were a Wages Board constituted, would you, as manufacturers, think it a hardship to have to bring every pattern before this Wages Board, and so disclose the secrets of the trade?—That is one of the greatest difficulties, and would cause more friction than anything I can think of; because it would be practically giving your hand to the other manufacturers who sit on that Board.

1625. You say that these middle-women, who take the lace to the workers, are absolutely necessary in order to carry on the trade. You say that they take about 20 per cent. of the money which is paid to the workers, and sometimes more. Now, do not you think that it would be possible at any rate to restrict the percentage which they should take as a fair remuneration for the work that they do?—You can only take their word for it. We have no possible means of finding out to whom they give it, except by tracing them from home to home. We could ask them to do it, but, even then, there could be collusion between the home-worker and the middle-women.

1626. You rather hinted that some of them did take more than 20 per cent., and you also thought that perhaps at times they might take more than they were justified in taking?—No, I did not intend to give that impression.

1627. 20 per cent. you say is about the percentage?—I should say from 20 to 25 per cent. I do not think they take more than that.

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Mr. *Brunner*.

1628. We have heard of books and tables of figures fixing the rates of pay for certain classes of lace goods. I think you know what I mean?—You mean the tariff.

1629. Yes. Then, on the other hand, you told us that there are certain varieties of lace as to which it is not possible to fix a tariff. Can you tell us whether there is any defined line you can put between those for which you can fix a tariff and those for which you cannot fix a tariff?—The price could be fixed at so much per hour, as it is at present; it is a question of experts arriving at the time taken by the different workers to do it, and it depends upon the skill of the worker whether she can do it in less time than another one, and then she would earn more money necessarily.

1630. I am afraid I have not made myself clear. Would it be possible to have a Wages Board to fix rates of pay for the commoner class of goods, and leave the prices of the better articles, as at present to be fixed by mutual agreement?—Decidedly it would be far better, because there is no dissatisfaction whatever as to the class of goods I am speaking of, where we have not fixed the rate by the tariff. There is none whatever—no dissatisfaction is ever expressed.

1631. Can you tell me whether there is a line which you can fix definitely between the two classes of goods—the one class of goods which could come under the tariff regulations, and the other class of goods which could not?—I do not think any line could be fixed, because everything depends on the class of lace. We do not know what class of lace will be in existence next year; perhaps none of these will be; but perhaps a different thing entirely, and no price could be fixed to regulate that.

Mr. *Bridgeman*.

1632. I should like to ask a question or two more on this point. Have you put this tariff in evidence?—It has been published in the Nottingham newspapers. I have a tariff here. That is the tariff that was sent round.

Mr. *Trevelyan*.

1633. Is this the whole thing?—That comprehends the whole that is necessary. Every worker would understand that.

Mr. *Bridgeman*.

1634. How many of your workers do you suppose are working now on the class of goods comprehended in that tariff? You say that there are certain classes of goods for which no tariff could be drawn, and that there is a certain class of goods for which you have drawn a tariff?—Yes.

1635. Now, what is the proportion of those employed on the work for which you can and have drawn a tariff, and of those who are employed on this class of work for which you cannot draw a tariff?—You mean what is the proportion of workers who work under that tariff, and of those who work at that class of work which we cannot fix a tariff for?

1636. Yes?—I should say quite 85 or 90 per cent. work under that tariff.

1637. Then you have never contemplated a tariff for

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for piecework, but always by the hour?—No, the tariff is for piecework.

1638. But you have been telling us about so much an hour?—Yes, but I was speaking of a small proportion of the better class of goods. Let me put it to you in this way. Only the more highly-skilled labour is paid for by the hour.

Chairman.

1639. All home-work must be paid for as piecework?—Piecework decidedly. We find out how much they can do in an hour, and then when he gives the goods out, if there are 50 dozen or 100 dozen, they are paid for at the price we have fixed. We endeavour to ascertain what they can do. If they can do 12 yards in one hour, and we should pay them 5d., then for every 12 yards they would get 5d.

Mr. Bridgeman.

1640. And if they did it in less time they would get the same money?—They would get the same money per yard, decidedly, when once the price has been fixed by the manufacturer or worker.

1641. And if they take longer they would get less?—Yes, that is their own fault; or they might get up from their work to attend to their household duties.

1642. And you test it by giving the work to some of the best workers?—We generally fix it by two expert hands; and then we submit it to the home-worker, and we ask her for her price, and then we tell her what our price is; and if there is a difference we settle it, or we give it to her if we can afford it.

1643. Would the girl whose work fixes the price be an average girl?—An average girl, quite so.

1644. I understood you to say that you thought it was quite impossible to do without the middle-woman in your trade?—Quite impossible.

1645. I did not gather how many home-workers each middle-woman would employ. In one part of your evidence you said about 20, and 10 in another. Would 10 to 20 be a sort of average?—It would depend very much upon what amount of work the middle-woman could receive—what connection she had with the manufacturers. One middle-woman might have to do with a house who could give her three or four webs a day. But it would depend on how many hands she gave her work to, and the time that was required to do the work.

1646. Could you say what would be the maximum number of hands to a middle-woman?—I could not say.

1647. Would it be 50?—No, not so much. She could not possibly see 50 a day.

1648. 30?—Probably.

1649. Then, if they were all earning full wages every week, what would you expect the amount to be that a middle-woman would earn per week when trade was good?—It would depend upon the time she put in. We cannot regulate a thing like that, we have no check on them whatever.

1650. I do not say that you have any check on them, but I want to know whether you have any idea what a woman would earn?—I have not the slightest idea what a woman would earn.

1651. You said, I think, that the home-workers

Mr. Bridgeman—continued.

earned somewhere about 3d. an hour, did not you?—No, I did not. I gave three different classes.

1652. 1½d. to 2d.; 2d. to 4d.; and 3d. to 5d. were the three classes?—Yes, different grades.

1653. So that supposing 2d. an hour was the average, then a woman working eight hours a day would earn 1s. 4d.?—Yes; but you are taking the very lowest goods—that is, unskilled labour.

1654. You would not let me take the 3d. just now. What I want to get at is, what the middle-woman is making out of this. Now we cannot do that without finding out what women in full work would be earning a week?—I am afraid I have not explained to you sufficiently the conditions under which the middle-woman is working. You see, the middle-woman cannot be guaranteed any quantity of work a week. She never knows when she goes to the warehouse whether she is going to have one, two, three, or four webs; and she does not know from day to day whether that work will continue. Therefore, it is impossible to say what a woman would earn until the end of the week.

1655. A home-worker might earn, I suppose, 12s. a week at this work?—Decidedly.

1656. Then, supposing there were 20 of these employed to one middle-woman, that would be 240s. a week?—Yes, £12 a week.

1657. Of which the middle-woman gets a quarter occasionally. Then she would be getting £3 a week at that time?—Yes; but of course she has a lot to do for that. There are a lot of expenses attached to it. She has to do a certain portion of the work—dividing the pieces up into breadths in order to give it out—checking it, and taking it back. Then she has expenses in fetching it. She very often has to take trams three or four times a day, besides being responsible for the work if it is damaged.

1658. Then you do not think 20 to 25 per cent. is too high?—Not for the work they have to do.

1659. What markets do you sell in chiefly?—Everywhere.

1660. At home and abroad?—At home and abroad.

1661. Supposing a Wages Board were appointed, do you think it would raise the wages which are now being paid?—Not if you took into consideration what they are paying abroad. I have the prices here which they are paying abroad, if you will allow me to give them to you. I think it is only right that you should take a note of them.

Chairman.

1662. Please, when doing so, give the corresponding prices which are paid here?—I have got what they are paying abroad for work similar to that which I have given you under our tariff.

Mr. Bridgeman.

1663. For home-work?—For home-work—for this class of work.

Chairman.

1664. How do you know that they pay those prices?—I have got these from four of the most reliable and largest manufacturers in Calais. I have

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have them from the best manufacturer at Dresden. I have them from two sources in Leipsic, and in Austria; and what I am going to give you is undoubted truth: it is positively correct; there is no question as to the figures I have here. Now I will take it in this way. The quality in Nottingham we pay 1d. per thousand clips, under the tariff abroad they pay ½d. to ¾d. for, according to the scolloping, and as low as ¼d. per thousand clips for the common grades. They do not give one price as we do, but they go according to the qualities of the goods. For scolloping in Nottingham we pay ½d. to 1½d. per dozen yards. Abroad, for the better qualities, they pay ½d. to 1d.—that is not quite so much as ours—and for the commoner goods they pay as low as ½d. per dozen yards. That is the general price in Calais. That is where the greatest competition is. Then for drawing I find we pay ¼ of a penny per dozen yards, and abroad it comes to practically the same price—that is for the unskilled part.

Mr. Bridgeman.

1665. Then the chief competition is with French firms?—Yes, the greater number of machines are in Calais.

1666. Do you sell much in France yourself?—I would rather you would not ask me that question.

1667. Do you think much Nottingham lace is sold in France?—Decidedly. But many of the markets that were formerly supplied by us now make their own. For instance, in Germany they are making a considerable portion of lace. So they are in Austria, and of course at Calais they are making, and also in Russia. In all these countries we have practically a prohibitive tariff. In Russia, 80 per cent. or more. We have 20 to 25 per cent., according to weight of the goods, in France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

1668. In fixing the price by a Wages Board you would have to have your eye always on foreign prices?—We should have to, in order to enable us to do any business at all; because they can send direct into England, and at this moment they can land their goods in London cheaper from Calais than we can from Nottingham.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

1669. Do you select your middle-women from the home-workers, or how do you get hold of them?—They are generally women who have been recommended to us.

1670. Are they not, as a rule, old workers?—Yes, decidedly. They are women who have in former times worked at that particular branch of lace. They have been used to it all their lives. They are women who understand the work.

1671. I gather that as soon as they become middle-women the majority of them cease to do any actual home-work themselves?—No, in a time like this in all probability they would do a lot of the work which they receive themselves.

1672. It is only, then, in the busy times that they are merely distributing agents?—They distribute it from their own houses and in their own neighbourhood and amongst their friends as far as possible.

Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

1673. You have been giving us the rate of pay for a particular class of goods. I suppose off that you have to make occasional deductions for work which is either spoiled or badly done, and probably deductions for the cost of materials such as thread, which the workers have to provide themselves?—No, they have not to provide anything. There is no expense whatever to them attached to our work.

1674. "All threads to be paid for." What does that mean?—We pay for every thread drawn; we pay for everything; every part of the work.

1675. Then will you answer the first part of my question. Are there considerable deductions for certain things, for work which is spoiled or badly done?—If work is damaged or spoiled by dirt or anything of that kind, of course they have to pay for it.

1676. We want to get at the net wages, if possible. That is why I asked you about whether deductions to any considerable extent were made?—No, there is no necessity for it really. I have come across very little in my own firm. I made inquiries as to the amount of soiled work we had during the last year, and it came to practically nothing. We certainly did not charge anybody for it.

1677. In answer to Mr. Robinson, you made a remark which seemed to me of great importance, namely, that you objected to the creation of a Wages Board on the ground that some of your trade secrets and patterns would be divulged. Why should that occur more than at the present time, because, surely, when you bring out a new pattern it gets on to the market, and your competitors are able to get hold of it at once; is not that so?—Yes, but they very often are not able to get hold of it as soon as they would if it had to go before them, ere it was finished, and sent on to the market. Certain manufacturers have their goods on the markets for weeks, perhaps months, before it is out in the trade generally. It may be for one particular market or for one particular customer.

1678. And your trade competitors in Nottingham may not hear what you have done until it has been sold for weeks and weeks?—Perhaps longer than that.

1679. They must be rather blind?—Not at all. If your employees are honest and do not take it away from your place, I do not see any reason whatever for that. If I made goods and sell the whole of them abroad, I do not see who is to know except my own people, and no competitor could ever find out what I was doing; he would never see the pattern unless it was dishonestly obtained, and sent to him with a view to his copying it. But were a Wages Board to be established and composed of six manufacturers, then all novelties would naturally be brought before them.

1680. And you would regard that as an exceedingly strong objection from your point of view?—I should decidedly, and I think other manufacturers would feel the same.

1681. You say you visited a number of home-workers yourself. Would you say that it would be quite easy to get, say, six efficient repre-

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Mr. BRIDGETT.

[Continued.]

Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

sentive workers on to a Wages Board?—I should not like to guarantee it, but it would be possible to get them.

1682. What I want to know is: Are they sufficiently intelligent to discuss questions which would come up?—They would have to be middle-women.

1683. Entirely, you think?—I should say so; I should say it would be better. I think they would be better represented by middle-women who understood the work, because the home-workers could only do one part of one class of goods, and they would not understand the other part of it at all.

1684. Would not the best arrangement be to have partly middle-women and partly home-workers?—No, the home-workers could only do a certain class of work unless you get the most skilled class of home-workers, and they become middle-women.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

1685. How long does it take to get a pattern on the market? If a new pattern came before the Wages Board, how long would it take another manufacturer to put the same article on to the market?—That is a very difficult question to answer. Some classes of goods would take a week or a fortnight. This article, for instance. *That* would take a month. *This* would take six weeks, or it might perhaps take two months to get that on the machine.

Mr. Fell.

1686. I gather, then, that you are rather in favour of licensing?—I certainly am. I think it would be very beneficial to the state of the house and to the condition of the goods returned to the manufacturer.

1687. You think it would improve the sanitary conditions of the houses of the workers?—Yes, decidedly. Although I might add that the sanitary authorities visit them constantly, and if at any time any disease is found in the house, any work which is in the house is taken charge of by the sanitary authorities and disinfected before it is returned to the manufacturer.

1688. You think the head of the house—the woman, I suppose, who does the work—should be licensed?—Yes.

1689. Have you looked at the licensing proposals which have come before us?—No, I have not seen them.

1690. One of the proposals before us is that all the workers should be licensed?—It would certainly tend to the better condition of the home if the proper authorities visited the homes, and only a licence was given where the houses were found to be clean.

1691. Do you think it would damage the Nottingham trade if that were done?—I do not think so. I do not see any reason why it should. I do not think cleanliness would ever damage anything.

1692. It would not damage the trade, but would it not close a certain number of houses?—Why should it close the houses?

1693. Would it not close a certain number of these slum houses which you mentioned in poor

Mr. Fell—continued.

districts?—No; but it would tend to make them keep them cleaner, I suppose.

1694. Surely they would not get their licence?—I hope you are not misunderstanding me; there are not many dirty houses; there are very few even in the slum districts that I went into. I hope I did not give you the impression that they were all dirty houses, because they are not. It is a very poor quarter, and it is a part where the casual labouring class come into force a very great deal. They are in the majority there, and the woman sometimes has not time even to do her household work; I mean she does her work in between with a little bit of lace work. It is only the commonest kind of lace that they do there.

1695. Still that is one of the conditions we are inquiring into?—Yes, I think it would be a very good thing to grant licences.

1696. You have told us that it is a season trade, and that the home-workers are busy at one time and have no work at another?—Yes, it entirely depends on fashion.

1697. It would not in any case be possible for them to earn enough in a busy time to keep themselves in slack time?—I do not know. It would depend on how long the busy time lasted. Sometimes it lasts three months, sometimes four, sometimes five, sometimes six, and another time only six weeks.

1698. And, of course, it would depend, too, upon the time that the depression lasted?—Yes.

1699. You said that at present not a tenth can get work?—I should think it is even less than that really. The depression is very great just now.

1700. I have heard that at Calais they are hardly working at all. Is that the case?—They are hardly working at all. In fact, the whole business throughout is bad.

1701. Then the amount of wages paid at the present moment would not have much effect, whether high or low?—Would not have much effect.

Mr. Dewar.

1702. Am I right in summarising your evidence in this way—that you prefer the licensing system to the Wages Board?—I do not prefer either one or the other. I think it would be to the advantage of the houses, and of the people themselves, if the heads of the houses were compelled to be licensed.

1703. Do not you think that the tendency of licensing would be to drive people in the lace trade and in all home trades into factories?—No, because the class of people who do this work could not, in the majority of cases, go into factories. They could not leave the homes.

1704. You think the tendency of licensing would not be to drive them into the factories?—I do not think it would drive them into factories. There are not factories for them to be driven into.

1705. In the lace trade are there no factories?—There are factories, but there are very few who do this class of work in the factories. There are some firms who employ a few hands to do the better class of goods which they do not like to go outside.

1706. In

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[Continued.]

Mr. Dewar—continued.

1706. In your view, you think it would not be possible to do much of that work in the factories?—It would, if you had room, and could get a regular supply of hands. But if the work were not regular, as I explained before, the number of workers would fall off.

1707. When it is possible to do work in the factory, can you do it in the factory more economically?—No. We pay exactly the same price. To the manufacturer it would not be the slightest benefit. Indeed it would be an extra expense to him.

1708. You say the price paid is exactly the same?—The price paid for the work, yes.

1709. In the factory have you not heating and lighting, and taxes, and so on, to pay, which the home-worker pays for herself? Are you taking that into account?—The class of people who do this do not pay much in the way of rates and taxes.

1710. You have got to heat and light the factory?—Yes.

1711. But the home-worker heats and lights her own room. Are you taking that into account when you say it is done at the same figure?—We pay according to that tariff, inside and out.

1712. It costs you the same?—The same exactly, inside or out—whether we pay for room, or light, or heat, or anything.

1713. With regard to this, what is called the suggested minimum tariff, it is, I understand, now in operation?—It is in operation, as far as I can tell, with the number who have come into it.

1714. How long has it been in operation?—As I said before, I cannot remember exactly the date—some time last Autumn.

1715. Had you any difficulty in arranging this tariff?—We had no difficulty in arranging it. We appointed a sub-committee of about 20 of the principal manufacturers. We also got on that sub-committee representatives of makers of different classes of lace.

1716. And you arrived at the result easily?—We arrived at the result easily, and it was unanimous at the general meeting.

1717. And so far as it goes there is no difficulty in arranging a tariff?—None whatever, so far as that class of work is concerned.

1718. Your only difficulty, as I understand, was to get everybody to agree to the arrangement? Or were there other difficulties?—We canvassed them, and some said they would wait and see what it was like. Then, as I say, a great many who did not join, are paying at that tariff now, and some are paying more.

1719. Tell me what is the effect on the working class of this tariff. Is the home-worker in Nottingham better off since you instituted this tariff than she was before?—We hope so. We have done it for her benefit entirely. We are getting no benefit out of it whatever.

1720. To what extent do you think she is better off?—I could not tell you unless I interviewed each one personally.

1721. When you said her average wage was from 2d. to 5d. an hour, did you mean now or before the tariff?—A great number of them would have it before.

1721. Let us take an illustration: Drawing,

Mr. Dewar—continued.

for example, one-eighth of a penny per thread for 12 yards?—One-eighth of a penny.

1723. What was paid before?—That was paid before by the majority of the manufacturers.

1724. To what extent did this tariff increase the wages which previously existed?—It is impossible to say.

1725. Was not your object to increase the wages of the outworkers?—It was with the object of letting every outdoor worker know the price, and know who were willing to pay to that tariff. After these reports of sweating being carried on in Nottingham, we thought it was better to let the outdoor worker know the price we were willing to pay, and so, if she accepted work under those prices, it was her own fault. You cannot control that.

1726. What would be the advantage to her?—That she would know what she ought to receive.

1727. But you did not inquire whether it was a better wage than she was formerly receiving or not?—I do not think it was in a great number of cases.

1728. What is the effect of this on the worker. Is it costing you more?—No, because we have always paid to that price, and more in some instances.

1729. I suppose everybody who has joined has paid that price too, practically?—We hope so. I could not, of course, say. We have only got their word for it.

1730. I understood you, in answer to the Chairman, to say that you thought a compulsory Wage Board would not be impracticable, but that it was unnecessary?—We think it is unnecessary in Nottingham.

1731. Then, to Mr. Samuel, I understood you to say that it would be good to the extent at all events that it would compel everybody to join. Your words were, I think: "The Wages Board would be an advantage, because it would compel all to come in," or something to that effect?—Yes, I think it would.

1732. Do you prefer a compulsory Wages Board?—As far as I am concerned I do. But I should not like to speak for the whole of the town. I should not like to speak for the whole of the manufacturers. But the manufacturers whom I have spoken to—and they are pretty representative of the town—are all in favour of it.

1733. And so are you, I take it?—I personally am, yes.

1734. You have no fear of foreign competition or anything else?—I should have no objection so long as the Wages Board kept under their consideration the competition we had to meet with from abroad. But then that is a very big question. It opens up the question of Trade Unionism, and we have enough to contend with in our district already.

1735. But legislation in the direction of a Wages Board has no terrors for you?—Not for me personally; but it might have for a great number of other manufacturers; I could not say.

1736. But from your own experience you are not afraid of it, you tell us?—No, I am not afraid of it.

1737. In point of fact, might I go a little further, and

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[Continued.]

Mr. Dewar—continued.

and say you advocate it for the lace trade?—No, I would rather not answer that; but, as far as I am personally concerned, I have no objection to it whatever.

1738. Have you inquired about the working of a Wages Board in other countries?—I did not know they had a Wages Board in other countries except Australia.

1739. Have you inquired as to how the Wages Board is operating in Australia and in New Zealand?—I do not think I have heard anything about it, except your own reports, which I read, I think.

1740. We have had some evidence about competition between machine-made laces and embroidery and hand-made laces. Is there any real competition?—None whatever; the goods are not of the same class.

1741. They are totally different?—They are totally different.

Mr. Trevelyan.

1742. Is this tariff under which they are working now the only tariff you have issued?—That is the only tariff issued by these manufacturers.

1743. You mean by the associated manufacturers?—Yes.

1744. Under this, the earnings are what you describe to us as per hour—that is to say, that all work is given out on that basis?—Yes.

1745. The better kind of work is paid for on what basis?—As to the better class of work we could not fix a tariff.

1746. You gave us three classes?—Yes, those are all based on that tariff.

1747. That is to say, the work is easier, and, therefore, more can be earned per hour by the worker?—Yes.

1748. I think you possibly answered the question when I was out of the room; but I want to be clear about this: to whom are these prices paid? Are they paid to the worker, or to the middle-woman?—To the middle-woman. We have nothing to do with the worker herself, except in a few cases where they come and fetch them themselves?

1749. The middle-woman gets these prices, off which she takes 20 to 25 per cent. herself?—Yes. But do not let me mislead you in this respect in regard to the middle-woman. Many manufacturers do direct with the home-workers. Those with small businesses could not find sufficient work for a middle-woman; they only have sufficient for a direct home-worker. I mean the amount of goods they would have to give out would not be enough for a middle-woman to have anything to do with; it would be too small; so some of the manufacturers deal directly with the home-workers themselves, and the middle-woman and the home-worker is one person then.

1750. But the middle-woman has, out of this, to get her 20 or 25 per cent.?—Yes, she has to get it out of that.

1751. There is no security that the middle-woman does not take a good deal more than 25 per cent.?—If so that is the fault of the home-worker herself. Every home-worker knows what the tariff is.

Mr. Trevelyan—continued.

1752. But this is not a price which the home-worker can ask the middle-woman for?—Where the middle-woman receives 1½d., the general thing, as I have said before, is that she pays the home-worker 1d. out of that 1½d., and she gets ½d. herself.

1753. Take clipping, 1d. a thousand. Is it intended to be the price the worker should get, or is it the minimum price to be paid to the middle-woman?—That is the minimum price paid to anybody, whether it is paid to the home-worker or to the middle-woman. We have nothing to do with whether she is a middle-woman or a home-worker. She takes the work from us, and if she cannot execute it herself she gives it out.

1754. Then there may be, for aught you know, an immense amount of sweating going on by the middle-woman, although you may be paying a 1d. or even more than 1d. per thousand?—I think it is very unlikely that such a thing is being done; because, as I say, they know what price they should receive.

1755. But you have said that not more than a penny per thousand need be given to the middle-woman by those who are abiding by this tariff?—That is so.

1756. It is no good for the worker to know that a shilling per thousand clips is the right pay if all that the woman is getting is a penny per thousand clips; because the middle-woman has got to make her profit out of it, and, therefore, she cannot be paying the minimum tariff to the worker unless the manufacturer is paying her more than the minimum tariff?—I do not quite follow what you want to get at.

1757. I want to get at whether the worker is getting the suggested minimum tariff here?—If she comes for the work herself she is.

1758. But if she gets it through the middle-woman she would not?—She would then get 20 to 25 per cent. less.

1759. That is to say, this minimum tariff does not secure the minimum rate to the worker?—No.

1760. It only secures it to the middle-woman?—That is what we call the first or second hand.

1761. Would there be any objection for a Wages Board, or for the Association, to try and secure that the wages were actually paid to the worker?—That would do away with the middle-woman.

1762. Not necessarily?—It would bring into existence a state of things which could not possibly continue. It would paralyse business.

1763. How would the merely finding out what the wages were which were actually paid to the worker paralyse business?—Where is the middle-woman's profit to come in? What is to compensate her for her time? She has to fetch and carry and divide the lace, and examine it.

1764. Then it comes to this, that what we are to understand is that the minimum tariff is not a minimum tariff for the worker, but is a minimum tariff for the middle-woman, and if the middle-woman is employed, the home-worker will get a great deal less than if she went straight to the factory?—They could not come direct to the factory in a great number of cases, because they cannot leave their homes.

1765. And

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[Continued.]

Mr. Trevelyan—continued.

1765. And because they cannot go to the factory they must, because there is a middle-woman, get a good deal less than the minimum tariff?—Yes.

1766. Therefore the minimum tariff does not represent the wages which the home-worker is getting?—It represents the prices paid by the manufacturers.

1767. The prices paid by the manufacturers to

Mr. Trevelyan—continued.

the middle-woman?—We cannot dictate to the middle-woman what she is going to give.

1768. It is not a point of whether the manufacturer can or cannot; it is a question of fact. This is not the wages which the workers get.

1769. I also understand from you that almost all the work is given out by middle-women?—The greater portion of it, yes.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Thursday, 19th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Bridgeman.
Sir William Bull.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.

Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Arthur Richardson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.
Sir Thomas Whittaker.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER IN THE CHAIR.

Miss MARY B. MACARTHUR called; and Examined.

Chairman.

1770. You are the Secretary of the Women's Trade Union League?—Yes.

1771. And I understand you have arranged for a number of home-workers to give evidence here to-day?—Yes, I have brought seven workers.

1772. What I want to ask you is—because we are to take this evidence anonymously for the protection of the workers—can you give us your assurance that we may take these as fairly typical cases of the trades in which they work?—They are fairly typical, but not exactly typical; in four cases they are above the average, and in two cases they are under the average. I have put that in the note I have given you.

1773. They are better workers, you mean?—Yes, they are better workers. I ought to explain that one of the workers is a factory worker employed in the same trade as two of the others, receiving much higher wages, and she comes with the permission of her employer.

1774. What we want to be clear about is that you have not selected what we should call sample horrible cases?—By no means; I have rather avoided that.

1775. One other point I wanted to put to you:

Chairman—continued.

may we take it from you that these are bonâ fide cases, for the genuineness of which you personally are prepared to vouch?—I have absolutely no doubt upon that point. I am prepared to vouch for them; I would be prepared to go further, but the difficulty is the danger of victimisation in some cases.

1776. Of course, you will understand there is a difficulty in hearing evidence anonymously and not in public, as usual; and, therefore, I am bound to put these questions to you so that we may take it that you do vouch for the authenticity and reliability of this evidence?—Yes, I am prepared to vouch for every worker, and for the reliability of the statements I have sent in to you of each worker's case.

1777. When we have had the evidence of these workers, it is just possible we might ask you to go into the chair again, when some general questions with regard to them, that arise as the result of the evidence, may be put to you?—Yes.

Mr. Arthur Dewar.

1778. Are all the women, and their capacity and

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Miss MACARTHUR.

[Continued.]

Mr. Arthur Dewar—continued.

and their circumstances, personally known to you?—Yes.

1779. Are you personally familiar with them, or have you taken your account of them from anyone else?—With most of the cases I am personally familiar; in two cases the person who is familiar with them is in the Lobby, and is one of our trusted workers.

Mr. Bridgeman.

1780. Are they all trade-unionists?—No, with one exception they are not trade-unionists.

1781. Could you tell us how they were selected at all, for general information?—I had very little time to select them, but, as it happened, I was just in the middle of investigating one trade, the baby linen trade, and I took three workers out of that; two of them had never seen each other before, and yet they do work for the same man, and, although they had never seen each other before, the details are exactly the same. One worker is furnished by the employer; he consented to her coming with the samples from his provincial factory because he feels the competition of the other man so greatly. In that case there is no secrecy at all, because the employer gives permission.

Mrs. A., Miss B., Miss C., Miss D., Mrs. E., Mrs. F., and Miss G.—seven women workers—called; and Examined.

Chairman.

1788. I am going to ask you your questions without asking you your names; I am going to refer to you as A, B, C, D, and so on, and I will begin with Mrs. A.; and ask the questions in order. I do not want you to mention any names of employers, nor do I wish to have your own names at all. (To Mrs. A.) I understand that you are a maker of blouses and Kimona belts and that you work in London?—Yes.

1789. If I should ask any question you do not like to answer, you are not bound to answer it. Just tell me you would rather not answer it. I want you to feel perfectly comfortable and at home in giving your evidence. You are married, I think?—Yes..

1790. And I understand you have five children?—Yes.

1791. Do you live with your mother?—She lives with me; she is a widow.

1792. Does she do any part of the work?—Yes; she puts on the hooks and eyes and buttons; she does the finishing.

1793. In the particulars you give me as to your earnings, does that include her work?—Yes; her work is included; I do not pay her, because she lives with me. You see, I keep her.

1794. Will you tell us what rates are paid for the blouses you make?—From 1s. 6d. upwards, 1s. 9d., 2s., 2s. 6d., 3s. 3d., 3s. 6d., 3s. 9d. and 4s. per dozen, according to the style of blouse and the work that is in it.

1795. That is from 1½d. to 4d. each?—Yes.

1796. How long do you work per day?—I begin about 8 and I leave off about 8 at night,

Mr. Bridgeman—continued.

1782. They are not all from London; one is from the provinces?—One from a provincial town.

Sir William Bull.

1783. Where do you work?—My headquarters are in London; but I go all over the country.

1784. Which part of London?—In Holborn—Clerkenwell Road; these are my headquarters.

Mr. Fell.

1785. Have any of these women been in any exhibition of any kind?—One only, as far as I know, has been; that is the first one, the blouse maker.

Sir William Bull.

1786. I suppose they are quite willing to come up here?—Some of them are willing; some of them are very nervous about it. One I hoped to bring at the last moment would not come, she was so frightened, and as she became hysterical I thought I had better not bring her.

1787. I suppose those of them who are here are interested and excited?—They are interested and very nervous.

*(The Witness withdrew.)**Chairman*—continued.

when my husband comes home, because he will not let me work after he comes in; he makes me put it away.

1797. Do you work the whole day, or do you devote part of your time to household work?—I do not do any housework at all; I only leave off for my meals, my dinner and tea.

1798. Does your mother do the household work?—Yes, and she sees to the children.

1799. What is your husband?—He is a labourer in the dock.

1800. What would his earnings be?—24s. a week.

1801. Has he constant work?—He has to pay for all holidays; he does not get paid for his holidays.

1802. But the employment is fairly regular?—Fairly regular.

1803. At 24s. a week?—Yes.

1804. Working 12 hours per day, with deductions for meals, about how much can you earn in a week?—Sometimes I earn 9s., 10s., and 11s., according to the work, how it is paid for; on some work we can earn more than on other kinds of work.

1805. May I take it that you are a fairly expert worker?—I have been at it 18 years, so I ought to know how to make a blouse.

1806. You are a quick worker?—I am very quick, and I have a very quick machine.

1807. How did you get this machine? Did you buy it by weekly payments?—Yes, 1s. 6d. a week I paid for it, until it was paid for.

1808. What

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

1808. What does the machine cost you?—£8 9s. it cost me.

1809. How long were you in paying this off?—About two years; it has been paid for a long time now, though.

1810. You can earn 9s. or 10s. a week, according to the character of the work?—Yes, according to the class of work I have; some work you get more for than you do for others.

1811. Do you mean that that is the net return; are there any deductions from that; have you any expenses to meet out of that?—Yes, we have to take the work up from where I live to London, and then there is the machine-cotton to come out of that for making them with.

1812. And you have to pay your fare?—Yes, and the cotton to buy.

1813. You go and fetch the work?—Yes, and take it in when it is done.

1814. Your mother does not do that?—No, I generally go; one of the children takes it up, because they go for half-fare; my eldest boy takes it in for me.

1815. Does he fetch it?—Yes, and sometimes I go.

1816. How long have you been employed by the people for whom you work now?—Eight years.

1817. The same firm?—Yes, on and off; sometimes we have been slack of work.

1818. How does the work run through the year?—In the early summer we have a slack time, two or three months, when there is no work at all; when it looks up, we hear from them again, and we go for more.

1819. Could you give us any idea as to how much you earn in the year? You have told us how much per week, but how much in the year?—I have never reckoned; I could not tell you that.

1820. What do the expenses come to, do you think, per week, that is, the tram fares and your cotton, and things of that kind?—About half-a-crown I should think, or 2s. 9d. with the cotton.

1821. How often do you send to the warehouse?—Two or three times a week.

1822. How much does that cost?—8d. return, each time we go.

1823. You are a long way from the warehouse?—Yes.

1824. And you think your outgoings, your expenses, run to as much as half-a-crown a week?—They do with the riding and the cotton.

1825. When you speak of earning 10s., is that after allowing for the half-crown?—Oh, no.

1826. The half-crown comes out of that?—That has to come off.

1827. Do I understand that that means you earn 6s. 6d. to 7s. or 7s. 6d.?—Yes, it does not come to any more, when you have taken off your riding and your cotton.

1828. Do I understand you to mean that that is when you are in full work?—Yes.

1829. You do not average that all the year round?—Oh, no.

1830. You have been in the trade a great many years; can you tell us what has been the tendency of payments, has it improved, or got worse?—It has got worse; each season

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Chairman—continued.

the prices fall; as the seasons come on, so the prices get lower, and the work is really more. The blouses are trimmed more, and there are more tucks and lace, and the work is put on, and the prices go down. I have found it so.

1831. What do you think is the reason for that?—Unemployment of men is one thing; so many men are out of work, and those firms have always got a long list of names behind them; women are always applying for work, and they have no work to give them, and, therefore, they cut the prices down, because the women go and beg for work. That is what I think has to do with it.

1832. You have some samples, have you not?—Yes (*producing a blouse*).

1833. Do you make the whole of this?—Yes, throughout; it is cut out.

1834. You put this lace on?—Yes; the raw material is only cut out, and we do all the trimming.

1835. You do the whole of the rest of the work?—Yes; I do it right through.

1836. What is the payment for that?—3½d. for that one, when finished.

1837. How many of these can you make in a day?—About half a dozen.

1838. This is all cut out?—Yes.

1839. Have you any work in connection with fitting this at all?—Yes, I have to put it on a stand, and shape the necks, and make it fit in all parts—make the arm-holes the right size, and make the necks to size.

1840. You mean on a block?—Yes, a dummy.

1841. And you have to fit this to the dummy?—Yes.

1842. (To Miss B.) I understand you are a maker of baby-linen and children's silk dresses and underclothing?—Yes.

1843. Do you work at home?—Yes.

1844. You are unmarried?—Yes.

1845. And you live with your parents?—Yes.

1846. Have you any other members of the family working?—Yes, I have a sister working with me, and she shares my expenses.

1847-8. Your father is alive, I presume?—Yes.

1849. What will his earnings be?—£2 10s. perhaps, to £3; I could not really tell you that.

1850. And is he in pretty regular employment?—He is a masterman.

1851. How long have you worked at this kind of thing?—Ever since I was 14 years of age, and I am 22 now.

1852. And your sister works with you?—Yes.

1853. Do you work at home?—Yes.

1854. You do not hire a room?—Yes, we have a little room to do our work in, and pay 2s. a week for the rent of it.

1855. In the home?—Yes.

1856. That is, you pay your father 2s. a week for the room in which you work?—For the rent of the one room.

1857. May I ask if you are considered a skilled worker?—I am considered skilled, and very quick.

1858. Can you tell us how much you can earn?—On

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—On

19 March, 1908.] Mrs. A., Miss B., Miss C., Miss D., Mrs. E., Mrs. F., and Miss G.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

—On the average, my money for 10 months, and they have been the best 10 months I have had for a long while, was 10s. a week. I did not have more than two half-days doing nothing during that time.

1859. Would your sister earn about the same ?
—The same, yes.

1860. The 2s. for rent has to come out of that ?
—Yes.

1861. What are your deductions for expenses ?
—About 2s. 5½d., and the 2s. for rent, makes 4s. 5½d. for myself, and my sister stands half the expenses on the oil, room, and City fares, which fetches me down to 2s. 3d., on an average, a week for expenses.

1862. And that would include 1s. towards the rent ?—Yes.

1863. So that your expenses would be about 1s. 3d. ?—No, 2s. 3d.

1864. I understand the total cost is 4s. 6d. for the two of you ?—Yes.

1865. And when that is divided that is 2s. 3d., each ?—Yes.

1866. And the 2s. 3d. each includes the 1s. each for the rent of the room ?—Yes.

1867. Therefore the expenses of each of you, without the rent, are 1s. 3d. each. Is that correct ?—That is so.

1868. Do you have any fire in this room ?—No, we light a lamp to warm ourselves.

1869. And that includes the cost of the lamp, I suppose ?—Yes.

1870. You heard that the previous witness's expenses came out about 2s. 6d. ; yours are 1s. 3d. ?—2s. 3d.

1871. 1s. 3d. without the rent, and there is nothing for rent in the other case ?—That is so.

1872. What is your cost for tram-fare ?—5d. each time I go in, and I go in twice a week.

1873. But your expenses come out a little less than the previous witness ?—Yes, because I go in twice, and it is only 5d. each time.

1874. You spoke of having had a very special time for 10 months ; is your work very much interfered with by slack time ?—We have two months' slack, but we are taking, perhaps, 4s. to 6s., and like that, a week during that time.

1875. You do not get full work ?—No, but we are not right idle.

1876. Is that the case now ?—Just at present we are earning, perhaps, 14s. between the two of us.

1877. Do you mean that the firms employ a large number of people for the work, that is, more than they really require ?—Yes, I do think so.

1878. Why do you think so ?—So as to get their orders out when they are busy ; otherwise they have to wait, perhaps, a week or a fortnight for their orders.

1879. Have you any sample of the work you do, and the payment you get for it ?—Yes, I have. These are babies' gowns (*handing in the same*). That one we get 3½d. for making.

1880. It is all cut out for you ?—Yes ; and that one is 5½d. We do six in 10 hours of that one, and six in 13 hours of the other. I earn 1s. 9d. without any expenses on that one ; and 2s. 9d. on the other one.

Chairman—continued.

1881. How do you account for the difference ?
—The one sweats you more than the other.

1882. The work is done for different firms, and *this* one pays you a better price for the work there is in the article ?—Yes.

1883. If you were working for the better firm you would make how much per day ?—2s. 9d. That would be if they gave you all good work, but they do not give you all good work. You would earn perhaps 1s. 6d. next day.

1884. From the same firm ?—Yes.

1885. On a cheaper class of article, I suppose ?
—Yes, sometimes on a good article you do not earn so much as on a common one. I have a good dress here, and I should only earn 2s. 9d. with hard work upon that in a day.

1886. Is that the price paid for it ?—No, I am paid 1s. 6d. for each article.

1887. And that is a good article ?—That is what we call the very best work.

1888. How do you account for this variation of payment for the different articles, when the work is not so different ?—I cannot say, really, unless it is the unjust way they have of pricing up the articles.

1889. Do I understand that you feel you are bound to take whatever they are willing to give you ?—You must take it or you have the sack ; if you do not take the article they offer you, they tell you you can go ; that they can get other workers.

1890. How long have you been doing this work ?
—Ever since I was 14.

1891. What is your experience as to the tendency of prices ?—What do you mean really ?

1892. Are they higher or lower than they used to be ?—They have come down ever so much ; they have come down in the last four years, so that I cannot keep myself now. I used to earn a decent wage.

1893. How much did you earn before ?—Taking it on an average, I could earn 35s. a week ; that is because we took only high-class work then.

1894. More than 5s. a day ?—I suppose it is 5s. a day ; 35s. it was.

1895. In six days ?—In five and a half days, with half-days on Saturdays.

1896. That is more than 5s. a day ?—Yes.

1897. You used to be able to earn 35s. a week ?
—Yes.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

1898. Was that alone or with your sister ?—35s. each we could earn.

Chairman.

1899. And you now earn what amount ?—On an average of the 10 months, 10s. each.

1900. That is an enormous change ?—It is an enormous change. An article I used to get 4s. for I can get 1s. for now, and not that sometimes.

1901. You, of course, have a machine ?—Yes.

1902. And did you work with the machine before, when you earned the higher money ?—Yes ; hand-finished, the same as I do now.

1903. Is there any other explanation for the difference that occurs to you in the character of the work or the method of doing it ?—No, if anything

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anything they are more particular now than they were then.

1904. Should I take it that what your earn is really not sufficient to keep you if you had to live on it?—I do not keep myself now; I am supposed to pay 7s. 6d. for my keep, but I never have the 7s. 6d. to give.

1905. Have you ever made an attempt to get better prices from the firm?—I have been at all the firms in the City, but I cannot get anything to suit me; having been used to good work, I do not like the Irishman's rise.

1906. (To Miss C.) You work on baby-linen?—Yes.

1907. You are not married?—No.

1908. Do you live at home?—Yes.

1909. What is the age of your father?—69.

1910. Is he in work?—No.

1911. How long has he been out of employment?—Three or four years now.

1912. What was his trade?—Mantle packer in a mantle warehouse.

1913. Was he a long time with the firm?—35 years.

1914. How was it that he came to leave them?—The firm went bankrupt.

1915. I have a memorandum here about a club in which he had invested some money?—A sick benefit club; of course, he was obliged to draw out, because he could not keep up the payments.

1916. How long have you been at this work?—Eight or nine years.

1917. What did you do before that?—I was at home before.

1918. May I take it you have had to resort to this work because your father was out of work?—Yes, to help him.

1919. Have you similar samples to those of the previous witnesses?—Yes, I have three or four.

1920. Are they similar to those of the previous witnesses?—Yes.

1921. Can you give us an indication of the prices that are paid to you?—Some are $\frac{1}{2}$ d. each, and 1d., 2d. and $\frac{3}{4}$ d. each.

1922. Have you any of those at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. or 1d.?—That is a $\frac{1}{2}$ d. article (*handing in the same*).

1923. How many of those could you make in a day?—About a dozen and two or three; not more.

1924. That is as many as you could make?—Yes.

1925. That is a very poor class of work?—Yes, dreadful.

1926. Does some of the other work pay you better?—There is nothing here very much better; *those* are a penny each—that long petticoat—and *that* is a penny each and you can do a dozen and two or three of those a day; *this* is a shilling a dozen. *This* is $\frac{1}{2}$ d. each, and you can do about nine of those a day.

1927. Do you know if any of these articles are made in the factories?—Not in this factory; he does not employ any indoor hands.

1928. Are there factories where they make them indoors?—Yes.

1929. Do they do better in the factories?—I believe they do; they do not find their own cotton, for one thing, and that makes a lot of difference.

1930. Are they able to turn more of them out

Chairman—continued.

in a day in the factory?—I do not think so, unless they are on steam machines; they say they do, but I do not know anything about them.

1931. You have had no experience?—No, but I have heard they can do it on the steam machines.

1932. That is where they are driven by power?—Yes.

1933. You hear they can turn out more?—Yes, I have heard so.

1934. How much can you earn per week, when you are fully employed?—From 7s. to 8s., not more; hardly that on some of them.

1935. How long would you work to earn that?—From about 9 in the morning to half-past 7 at night, or 8 o'clock.

1936. Have you the household work to do?—No, I clean up before I start, and then manage as well as I can.

1937. Have you a mother or sister?—No, nobody at all.

1938. You are alone with your father?—Yes.

1939. Is your father practically dependent upon you?—Yes. I do private orders, as well, to help to pull it up, pinafores and aprons, or anything of that sort I can get. Of course, I could not depend upon this by itself, it would be no use at all.

1940. You say you earn 7s. or so per week, that does not mean that you are working the whole time at this?—On this thing it does; after that I have to do the other things late in the evening, but I should have to stick at this from 9 to half-past 7 at night to earn that much.

1941. And any extra you would earn would be in the off-time?—Yes, later.

1942. How much would you earn altogether?—That I cannot say, because sometimes you get more than others; I could not tell that. Sometimes I can get some orders, and sometimes I cannot.

1943. What do you pay for rent?—6s. 6d. for two rooms.

1944. That leaves you extremely little to live upon?—We have had to run a lot of rent up; we have had to slip it lately—we could not pay it.

1945. You have got into debt?—Yes, we owe a good bit of rent?

1946. Does your father get any Parish relief?—No, he is applying for a little pension now, but I do not know if he will get it.

1947. Does he get any relief in any way?—Nothing at all, at present.

1948. If 6s. 6d. has to be paid for rent, and you only earn 7s.—?—I do not earn that sometimes.

1949. It is almost a mystery how you manage to live at all?—I make it up with private orders, but I cannot say exactly what it is, because it is all chance work. I only speak of what I get from this man.

1950. Does your father, or do you, get any assistance in any other way—financial help, I mean?—None at all.

1951. You cannot tell us at all how much you make by this extra work?—It may come to another few shillings a week more.

19 March, 1908.] Mrs. A., Miss B., Miss C., Miss D., Mrs. E., Mrs. F., and Miss G.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

1952. 3s. ?—A few shillings a week.
1953. 3s. or 5s. ?—Yes, perhaps 6s. sometimes ; it is chance work, you see, of course.
1954. Altogether, then, when you are favourably placed, may I put it that you earn 12s. or 13s. ?—Yes, it might come out at about that altogether, it would not be more.
1955. To what extent is that uncertain ? Have you many slack months in the year ?—No, there is not a great deal of slack time with this work ; towards the end of the year, they are rather slack. It is slack now, at least I have not got any at present, and I do not want any if I can get it anywhere else it is too badly paid for.
1956. You do get other work ?—I want to get some from another firm.
1957. But you have not got it ?—Not at present.
1958. You say you would like to change your work ; is this particular class of work, so far as you know, specially badly paid ?—I think so ; I do not think there could be anything much worse.
1959. Do you think it is worse than the other class of work we have seen ?—Some of it, in comparison.
1960. Worse paid ?—Yes, it is worse than this young lady's kind (Miss B.).
1961. Was it better or worse paid when you first went into it ?—Much better.
1962. You are quite sure that the prices have fallen ?—Yes ; they pay about one-third or one-fourth now of what they used to do, and ought to do.
1963. (To Miss D.) I think you do not mind so much your evidence being known ; you work in a factory in the country ?—Yes.
1964. You are a maker of a similar class of article to that we have just heard about ?—Yes.
1965. You are not married ?—No.
1966. You live at home ?—Yes.
1967. Do you earn enough to support yourself ?—Yes.
1968. May I ask if you are considered to be an exceptionally skilled and quick worker ?—Yes.
1969. By that do you mean that your earnings are more than the average ?—No ; I do not think they are.
1970. Are you paid by piece ?—Yes.
1971. Do the other girls earn less than you ?—Some of them.
1972. But you earn a full average wage ?—Yes.
1973. How much will you earn in a week ?—About 13s. 6d.
1974. How many hours per week will you work for that ?—I work from 8 in the morning till half-past 6 at night, with an hour out for dinner.
1975. And on Saturday ?—Till 1 o'clock.
1976. Have you any expenses or deductions ?—For cotton.
1977. In the factory ?—Yes.
1978. You provide your own cotton ?—Yes.
1979. Is everything else provided for you ?—No, we buy our own needles.
1980. Anything else ?—No, nothing else.

Chairman—continued.

1981. The only expenses are your needles and cotton ?—Yes.
1982. What will they cost you per week ?—I do not have many needles, but I think the cotton would be about 7d. per week.
1983. Do you buy them out in the town, or do you buy them from the firm ?—From the firm.
1984. The firm charge you for them ?—Yes.
1985. Do you live near the work, or does it cost you anything for tram fares to go to it ?—No, I live near the work.
1986. Roughly you make nearly 13s. clear per week ?—Yes.
1987. Is the employment pretty regular, or do you lose much time ?—None at all, only holidays.
1988. You have seen some of the work that has been done by the others. How do those rates that you have heard the other witnesses state are paid to them compare with the rates you are paid ? You make a similar class of article ?—Yes.
1989. How are the prices paid for that work in comparison with the prices you get ?—I have got some samples (*producing the same*). *This* one is 4s. 3d. per dozen, like the one C. has. (Miss C.) *This* is 2s. a dozen in my case.
1990. And that is a similar thing ?—Very little difference. (Miss D.) *This* one I get 5s. a dozen for. (Miss B.) That is like mine at 3½d. each article, or 3s. 6d. a dozen.
1991. Are those similar ? Yes, you may say they are exactly the same.
1992. (To Miss D.) What do you get paid for this article you make ?—5s. a dozen.
1993. (To Miss B.) And what do you get paid for the similar article you make ?—3s. 6d. a dozen.
1994. And you think those articles make a fair comparison, the one for which 3s. 6d. a dozen is paid with the other for which 5s. a dozen is paid ?—Yes.
1995. (To Miss D.) Your employer has lent you these articles to bring up, I suppose ?—Yes.
1996. Does he ever say anything, or do you ever hear anything, about the competition of the lower prices in London ?—No.
1997. How long have you worked at the trade ?—Seven years.
1998. Has there been any changes in the prices paid to you ?—Yes, some of them have gone down.
1999. Much lower ?—No.
2000. Have any of them gone up ?—No.
2001. The price is a little lower then, but not much ?—That is so.
2002. On the whole, are you fairly contented with your rates of wages ?—Yes.
2003. (To Mrs. E.) You are married, I think ?—Yes.
2004. Is your husband in work ?—No.
2005. Is he ill ?—No, he is too old to work. He worked in the Royal Dockyard at Woolwich for 40 years and got his discharge for being too old.
2006. Has he any pension of any kind ?—No. He came out with a bonus.
2007. He took a payment and came out ?—Yes ; £33 bonus. That is five years ago this May.
2008. What

19 March, 1908.] Mrs. A., Miss B., Miss C., Miss D., Mrs. E., Mrs. F., and Miss G.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

2008. What age was he when he left?—65; they will not allow them to work after that.

2009. What kind of articles do you make?—I do the racquet balls.

2010. Do you make the whole ball, or simply cover it?—I cover it.

2011. What is the rate of payment for covering the balls?—The ones I do are 2s. 4d. a gross.

2012. Have you any of them here?—No.

2013. That is 2s. 4d. a gross for covering them?—Yes.

2014. How many can you cover in a day?—I cannot do more than four in the hour.

2015. How many hours are you able to work a day?—From about 8 in the morning till about 6 in the evening.

2016. And a little time off attending to your household duties, I suppose?—I do that afterwards. Then I do another kind of ball, called fives, and they are 3s. a gross. Those are the two sorts I do.

2017. Roughly, they run from about 2s. 4d. to 3s. a gross?—That is so, but the 3s. ones are larger.

2018. And you do four in an hour?—That is all.

2019. It takes you three hours to do a dozen?—Yes.

2020. It takes 36 hours to do a gross?—Yes; that is all I can do; you see I have not been at them very long.

2021. That is not a penny an hour?—I reckon that I make one penny an hour.

2022. You have not been very long at it?—No.

2023. Is there any other method of covering these balls? Are they covered by machinery?—No; they cannot do it.

2024. It is all done by hand-work, always?—Yes.

2025. Do you know what a very quick hand can do?—Yes, I know only one, and she is very quick; she says she can do seven or eight in an hour, but, of course, she is very quick. That is the only one I do know.

2026. She would not make 2d. in the hour?—No.

2027. Does your husband get any assistance from the Parish?—Yes.

2028. How much?—4s. 6d. a week, 2s. 6d. and the rest in kind as they call it—bread and meat.

2029. That does not leave you very much? No, it does not.

2030. Is the work pretty regular?—Yes, I could get more to do, but I am slow, and cannot do any more.

2031. You have as much as you can do?—Yes.

2032. May I ask what your age is?—57.

2033. You do not suffer much from variations in the trade?—No.

2034. When did you first begin to do this work?—About three years, or three and a half years ago. I was compelled to learn something when my husband came out of the dockyard.

2035. So that you have not the same advantage as anyone who has been brought up to any particular trade?—No, it is different altogether.

Chairman—continued.

2036. Have you any children?—I have two sons grown up, but they are right away.

2037. Do they help you at all?—No, they cannot; they have little families of their own.

2038. So that, practically, there is no one but yourself and your husband?—That is all.

2039. (To Mrs. F.) What trade are you engaged in?—I am a shirt-maker.

2040. You are married, I think?—Yes.

2041. What family have you?—Six children.

2042. How many of them are young?—They are all young, the eldest being 14.

2043. What is your husband's occupation?—A labourer.

2044. Is he in work?—He got into work three weeks ago, after being out of work three years.

2045. Has he been ill?—No, he is quite strong.

2046. What has been the difficulty? There has been a large amount of work during the last three years, has there not?—He has not found it so, he might have got different classes of work, which he has not been able to do.

2047. What is the particular kind of labouring work he has got to do?—In a miller's factory.

2048. How long have you worked at shirt-making?—16 years.

2049. May I ask if you are a quick worker, and expert?—Yes, very quick.

2050. How much can you earn per day, or per week?—On the average, 10s. a week—from 9s. to 10s.

2051. How many hours a day will you work in earning that?—Between 15 and 16 hours; I am sometimes up at 6 o'clock, and I work till 10 at night.

2052. Are you off much for household duties?—Not at all; my husband used to do the house-work.

2053. Do you work on different kinds of shirts?—Yes, I get 9d. for making a dozen shirts.

2054. What kind of shirts would those be?—Working-men's shirts, a plain shirt.

2055. Cotton?—Yes, cotton and flannelette.

2056. Do you make the better linen shirts? Not outside; in the factory.

2057. Do you work sometimes in the factory?—I have done; just before I was confined I went into the factory.

2058. What could you earn in the factory?—Between 15s. and 16s. a week.

2059. Was the work done by machines there?—Yes, they went by steam.

2060. Do you work with the machine at all?—Yes.

2061. They were power-driven machines in the factory?—Yes.

2062. Was the rate of payment per dozen shirts better in the factory, or was it because you could turn out more shirts in the time?—It was better, and we could turn out more shirts in the factory.

2063. The payment was better also, was it?—Yes.

2064. What was the rate there?—There was a different way of doing; there was what they call the front hand, making-up, the collar hand and the hemmer; it passed through four people's hands before it was made inside.

2065. At

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

2065. At home do you make the shirt right through?—Yes.

2066. In the factory the labour was divided?—Yes.

2067. And you earned how much in the factory?—Between 15s. and 16s.

2068. What kind of work did you do in the factory?—Making-up.

2069. For the same kind of shirt what would be the total piecework payment in the factory as compared with the payment at home?—9½d. at home and 1s. 1½d. in the factory.

2070. Can you explain to us how they can give 4½d. more in the factory than they give to you at home?—They could not possibly give the hemmer less than 1½d. a dozen for her work. There was 2½d. for the fronts and 2½d. for the collars, and that left the remainder for the making-up.

2071. But one would think, looking at it purely from the business point of view, that if these shirts can be made at 9½d. outside nobody would make them inside at 1s. 1½d. You do not know how that is?—No, I do not.

2072. And when you work at home do you provide your own cotton?—Yes.

2073. What are the expenses you have to bear altogether at home?—One shilling a week for cotton, besides the needles.

2074. And this comes off your receipts?—Yes.

2075. Had you any expenses in the factory?—No, they give the cotton now.

2076. Then that 15s. was clear money?—Yes; I got the cotton and needles.

2077. While at home your 9s. or 10s. is subject to the deduction of a shilling?—Yes.

2078. When you are working at home, have you to buy your cotton from the firm?—No.

2079. You buy it where you like?—Yes.

2080. What rent do you pay?—6s. a week.

2081. Do you get any assistance from the Parish?—No.

2082. How do you manage to live?—We do not live; very often I used to go and sit at the machine all day without anything to eat.

2083. You have had no assistance in any way?—None whatever.

2084. (To Miss G.) You are in the shirt-finishing?—Yes.

2085. Do you work at home?—Yes.

2086. Do you make the shirts throughout?—No, button-holes and buttons.

2087. Is that for the best class of shirts?—Yes, for the best class we get 8d., and the others are 5d. a dozen.

2088. For making the button-holes?—Yes; I have to make 84 button-holes before I earn 5d.

2089. That is all done by hand?—Yes.

2090. That is not work that could be done by machinery?—No, it is all done by hand.

2091. You have given me some rates here: "collars, 5d. per dozen"; is that for putting the collar on to the shirt?—No; that is button-holing right through; there are seven buttonholes on each shirt, and that is 84 in the dozen.

2092. At 5d. per dozen, how much can you earn a week?—You cannot earn more than about 5s. or 5s. 6d. a week and then you have to sit

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from 6 in the morning till 12 o'clock at night to earn that.

2093. That cannot maintain you; it is not enough to live upon?—No, it is not.

2094. Do you get any assistance from the Parish?—No.

2095. How do you manage to live?—I have to go without food.

2096. You cannot go without food indefinitely?—I get a little bit of bread, and that is all we do get.

2097. What do you pay for rent?—1s. 6d.

2098. Is the work regular?—Sometimes; sometimes they are a bit slack, when you are a week or a fortnight standing off with perhaps couple of dozen to do.

2099. How do you manage to live during that time?—I have to go without.

2100. You cannot live and go without long?—Sometimes I am sitting all day without food.

2101. You do not get any help in any way?—No.

• *Mr. Trevelyan.*

2102. (To Mrs. E.) With regard to the racquet balls; is it a large trade, and are there many people working in the trade?—Yes, but not with the firm I work for; there are not very many, and it is all given out.

2103. Is there none done in the factory?—I could not say. I do not know very much about the covering, and I do not know many factories. I suppose there is some done inside, but they are mostly done out.

2104. Have you always got your racquet balls from the same firm?—Yes.

2105. Have you ever tried to get them from any other firm?—No, because I have always got plenty from them.

2106. You do not know of other firms in the neighbourhood which pay more?—No, I do not think they pay more for the racquet balls; for the tennis balls they are paid better, but I do not do them.

2107. You have not learned how to do them?—No, I wish I had.

2108. Can you tell me how the tennis balls are paid for?—6d. to 8d. per dozen, I think.

2109. Do you know how many of those they can make an hour?—Only from what I have heard; they tell me they can earn about 3s. a day, but I cannot speak from experience.

2110. During the three years you have been working have you ever been able to make more than about 1d. an hour?—Yes; last year, working more hours, I daresay I have earned as much as 4s. 6d. a week in the longest days.

2111. Has there been any time in those three years when the price they have paid for the balls has been better?—No.

2112. It has always been the same?—Yes. I have heard the price was better years ago, but that was before I started them.

2113. (To Mrs. F.) You said that you worked in the factory, sometimes getting 15s. to 16s. a week?—Yes.

2114. You worked there about how many hours?—From half-past eight till seven at night.

2115. With a short day on Saturday?—To one o'clock.

2116. And

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[Continued.]

Mr. Trevelyan—continued.

2116. And in order to earn the 10s. at home you worked very much longer hours?—Yes.

2117. Supposing you could earn your 15s. to 16s. in a shorter time, do you suppose that you would work those long hours?—In the factory you are not allowed to work more than those hours?—No.

2118. Supposing you could get 15s. by working about eight or nine hours a day, should you probably go on to work 10 or 12 hours, so as to make more, or do you think you would stop?—I would stop, in the factory.

2119. You would be satisfied with the 15s. or 16s.?—Yes.

2120. (To Miss B.) I wanted to ask a little more about the time when you said you were able to get 35s. a week. I forgot how long you said you had been working?—Ever since I was 14, and I am 22.

2121. How long ago is it since the prices were better?—Four years back; I left the firm because they took the prices down all of a sudden.

2122. All the firms in the neighbourhood?—No, the one firm I was working for then.

2123. Did the firm you were then working for pay unusually good prices, better than the other firms?—I do not know; I had only worked for the one firm until I left, and I went to another good firm and they took theirs down.

2124. Did you know at that time a good many girls who were working for these firms and others, who were getting good prices?—There was another good worker working for that firm, and she could earn good money.

2125. All the time you were working, up to four years ago, you were getting prices as good as that?—Yes; some weeks we would take £5 between the two of us; that is how it averages to the 35s. a week, and we would only work 48 hours then, and we work 60 now.

2126. I forget whether you said anything about the factories in the neighbourhood. Are there any factories in the neighbourhood doing the same work as yourselves?—Do you mean indoor workers?

2127. Factories where they employ girls?—This factory employs workers, but not in London.

2128. The factory you are working for now does?—No, the factory we are working for now has indoor workers, but they give the best work to the indoor workers, and only give the common work out. They will not give us the good work out now. The firm with whom we formerly earned 35s. a week keep the good work, the silk work, indoors entirely now. It was formerly all given out. They have no common work.

2129. Is that work given out now by that firm, only at lower prices?—I have heard it is still given out, but I cannot be sure; it is at lower prices, if it is given out.

2130. You cannot anywhere get anything like these prices now, and you have made efforts in the neighbourhood where you live?—The very best I can do now is 2s. 9d. a day. I have my pay book, which I can show you if you care to see it.

Mr. Arthur Dewar.

2131. Can you tell us, with regard to the article for which you get a penny, what is the selling

Mr. Arthur Dewar—continued.

price in the shop?—I could not say. I have never done articles for a penny yet.

2132. What is the lowest price you get?—The lowest I have got here is 3½d.

2133. Take that one; what price does that sell for in the shop?—I could not tell; I have no idea.

2134. Could you not tell approximately?—No, I could not tell.

2135. Can any of you tell?—(Miss C.) I do not know what profit he gets at all.

2137. Can any of you tell the selling price in the shop?—(Miss B.) The man *this* article is made for trades as —, and he sells the work as parcels of goods.

2138. You cannot tell what he gets for that individual thing?—No.

2139. Cannot any of you tell us generally what the shopkeeper gets for the things he gets you to make for 3½d. or 4½d., or whatever it may be?—(Mrs. F.) About 2s. 6d. each. (Miss B.) That may be the case with shirts, but another trader may have more profits.

2140. Shirts will do first-rate just now; he gets 2s. 6d. each for the shirts. What do you make the shirts for?—(Mrs. F.) From 1s. 6d. to 2s. 11d. a dozen. (Miss B.) The masters will not allow you to find out the prices they sell them for, because when they give you the work out they take the ticket off.

2141. You think the masters do not desire you to know what they sell them for?—No.

2142. What is your view as to their reason for that?—Perhaps they think we might get a bit obstreperous if we thought they were getting too much profit, and I know I should.

2143. Is what B has said the experience of all of you—that the masters show reluctance to let you know what they get for the goods you make, or have any others of you a different experience?—(Mrs. F.) No.

2144. You are all of the same opinion?

This was assented to.

2145. I ask you this generally. Can any of you suggest any way in which we could make an improvement in the unfortunate rate of wages paid to you. (To Mrs. A.) Can you suggest anything that might be done to help you to get slightly bigger wages?—I do not know how you can do anything, because, taking the different articles, you get 3d. for this and 3½d. for another, and you do not know how long it will take to do them.

2146. You cannot suggest anything that anybody could do for you which would induce your master, or perhaps compel your master, to give you a fairer or a larger wage?—(Miss B.) If he would only time an article, state how long the article would take to make and give you a certain wage of so much an hour, it would be fair if it was only a living wage; we only want to live.

2147. But when you are working all alone you could not be paid very well by the hour?—He might time the article in his factory, or he might even get one of his ordinary workers to make it first.

2148. There is nothing you can suggest that would enable you to get a better rate at home?—(Miss C.) They ought to be made to pay three or four

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[Continued.]

Mr. Arthur Dewar—continued.

four times as much for the making of these articles and that would be enough.

2149. I want to know whether any of you can suggest anything that could be done, because we are trying to help you?—I think they ought to be made to pay a regular price for each thing.

2150. Supposing I agree with you, how do you suggest that could be done?—Only by forcing them to do so.

2151. Can you think of any way yourselves? How about a minimum wage under which you would all have to agree not to work for any less? Would you all approve of that?—(Miss B.) Yes, a minimum wage would be better than how we work.

2152. Would not the minimum wage be just a good thing for the more expert of you? I quite understand, B, that you have experience, and you are a very good worker, and the minimum wage would suit you very well, but supposing some of your friends were not so good at the work as you are, and could not come up to the minimum wage, would it not be harder on them?—In every trade they pay a man or woman what he or she is worth.

2153. The minimum wage would perhaps be good for the expert worker, but the one who was not expert would be crushed out altogether and be worse than she is now. What do you think of that?—We do not want to crush those who cannot work as good as the others.

Mr. Bridgeman.

2154. (To Mrs. A.) I should like to ask if you have ever seen those articles which you make exposed for sale in a shop?—No, I have never seen any of those for sale.

2155. They are not sold in the part you live in?—No.

2156. And you have not any idea where they are sold?—No, I have not.

2157. (To Miss B.) As to this extraordinary difference in the amount you are able to earn, which you say has taken place very largely in the last four years, is that in your opinion accounted for by the increased use of machinery or not?—I never knew any of the silk work to be done on a power machine.

2158. But you said, I think, that one of those things you made was identical with one of those things made at the factory in the country?—I never earned good money on this class of work; it was on the silk dresses that I earned good money, and silk robes and pinafores.

2159. You think machinery has made no difference?—I cannot say that it has in the silk trade.

2160. How do you account for it then?—I cannot say; they did not know that we earned the good money then, or I think they would have cut it down before they did.

2161. Have you ever seen these things you make sold?—No, I have never seen them exposed for sale.

2162. In the case of a very good worker, and a very quick worker, surely they can secure for themselves better treatment than the worse ones get?—We do get the better-class trade.

2163. But even then you suffer apparently much more severely in proportion than the others?

Mr. Bridgeman—continued.

—No, we came down all of a sudden, but I am not earning a worse return than the others; I earn 10s. on the average.

2164. But you said you had come down from £5 a week?—Not £5 for one; I said £1 15s. for one.

2165. (To Miss C.) I think you said you paid 6s. 6d. rent?—Yes.

2166. Is it a large house?—In an eight-roomed house.

2167. Do you let part of it?—We rent two rooms in a private house.

2168. And you pay 6s. 6d. for these two rooms?—Yes.

2169. Is that the average rent there?—Yes, you get nothing cheaper; some are more.

2170. (To Miss D.) Have you looked at those articles you say are the same as what you make. Are you quite sure that they are just the same as what B and C make?—Yes, *this* one is the same as *that*. The only difference is that we put a double seam *there* (*indicating*).

2171. I wanted to know whether you had compared them before you came into the room, so as to be quite sure they are practically the same?—Yes, they are.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

2172. (To Miss G.) You say you get about 5s. a week for making the button-holes in shirts, while F has told us that she gets about 10s. a week for making the shirts themselves. Could you change your work and, instead of making the button-holes at which you earn the 5s., make the shirts at which your neighbour earns 10s. a week?—It would take me a month to learn the work.

2173. Do you think it was rather a mistake which you made in choosing the particular sort of home-work you do, seeing that it only brings you, in 5s., whereas your neighbour, sitting next you, gets 10s. for the same number of hours' work, or would the work which F is doing require a great deal of time for you to learn?—Yes, and perhaps I could not pick it up so quickly.

2174. It really looks as if you had made rather a bad choice at the beginning, when you chose the particular sort of work you would do?—Yes.

2175. I have your figures down and they work out to 5s. a week, and I gather that F, who sits next to you, does not have to work any longer hours in order to earn 10s. I want to ask you one or two general questions, and perhaps some of you may be able to reply. We have heard nothing from any of you about middle-women, and I should like to ask is there anybody here who has worked, or has ever had work, through or from a middle-women or do you all get it direct from the factory?—I get my work from a middle-women.

2176. And she pays you?—According to her price.

2177. You do not think the employer knows what the middle-woman gives you?—No, I do not think so.

2178. Has anybody else any dealings with a middle-woman except G. I understand that all the rest of you get the work direct from the factory? (*This was as'en'ed to.*)

2179. Only one of the seven witnesses, G, gets her work from a middle-woman, and she is the worst

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worst paid of all. In going to the factory do you find that you often or ever have to wait for work, because we have often heard it said that a lot of time is wasted hanging about the factory before you get the work, and that, even then, sometimes you do not get any work at all. Have any of you had that experience?—(Mrs. F.) Yes, I have. (Miss B.) It always takes me the whole morning. (Mrs. A.) It is half a day wasted.

2180. When you get to the factory, you often have to wait an hour or so?—(Miss B.) Yes, that is a little while; I start at nine in the morning, and get back at one.

2181. And that is once or twice a week?—Twice a week.

2182. It makes a very big hole in your earning power?—Yes.

2183. I should like to ask another general question. Are deductions made from your wages in any case for spoiled work; that is, for work which the employer regards as below the standard?—I should not get paid at all if I was to spoil it, but I have never spoiled any; I should not get paid for the article I spoiled.

2184. If there was anything at all below the standard, your wages would be docked?—I should not get paid for that one article.

2185. Has anybody heard of deductions made owing to spoiled work?—(Miss G.) I know a woman who had 3s. stopped out of her money for it.

2186. Is there any of our witnesses here to-day who have personally had money stopped out of their wages owing to their work being considered by the employer as below the standard?—(No witness responded.)

2187. One more question. When you have the work given out to you do you have particulars of the prices in all cases with it, or do you in certain cases do the work first and only know when you take it back how much you are to get?—(Miss C.) This one tells you beforehand what you are to get. (Miss B.) I never knew the price of my work before last January, and I think then they said there was a Bill passed according to which they had to give the prices, and I have had the particulars since then.

2188. Part of the Factory Law is what is called the Particulars Clause, which means that when work is given out details of the prices have to be given to you, but in some of your cases I gather you have not known, until you have taken the work back ready, what you were going to get; is that so?—(Miss C.) We do not generally get the information; this one does give it, but as a rule they do not. We do not know the prices generally until we take the work back.

2189. When they give you the particulars beforehand do they give it to you merely by word of mouth or do they write it down on a sheet of paper?—By word of mouth only.

2190. Does that apply to everybody?—(Mrs. F.) They write mine in a book.

2191. And they do that with all your work?—Yes.

2192. I rather gather from the silence of the others that you, F, are the only person who invariably knows when you take out home-work

D

Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

what you are going to get?—(Miss B.) Since Christmas I have had mine written down.

2193. (To Miss C.) In your case, sometimes you know and sometimes you do not know?—Yes; since I have worked for this employer I have known; he tells you his price beforehand.

2194. In other words, some employers tell you, and others do not?—That is so.

Mr. Arthur Richardson.

2195. (To Miss B.) I would like to ask you one question in relation to an answer given to one of the Honourable Members respecting the minimum wage. You are paid by the dozen?—Yes.

2196. You are not paid at all by the hour or day?—No:

2197. If a minimum wage were arranged it really would not be hard on the less skilled; it would take them longer to do the work?—I should not think it would be hard upon them, because the less skilled get a different class of work; they do not get the best work.

2198. But it would not be hard upon them, because they are paid by the dozen and not by the hour?—They are all paid by the dozen.

2199. They might not do so much work, but they would earn more if the minimum wage were established?—They would know what they were to get, at any rate.

2200. And they would get more?—Yes, I would think so.

2201. Therefore, both for the skilled and for the less skilled it would be better if a minimum wage were arranged?—I should think so.

2202. Do you agree that the prices paid in the factory are better than those paid to the home-worker?—Yes; I would go into the factory tomorrow, if they would take me.

2203. I was just going to ask why you did not go?—I would need to take a certain time learning the power machine, and, perhaps, I should not be so clever with that sort of machine as I am on my own.

2204. Judging from the answers you have given, I should think you would be very clever on any machine?—I could work any machine, but it might be somewhat awkward when I have been used to doing my work on one machine.

2205. May I ask your opinion: is it not the fact that many workers get very low wages because they do not know how to go about getting better wages?—I believe there is something in that.

2206. And that if an Association were established really to promote the interests of the workers by giving them information, do you not think they could get better pay?—I should think so.

2207. To-day I should think that the workers here present have learnt something from what has been mentioned before the Committee. I want to ask a further question. Are you working at home, as one might say, for your living?—Yes, I wanted to work for my living, but I cannot.

2208. But you are living at home with your parents?—Yes, but I am expected to keep myself.

2209. They provide you with your home?—Yes, but I am expected to pay my board and lodging.

19

2210. Are

19 March, 1908.] Mrs. A., Miss B., Miss C., Miss D., Mrs. E., Mrs. F., and Miss G. [Continued.]

Mr. Arthur Richardson—continued.

2210. Are you really working with a view of helping your parents by contributing to them?—I ought to support myself; my father and mother will not always live.

2211. (To Miss C.) Why do you not go into a factory?—Because it is not very convenient, and I do not see that they would pay any better prices inside.

2212. That is the point I want to get at?—(Mrs. A.) Some factories do not pay any better inside than out.

2213. D is making practically the same thing as B, and is getting better pay?—(Miss C.) That shows that the one employer is underselling the other; everybody cannot work for the best factory, can they? *This man does not care what he pays; he pays the lowest price, and he tells you so; he says that the principal thing is his selling and not your making or what you get.*

2214. Have you ever tried to find what you could get in the factory?—No, because I have always heard they pay the same; I have never known them pay differently.

2215. But you have not yourself tried?—No.

2216. (To Miss D.) In your opinion, is the cost of living in the country pretty much the same as in London?—It is much cheaper.

2217. And still you say the wages are better?—Yes; I have no tram fare or anything of that kind to pay.

Mr. Hugh Law.

2218. I was wondering if any of you had been talking among yourselves at all about the things

Mr. Hugh Law—continued.

that have been proposed; for instance, about home-work being given out only to people who could get a licence to show that their rooms were in a good state, and so on?—(Miss B.) We never met one another until to-day.

2219. And you had not heard about the proposal I have mentioned, or thought about it at all?—(Mrs. A.) I have heard about it, but I do not see that it would do us any good at all; it is only for the benefit of the people who would buy the articles in the way of preventing infection, but the worker would get no benefit, and it would not alter our condition at all.

2220. And some might get no work at all?—No; it would be only harder for the workers, I think.

2221. Just one other question. Do you know what is meant by a Wages Board? It is proposed that a minimum rate of payment should be fixed by a Board consisting of a certain number representing the employers in the trade and a certain number of people representing the workers and one person acting as a kind of umpire between them. Do you think, supposing that law was made, you would be able to find amongst yourselves, in any trade you are connected with, six workers who would be able to sit on a Board of that kind?—(Miss B.) I should think so; if it was for the benefit of the workers, I should think they would be willing, and I know I would. (Miss C.) That is what there should be, and it should be a lady, should it not?

(The Witnesses withdrew.)

MISS MARY R. MACARTHUR, recalled; and further Examined.

Mr. Bridgeman.

2222. Is there anything you would like to say upon this evidence, seeing that you know the people, which might throw a little more light on what they have said?—There are a number of points I can clear up if I may be allowed to. In the first place, there was the statement of the girl (B.) who had formerly made 35s. a week. I saw her wages book for four years, and discovered that the employer who paid her the 35s. a week is the same employer who has the factory in the country. I interviewed that employer yesterday; I told him I had seen these wages books, and asked how it was that he came to pay out-workers so much. He said that it was in the silk department and exceptionally highly-skilled work, but that if he had known they were earning such high wages he would have felt there was something wrong with the department, comparatively with other sections. I only mention this to corroborate the girl's statement. As to the girl employed in the factory, her employer, when he gives out work to London workers, pays them exactly the same as he pays the country workers; that is to say, is doing work at the same rate as workers in East London who are employed by this firm, which goes to show that he pays higher wages than some of his competitors.

Mr. Trevelyan.

2223. Do you say that he is the same man who used to give work to Miss B?—Yes, the same firm.

2224. Why did her wages drop then?—Apparently the forewoman was under the impression that this girl B had a workroom, and was employing a number of other girls, and when the wages-book at the end of the week totalled £4 or almost that amount, she paid it under the impression that the girl was probably paying several workers instead of only two; so that she thought her rates were all right. That is the only explanation I can get of it.

Mr. Arthur Richardson.

2225. The reason these girls earned so much was because they were highly skilled?—Yes, it was special work, and the forewoman did not know that there were only two of them.

Mr. Trevelyan.

2226. It was a very special kind of work, and there was so little of it that there was practically only enough for two or three girls?—For the two workers.

2227. You

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Miss MACARTHUR.

[Continued.]

Mr. Arthur Richardson.

2227. You do not suggest that, had either the employer or the forewoman known that there were only two workers, therefore, she would have reduced the price?—Yes, she would, and she did when she discovered it.

Mr. Hugh Ltw.

2228. At that time there were no particulars given?—No.

2229. Could she do that now? I understood the girl to say that she gets the particulars furnished now?—I do not see that it would make any difference. The point I also want to make out, is with regard to the similarity of these garments made by *D*, and the garments made by *C*. They are the same; they were made specially to match by the employer, and the usual rate was paid. They are absolutely the same, and it is a fair comparison between the 4s. 3d. and the 2s., between the 5s. and the 3s. 6d., and between the 2s. 6d. and the 1s. 9d.

Mr. Bridgeman.

2230. Did you compare the time it took?—It took the factory worker longer, but she was new to the work. I visited the manufacturer yesterday, and he costed the articles; I got the wholesale and the approximate retail prices for some of them; he was very kind, and gave me a lot of information. I wanted to say about the girl *C*, whose father is out of work, that her home was visited and that practically everything in it has been pawned; they are owing money of course, and are expecting the bailiffs in, so that she is at a crisis in her affairs. The girl *C* has hardly any clothes, and when we found her she was almost starving. She is really in a very bad position; she has her old father who hawks her goods sometimes in the evening, and that is now she makes some extra money. As to the worker *G* I thought the Committee might have some doubt about her evidence, but the Deaconess has visited her house, and has been in touch with her for six months or so, and she assures me that generally the girl's statements are accurate. I cannot find out myself how she can subsist at all, because I gave the Chairman her average wages for the five weeks before Christmas, and these, which are proved by her wages book, worked out at 4s. 4d., 3s. 7½d., 3s. 10½d., 3s. 7d., and 3s. These were her worst five weeks, so that how she manages to support herself and her child is an absolute mystery. She looks rather starved herself at present.

Chairman.

2231. Do you think she gets anything for the child?—She does not get anything; the man deserted her, and he is in Canada. There is another point I am particularly anxious to make plain. These two workers *B* and *C* are both doing work for the same firm, amongst other firms, and this firm is carrying on business in a peculiar way, undercutting others immensely. He is carrying on his business in an extraordinary

*D**Chairman—continued.*

way at present. He has little advertisements in the papers of six or seven lines, in which he pretends to be a nurse, and says that he has a baby outfit to sell. He advertises about 70 articles for about £1, and when we sent for one of the outfits, we discovered that they were the same garments made by this man, who has a warehouse in the City, although he trades in that way. The reason I was so anxious to tell you about that is that it throws an entirely new light on the trade, and shows how one firm is not only paying low rates, but is saving two profits, both the wholesale and the retail profit as well. Of course, the other firm is competing with him indirectly. I have heard that there are a number of firms carrying on business in the same way by these mock advertisements; most of the advertisements say that the articles are home-made, so that the woman who sends for them is under the impression that they are articles carefully made by some mother whose child has not lived. They are home-made, but by this worker you have seen here. The racquet ball maker, Mrs. *E*, is a slow worker, I admit, and, with regard to that trade, I may say that at the present moment the colleges and schools are considering the possibility of having a Voluntary Wages Board in the trade. They are prepared to pay higher rates for the balls if the workers can get better rates of payment. It was because of that that I brought this woman here.

Mr. Trevelyan.

2232. Who is arranging that?—Canon Lyttelton, Dr. Fry, and a number of other head-masters.

Mr. Bridgeman.

2233. I do not see how they can arrange that without the employer's consent?—They have the control of the market, and they can bring influence to bear on the employer.

Mr. Chiozza Money.

2234. There is a margin of profit already?—The head-masters are convinced of that.

Mr. Bridgeman.

2235. The fact is that there is an enormous price paid already for these things, and, therefore, it will not do any good if the head-masters put up the price further?—The head-masters have been paying 2s. a gross extra.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

2236. One question with regard to the middle-women. One very important fact brought out to-day was that the worst paid of all your witnesses was the only one who gets her work from a middle-woman. That is no doubt correct?—She does get her work from a middle-woman.

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2237. Therefore

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Miss MACARTHUR.

[Continued.]

Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

2237. Therefore, we cannot necessarily blame her employer for giving her these terribly low wages?—Probably it will be found that the middle-woman has only a small margin of profit. This worker, G, is the only instance of direct competition between hand-work and machinery, she does button-holes by hand, and does compete with machine-made button-holes, but some customers insist upon having hand-made button-holes, so that it is not, perhaps, as much competition as it appears to be.

2238. I should have thought in her case it was not necessary to have a middle-woman, any more than in the case of the other woman we have had to-day. Could not the middle-woman be eliminated in her case, and her wages thereby raised?—I do not know; apparently the middle-woman is trusted by the employer, and does some work herself, and then sublets part of the work to this woman.

2239. Could not you yourself, or your organisation, arrange for this woman to get her work direct from the factory?—We intended to make inquiries about it, but it is very difficult, because some employers like to deal with one or two workers rather than with a number.

Mr. Chiozza Money.

2240. About that silk dress case, was there anything to show that a perfectly satisfactory margin of profit was not made when the reduction was made? The wages came down with a run. Does that not rather look as if the margin of profit was sufficient, and that they thought that the wages being rather high they had the opportunity of getting more profit? Is there any evidence that silk dresses came down in price?—They might get an increased margin of profit, and they might get a larger market by producing the goods at cheaper rates.

2241. Have you come across any evidence at all bearing upon that?—Not except that the employer told me that the department had never paid. Of course he might say that because I was quoting the wages.

2242. With regard to that point about the middle woman, do you know of the New Zealand provision, which has been said to be so successful, with regard to eliminating middlemen altogether?—I do not remember the details at the moment.

2243. The New Zealand law is that a factory owner shall not give out home-work except directly to the actual worker. How should you view that?—I should think it was a very good provision if it were possible.

2244. I know that in the official exposition of their laws they claim that it has largely eliminated sweating?—I should think it was a very satisfactory provision.

Mr. Arthur Richardson.

2245. Have you any idea how many of this class of workers there are in London?—Baby-linen workers?

2246. Out-workers?—There are returns showing

Mr. Arthur Richardson—continued.

a very large number, but I think there are even more than those quoted in the returns.

2247. Are they organised at all?—No, they are not organised; one of these girls is enrolled as a member of the Union, but it is a nominal membership.

2248. You find it difficult and almost impossible to organise them?—Almost impossible.

2249. Did you hear the question I put to B with regard to work being given out by the dozen or gross?—Yes.

2250. And therefore if a minimum wage were established it really would not press unfairly on the less skilled, would it?—The less skilled would earn less than the others, but they would get a higher rate.

2251. They would earn more than they would without either organisation or a Wages Board?—Yes.

2252. Seeing you cannot organise them, would you not suggest that a Wages Board would be in their interest?—Oh, yes, decidedly; I am a strong advocate of Wages Boards.

Mr. Bridgeman.

2253. Might I ask what you meant by saying they were merely nominal members of the Trades Union?—We told them about the Union, and they said they would like to be members, and B and her sister have joined.

2254. Do they pay?—A penny a week.

Mr. Hugh Law.

2255. With regard to what Mr. Money said about the middleman or middle-woman, is it necessarily true that it would be a good thing to get rid of the middle-woman, because we have evidence, and these women to-day have told us, that they spend half a day twice a week fetching and taking their work back to the factory?—They have to go to the middle-woman, you know.

2256. Then she is not a distributor in the sense in which the middle-women in Nottingham are?—No. There might be a legal percentage fixed as the maximum profit the middle-woman should be allowed—5 or 10 per cent.

2257. Would not the middle-woman be a neighbour, so that the worker would not have far to go?—She usually would not be very far off, but it does not follow that she would be a neighbour.

2258. I thought, perhaps, she might be a person living in the same house?—That might be, but it is not necessarily so.

2259. The middle-women are very small people themselves, are they not?—Yes. I might explain that A, the maker of blouses and Kimona belts, told me that the temptation to sub-let her work, when she got a lot of it, was very strong, but she had never done it, because she thought that her rates were low enough already. She said that frequently other women that got the work at the same rates, sub-let the work, but she has always set her face against it, although she was busy.

2360. Is

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Miss MACARTHUR.

[Continued.]

Mr. Chiozza Money.

2260. Is it not fair to regard the middleman or middle-woman as the agent of the employer, and, therefore, his wages, as distributor, should be paid by the employer, and not by the employed?—Certainly, that is so; but still, as it is, she often does part of the work, and is just trying to make a little more.

Mr. Trevelyan.

2261. Do you see how you could stop the sweating by middle-women, although a Wages Board were fixed?—If a middle-woman is necessary, the only solution is to fix a certain rate for her profit.

Chairman.

2262. A Wages Board, supposing there were one, would fix the wage which the actual worker must receive?—Yes.

2263. If the middle-woman is to make anything, it would be in addition to that?—Yes, she would have to be paid by the employer.

2264. Take the case of *G*, obviously, by getting her work through the middle-woman, she does at least save all that cost of tram fares going up to the City, and the loss of half a day?—Yes.

2265. The middle-woman obviously, in many of these cases, renders a distinct service in collecting and distributing the work?—Yes.

2266. The point of the Wages Board would be to see to it that the actual workers for the piece-

Chairman—continued.

work done at home in these instances, would get not less than the minimum wage?—Exactly.

Mr. Trevelyan.

2267. I wanted to see if you had any suggestion as to how that was to be done, because yesterday we had pointed out to us that in Nottingham there was a voluntary Wages Board fixed, which fixes rates which are regarded as satisfactory by the better employers there, but when it came to cross-examining the employer, we found that these were the middlewomen's receipts, and that the middle-women got out of these minimum wages their payments, which might have been reasonable, or not?—That is a contingency which has to be guarded against as the Chairman suggests.

2268. Have you any suggestion?—I think the Chairman's suggestion is an admirable one.

Mr. Chiozza Money.

2269. You do not favour the New Zealand plan?—I think there may be difficulties in the way.

Mr. Hugh Law.

2270. You think the middle-woman occasionally renders a real service?—Yes, occasionally she may.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Wednesday, 25th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Bridgeman.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Ernest Lamb.
Mr. Hugh Law.

Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.
Sir Thomas Whittaker.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. CHARLES E. WATTS called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

2271. Are you head of the firm of Johns, Son & Watts, Limited?—Yes.

2272. You are large box-makers, I think?—Yes; we are in a large way of business.

2273. Do you employ a large number of people in your factory?—Yes.

Chairman—continued.

2274. And do you employ a considerable number of out-workers?—We do.

2275. Therefore you have experience of both classes of the trade?—Yes.

2276. I think you would like to say something to us about the advantage of home-work to the home-workers?

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Mr. WATTS.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

home-workers?—Yes. I might perhaps be allowed to say that we are very old members of the trade, and the practice of home-work almost originated with us many years ago, and that induced us to take a little interest in the work of this Committee, and we tendered ourselves accordingly to your notice. We think there are advantages in home-work. I speak now from the point of view of the people who do the work that we supply them with. They have an opportunity of doing as much or as little as they please, the arrangement having been made previously with us, so they are unfettered in doing the work. The work is of such a nature, being necessarily small in size on account of the difficulty of conveying it to and from home, that it does not impede very much, we consider, their domestic operations.

2277. Do I understand, then, that if any workers wished to have work that would take their whole time, you would give it to them?—Yes.

2278. But that they might take it from others who wished to do some?—Do you wish me to explain that point?

2279. Yes. I do not quite see how they can all have just what they would like?—This home-work is only a supplement to our indoor work, and when one says that they can have just what they like, that has to be of course arranged with our people who work at home. They can have a little work perhaps to fill up a few hours a day, if they wish it, or they can have work to fill up a greater amount of time: some of them, I should say, from the wages which they earn, must pretty nearly fill up their whole time and the conclusion that we make from that is that they have somebody else living with them who does the domestic work.

2280. Can you give us some indication of the wages which the home-workers earn?—Yes. I have brought with me the figures for nine different classes of work, which are done out-of-doors—that means home-work. The average rates of earnings from us of one hand, taking four weeks consecutively, were respectively 19s. 2d., 14s. 8d., 19s. 11d., 17s. 8½d.

2281. What class of work was she doing?—Note-paper work.

2282. Do you mean boxes for note-paper?—Boxes for note-paper.

2283. May we take it that she was an average hand, or an expert hand?—I should think she is a good hand.

2284. Rather a special one?—Yes, but in that class of work there is not very much to constitute what you call an expert hand, because making boxes of that description is a simple matter. The value of our business to a person working at it lies in the dexterous use of the hands. You may stand and look at two box-makers who have been taught at the same time, under the same régime, and you will find one work very much faster than the other. It is a matter of skill and quickness.

2285. Can you give us other illustrations of the wages and the payment earned?—Here is another case of a person who works evidently, from what she receives, for a short time. This is illustrating what I mentioned to you. This

is the same work. The figures are 12s. 3d., 7s. 10d., 7s., 5s. 8d.

2286. Just going back to that first case, do you know of your personal knowledge, or as a matter of fact, that she did all the work herself, or might she have had some members of her family helping her at home, the payment simply being made to her?—We cannot tell you that with absolute precision, but we can in a great many cases. I cannot tell you exactly about that. I should think that the other woman might have help. She may earn the money by herself.

2287. That is your opinion?—Yes.

2288. But it is possible that she might have a little help?—She might. With regard to the ordinary run of these people, as far as we are able to gather—and we inquire as much as we can, because we take an interest in them—nearly all our home-workers have been with us, I find, on an average for five years.

2289. Will you proceed, please?—The next is a common case. A woman has a child to help her with the work. That is another class of box. She has taken 25s. 5d., 20s., 24s. 11d., and again 25s. 5d.

2290. Are these people working in their own homes and not in domestic workshops?—They work in their own homes.

2291. Have you any other cases?—Then there is another woman, who works by herself, and whom we know is not so good a worker—not so expert. She has taken 10s., 11s. 2½d., 12s. 8½d., 8s. 11d.

2292. Those are the average earnings?—No. They are the earnings for four consecutive weeks.

2293. Do you pay the same piece rates to the home-worker as you do to the worker in the factory?—Yes, we do. They are on a level.

2294. Is it more economical to you, then, to put the work out?—It is in a business of the nature of ours, because we are subject to booms in the business, an increased demand without much warning to us.

2295. Great fluctuations?—Yes. That is how it affects the employers.

2296. You have not the cost of providing a factory?—No. If we had not help of this kind we should possibly have empty workrooms at times which in a place like London is a very costly thing.

2297. Can you give us any comparison of the respective earnings of home-workers as compared with factory-workers, on similar work?—If the worker works at home the same time as she would work at the factory, the earnings should be the same. We take no advantage of the fact that they are away from us and are getting their work from us.

2298. When they work at home have they any materials, glue, or anything of the kind to provide?—Yes, they have to find glue.

2299. Do you provide it for the workers?—We give them the money to pay for it.

2300. Is that additional to the piece-rate?—Yes.

2301. You provide the glue and similar materials for the work in the factory?—That is so. They are on a level. Some of them buy the glue of us. A great many of them do not.

2302. Do

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Mr. WATTS.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

2302. Do you do much box-making by machinery?—We do some.

2303. Is the use of machinery in box-making developing?—I think so.

2304. We have had evidence here to show that in what is called an up-to-date factory with all the newest machinery boxes can be made in far less time than by the old methods. Is that so?—Yes, that is so with regard to some boxes. Some cannot be made by machinery at all.

2305. Do these home-workers make a class of box that competes with the kind of box that can be made by machinery?—In some instances they do—not in many.

2306. Where they do do so, how does the pay come out?—We discourage that. We give them that class of work on which they can earn money. We aim at good work; that has always been our aim. We are known in the trade for that, and we have always aimed at paying the people well.

2307. As far as your work goes, would you say that the home-worker working for the same time and at similar work can earn as much as the factory worker?—Yes.

2308. I do not know whether it would be fair to ask you, but are there other firms in the trade that pay lower rates than you do for the home-work?—Well, I imagine so.

2309. You do not know?—As a matter of fact I would rather not make a statement with regard to that. I have no absolute means of knowing. I know that we pay well, because these people come to us year after year. Half of the people that are working for us at home are our own training.

2310. Has there been any change in the rate of payment? Has it tended to go down or to increase during recent years?—The rates of payment for certain classes of boxes have tended to go down. Speaking roughly, I should say that the rates of home-work are a little better.

2311. But some have gone down?—Some have gone down.

2312. Where they have gone down, what would you say was the reason?—The demands of the buyers of boxes; they will have something cheaper. I think it rests a good deal with the buyers. They will put up with perhaps commoner work. There are some classes of work in the box trade that we should not think of touching.

2313. Work may be commoner and yet yield the same rate of wages to the worker?—That could hardly be in our trade. If you will pardon me, when I say commoner what I mean is, a worse finish.

2314. If it is not so well finished, I presume that it takes less time?—Yes.

2315. Therefore, although the rate of payment per article per dozen or per gross might be less, less time is taken in producing it. A worker on commoner work, therefore, might in the week be able to earn as much money as on better work?—I should be inclined to question that. I am only now speaking from what I surmise. What I told you before was an actual fact. My surmise is that we cannot do the trade in certain classes of goods. It is done at such prices that we cannot touch it.

2316. Do you wish to say something about the materials?—Yes. That bears reference only to

Chairman—continued.

the different kinds of glue that are used. Many box-makers have a fancy for one kind of glue and many have a fancy for another.

2317. One witness suggested that glue of an objectionable nature is used, and should be prohibited. What is your view on that point?—I cannot think that that can be the case. We all know what glue is like; it is not very pleasant, but it is not very offensive, speaking generally. There are three kinds of glue that should be used: cake glue, what is called glue-size—and some box-makers fancy, because it is a nice thing to use, a French glue, which has the advantage that it does not stain the work.

2318. Are you acquainted with the condition of the homes of these workers yourself?—I have not visited any of them. I hear about them from people connected with us. When any one of them, who has been with us for a long time, working for us, meets with any misfortune, and we hear of it, we send people to see her.

2319. I wonder whether you can give us any information as to the extent to which their homes, which are probably small, and get very much filled up with great quantities of boxes and paper and cardboard and glue, are liable to get into a very unsatisfactory condition—sticky, and so on. Does that occur?—I should not think so. There is no reason for it. The material for a gross of boxes before they are built up, would be about the size of my hat on this table, although the pile would be very large when made up. It is all cut up, and tied up, and given to them ready for use. I might mention that we only give out small work, because it does not pay a box-maker to make large boxes at home and bring them back. The result of that is that many houses do not give out home-work at all; they have not the class of trade for small work.

2320. Where there are complaints as to the low rate of payment for home-work, could you make any suggestion to us as to how that could be dealt with?—Yes. I have thought it over, and I think that we should very much like to see such a thing done in a practical manner. It should be done, I think, by an Arbitration Board. A feature of our business is the constant production of novelties, and we should think it a great impediment to our business if we had, having produced a novelty, to ask other members of the trade to fix the wages that we should pay.

2321. You would not like them to see the novelty?—I think you will see that it is a reasonable objection. We have to produce a box very likely with the label of the customer upon it; this is brought before so many gentlemen to fix the price we are to pay for it, and they say: "Johns has this, you see," and next morning Johns' rival is round at the gentleman's place with the box.

2322. Then what is your suggestion with regard to this?—I should suggest an Arbitration Board. There are boxes of established use, which are common; they are sold at a rate which necessitates what we consider cruel prices being paid to the people engaged in making them; and with regard to that class of work, I consider that an Arbitration Board could decide with great advantage.

2323. Do

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Mr. WATTS.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

2323. Do you make those boxes?—No. We have made them. It is not an interested answer. I will answer at once anything that you wish to know.

2324. What would you suggest as to the method for dealing with the prices paid for the kind of boxes that you make?—I think that is a matter that must be settled between employer and employed. The practice is this. We produce a fancy box, a new design, and we give it to a girl to make. Long experience has told us about what a girl can fairly be expected to make boxes for; perhaps in the course of the year there are a few occasions on which we have thought that a certain box could be made cheaper than was the case. The worker comes to us and says: "I cannot earn my money on this box"—that is the expression. That is inquired into, and we come to an agreement.

2325. I understood you to suggest an Arbitration Board?—For boxes in established use. The box trade is continually changing. Our firm alone last year produced 4,500 different kinds of novelties in boxes, and that is where the difficulty comes in in fixing the wages. It would be such a block to business.

2326. You do not make the kind of box which you suggest the Arbitration Board should act upon?—We make some of them. When I said we did not, I was thinking of one particular kind.

2327. I only meant that your view is that the Arbitration Board should not decide the prices that you should pay?—I do not see how it could in the case of novelties.

2328. Should it decide the prices that someone else should pay?—No, nothing of the kind. I am not trying to get out of it. I have already explained why the price could not be fixed.

2329. Someone else makes a different kind of box. You suggest an Arbitration Board, and I find that it is not to apply to the kind of box that you make?—I did not mean that—I beg your pardon. I did say so, having only one kind in view, I cannot at the moment recall all the various kinds we make. You will forgive that. We should welcome it with regard to some which we make, because we think they are down too low.

2330. The others, you think, it could not apply to?—First of all, some of the masters are poor judges. The Arbitration Board would have to comprise women, because women do the work. There are certain people in our place, as in other factories, who, from their contact with the work-people, form a pretty good notion of what work is worth, and they fix the price, and ordinarily it goes through. We have very few disputes with our people on the question of price.

2331. But taking the trade generally, and other firms, as well as your own, you feel that an Arbitration Board, or a Wages Board, would not be able to fix the prices in the numerous classes of patterns that you make?—Not at the outset, when they first have to be made, because it is a doubtful matter; and, secondly, there is the very strong objection that we have to showing samples of prospective trade to our competitors.

Chairman—continued.

2332. Then you have no suggestion to make to us as to the way in which any complaints in regard to low rates of payment for the making of these boxes, where the changes are frequent, could be dealt with?—I do not see how they can be, except by the workers declining the work until the rate of payment is increased.

2333. Is there any other point you wish to mention?—Of course, it is open to the worker to put forward her case. These people are all voluntary workers for us. We can get all that we want at any time.

2334. Is there any other point in connection with the industry that you would like to bring before us?—I think I named all the points in my letter to you. I have brought with me something to show you. I fancy that our workers feel, and we feel, rather concerned at the sort of attitude which we fancy a great many people bear towards our business. I have brought for you to see letters from different charitable agencies asking us to employ people. These people know something about the working of the box business. Here are the letters. Shall I give them to you?

2335. If you please. (*The same were handed to the Committee.*)—They were all received in the Fall of last year. With the exception of one in January, they are all in August and October, and so on.

2336. These letters, just speaking broadly on looking at them, are applications from philanthropic Committees and Associations, asking you if you can find employment for certain people in whom they are interested?—That is so.

2337. What is the point you wish to make in connection with that?—We thought it was a suitable thing to submit to your consideration, to show the Committee that the trade of box-making—the manufacture of boxes—is a thing that can hardly be classed in what I may call sweated industries.

2338. It is an industry in which these philanthropic organisations think it is quite suitable and desirable that people should be employed?—Yes. They know about what wages they can earn.

2339. Is there any other point you would like to bring before us?—I am looking for a copy of the letter that we sent to you, submitting certain things.

2340. I have your letter?—Those are the points I am prepared to deal with.

2341. You say at the end that you can give any further information affecting the industry. Is there any other point that you wish to bring before us?—No. Anything you wish to know, I am quite ready to answer, as I mention there.

2342. Perhaps it does not come within the work of your firm, but you may have some general knowledge about this. We have had no evidence upon it, but do you know anything about the match-box trade?—Only by report. I know nothing of that. We do not make match-boxes.

2343. Are they being made by machinery now very largely?—Yes, very largely. When I say we do not make match-boxes, we make what are called vesta boxes, but that is a different thing. We do not make the wooden match-boxes.

2344. You

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Mr. WATTS.

[Continued.]

Mr. Trevelyan.

2344. You represent your firm as paying good prices, I understand?—Yes.

2345. And that, no doubt, is one of the reasons why these charitable organisations send people to you for employment, you think?—That and other reasons. I understand they are satisfied with the places in which our people work, and the general tone of the place.

2346. But do they send that sort of communication, as far as you know, to other firms?—I do not know.

2347. In making the remarks you did with regard to good wages, you were only speaking of your own firm, and not of others; you were not speaking in general for the trade?—I should be disposed to think that the trade generally pays what we should call fair wages. We are not holding ourselves up—I want that to be understood—as the people who pay better money than anyone else. We cannot do it, but we say that we pay quite up to the level.

2348. Have you ever had to drop the making of any kind of box, or have you often had to drop the making of any kind of box because of competition with other firms?—Yes.

2349. Frequently?—Well, we lose the orders for them; that is our test.

2350. Do you find the chief competition in the kind of boxes which are in constant use, or in the special kinds of boxes that are always changing?—The competition is most severe in boxes of established sale. I used that expression in answer to a question by the Chairman. I thought that would help to indicate what I meant.

2351. That is where the competition is most severe?—Yes.

2352. Can you explain a little more to the Committee what you mean by boxes of established sale. What proportion of the whole trade do you refer to?—I can mention a box which will be common knowledge to every member of the Committee—boot boxes—we have ceased to make them. We cannot get the money for them. This is where, I think, arbitration would come in usefully. It is a box that is hardly likely to be dropped, because it is so useful to the man who sells boots. It helps him to keep his shop much more tidy than in the old days before boots were boxed. My memory carries me back to those days, I do not think that they will ever be dropped. Our sale of boxes may be taken to a certain extent as a somewhat uncertain calculation, because directly the articles that go in the box get very dear, the next thing that the person who puts them in the box does is to use a commoner class of box, and finally he comes down to the original way—putting the goods up in paper and selling them in that way. A box is not a necessary. It can hardly be spoken of in any way as a necessary, and that is why it occupies the doubtful position which I have tried to explain.

2353. Is there any way in which you could define what boxes you would apply the arbitration to, and what you would have to leave out in your view?—Any box of established sale—the boot box that has been selling for years, for instance, and anything else of the same kind.

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Mr. Trevelyan—continued.

2354. The words “established sale” you could hardly put in an Act of Parliament?—No, unless you define the expression.

2355. It is a little difficult to make a definition, and I rather meant to see how you would be able to define the various classes. I do not very well know how it is practicable?—I should only be misleading you if I told you I thought it was, because I do not see how it is. Boxes vary. Looking at the sizes of them, one is an inch longer than another for instance, and another is an inch deeper, and all these differences, while trivial in themselves, amount to a lot when you deal with such numbers. You can measure the numbers when I tell you the number that we, one firm, send out. That makes it very difficult indeed to do it.

2356. You said at the beginning of your evidence that you thought home-work originated in your firm?—Almost—simply because we are the oldest firm in the trade but two. I know personally only one of the firms older, and I inquired of them, and they said they did not have home-work at all.

2357. How many firms are there in the box-making trade?—400 in the directory, I am told. I have not counted them. It is subject to correction. Someone told me that.

2358. Do you say that yours was the first firm that started home-work?—Almost in our industry.

2359. The first among all those firms?—With regard to the 400 I am talking of, my impression is that 20 years ago it was somewhere round about 70, and a few years before it was still smaller.

2360. In those days was all the work done in factories?—No. We have a woman on the list I have brought here to-day who has worked for us for 40 years, and the best part of that time she has worked for us away from our premises.

2361. You say that you originated home-work. When did you do that?—Soon after we started in business in the year 1812; it was a natural thing. We made little things, and it was a natural thing, at least we gathered so from the way in which we are asked to give home-work. When people leave us to get married, for instance, they usually apply to us to be put on the list for home-work, if they should want it, and if we are satisfied with the way in which they have conducted themselves while with us, we put them on the list.

2362. Has home-work been growing, do you think, as against factory work, during the last few years?—No, I do not think it has; it is about the same.

2363. Do you employ about the same proportion of factory and home hands as you used to?—No. The home proportion is smaller.

2364. Is it increasing in proportion to the factory work, or is it about stationary?—It is about stationary, I should think. I do not think there is much difference one way or the other. We have between 300 and 400 home-workers on our books, and it varies. They are not all employed. They are ready to take work if we can give it to them, and, as I say, if they have conducted themselves well while with us and have a good reference, we think of them and let them have it.

Mr. Parkes.

2365. You say that your business could hardly be called a sweated industry?—I have been told

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so.

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[Continued.]

Mr. Parkes—continued.

so. It is dealt with in a little book published on what are called "Sweated Industries."

2366. That is your own particular business, of course?—Yes, the industry in general.

2367. Can you tell me how it is that box-making formed a very important part of the exhibition on sweated industries in London and different parts of the country?—I have not in my memory the details that were given there. I do not consider the wages I have read out to you—and I shall be pleased to give you any other information—indicate or in any way support the idea that it is a sweated industry.

2368. I simply asked because in one of these exhibitions very great prominence was given to box-making?—Yes.

2369. I take it that that would not be your kind of box-making?—You must judge for yourselves, by the figures I give you. There they are. There is no doubt about their accuracy—not the slightest.

2370. But there is competition to a large extent in the general kind of box which is universal?—Yes, it is a very competitive business—very.

2371. And you really cannot say much about that kind of work, can you?—About what is called sweated work?

2372. About the cheaper kind of work?—We know where a certain amount of it is done.

2373. But from your own personal experience you cannot say much about that, I suppose?—No; we do not do it. We have a few cheap boxes, as I mentioned to the Chairman. We should be very glad to have some arbitration, to see if we could not get an improvement of prices, for the sake of the workers and ourselves.

2374. Do children work at box-making?—We know of none under 14.

2375. But are there many workers in the homes who are children?—I do not think so. I have made some inquiries about that. We find one or two of the people whose figures I have here have a child who does a little when she comes in from school. That is about all that is done. They do a little of what is called turning in. That is a very simple process. That is all that a child can do.

2376. What are about the average wages of an expert worker in box-making. I do not want the details but the average wages?—An expert worker ought to earn round about from a pound to 25s. a week.

2377. How many hours a day would they work, on the average?—Our hours are from 8.30 in the morning till 7.30 in the evening.

2378. Are you referring to the home-workers?—No, we cannot say about the other people. We pay the home-workers who have been trained and know their business the same wages that we pay the people in our place. Things are estimated in our place, and they are paid at the same rate for working in one place as we pay for work in the other.

2379. Do you think the home-workers could, if they are experts, earn from £1 to 25s.?—No, because you cannot give out that class of work. You can only give out work of a certain character, which wants less care than the other work, to

Mr. Parkes—continued.

outside workers. We make boxes covered with satin and covered with velvet and covered with plush, and you cannot give out them.

2380. What I am interested in is the condition of the home-workers. What about would be their average wages?—I will just look through the list. Here are two people down here who I know have nobody to help them. I have asked on that point. One of them has earned 12s. 10d.; 12s. 2d.; 13s. 11d.; 11s. 8d. The next one has earned 15s. 10d.; 15s. 2d.; 15s. 6d.

2381. Did one not do as much work as the other?—Not the full week, I should think. What they could earn one week they could another. They are accommodated by not being asked to work a full week. We have nothing to do with how they spend their time. I am speaking of the people doing home-work. From the 15s. 10d., I take it that the woman was able to work fairly through the day.

2382. Do you know anything about the condition of the homes of the workers. Have you any means of judging of the condition of the homes?—We have no reason to suppose they are bad or unsatisfactory. We have to send a list of our home-workers to the sanitary authority twice a year, at the end of January and the end of July.

2383. Do you visit them for that purpose?—No. We give the addresses. Then, if anything in the shape of contagious or infectious disease springs up, we get a notice from the authority. We send to the parochial authorities of the two parishes in which we have factories. If, as sometimes happens, the notice follows when the goods have been brought back, they are burnt at once by us. If they are in the home of the worker, we write a letter to the people, and ask them to burn them.

2384. But you have no inspection, and never see the homes of the people?—No, it has never been the custom. As I said before, now and then, if anyone falls ill—anybody for whom we have respect and it is brought to our notice—we send somebody down to see her. You know the homes of people earning the same money wear very differing aspects?

2385. You do not think a Wages Board practicable, as far as your branch of the trade is concerned, and in the great majority of cases, I suppose, you do not think it practicable?—I am able there, I think, to speak for the business generally. It is not practicable for the reason that I have given; that is all. But when a box has been established, and sold year after year, year after year, that is a debateable question at once, and I would suggest an Arbitration Board for that.

2386. Do you have middlemen in your trade?—No.

2387. Do you have any foreign competition?—Yes—severe.

2388. In that kind of trade?—Yes.

2389. Is the foreign competition more in the cheaper kind of box than in the other?—We have fostered our trade and brought it up to what it is in the face of steady German competition.

2390. Is it increasing now at the present time?—It is severe. It is increasing on the whole.

2391. Is

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[Continued.]

Mr. Parkes—continued.

2391. Is box-making confined mostly to London, or is it in the provinces?—In the provinces and in London.

2392. As much?—Yes.

Mr. Bridgeman.

2393. One of the witnesses we had from your trade said that there was something about the classification of foreign boxes that came over which made the competition more severe. I think he said that they were classified as coverings, and therefore the Merchandise Marks Act did not apply to them?—Yes, that is so.

2394. Do you bear out what he said about that?—Yes.

2395. Do you think that if that was put right, it would make a considerable difference?—I think it would be a fair thing to do. We are under the disability of not having that done. Other trades have the thing done, and I think it would be fair.

2396. It would be fair, perhaps, but it would not relieve you from foreign competition?—No, excepting that people might say: "I would rather give my trade to an Englishman." That is all.

2397. Do all your workers bring back their own work, or do you collect it from them?—I will answer the last question first. It might be considered that to collect the work would be an advantage. We thought so, and we made an effort at it. We tried it as an experiment some years ago, and we had to give it up through the want of punctuality on the part of the workers. We could not very well punish them for it, and we had to give it up, and they had to bring it in themselves. It is impracticable on that account. And there may be very good reasons why a woman should not be ready with her work, and, therefore, we are quite prepared for unpunctuality. We do not want to make any complaint of it. For instance, her baby may be ill.

2398. Do you find that giving them so much time in which to do the work led to their doing nothing for the first part of the week, and then working a great deal too many hours the last part?—I cannot follow that sufficiently to say. The average box-maker out-of-doors begins her work some time on Tuesday afternoon or Wednesday. I think that Monday is usually the washing-day in small homes, and so they do not touch the box-work on that day.

2399. You think that collecting, if you insisted on collecting and their having the work ready by a certain time, would not lead to their working less excessive hours?—I have no reason to think that they do work excessive hours. We now and then inquire, and we thoroughly discountenance excessive hours. We do not claim that the thing shall be brought in, in a specially quick time.

2400. No; but that would not prevent their doing no work for three days, and then working twice as hard as they ought for the other three?—I do not see how we can help that.

2401. I ask you, because one of the witnesses we had before, suggested that collecting at regular times would make the hours of work very much

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Mr. Bridgeman—continued.

more regular?—I give you the result of our own experience. We have cultivated always, and do now, friendly relations with our people, and the collection was a spontaneous effort on our part to do them a turn unsolicited. We did it to see if we could do any good with it.

2402. In speaking of the different kinds of glue, you did not mention fish glue, unless that is what you call French glue?—Fish glue is a different thing. It is glue of great strength, which is used for the fastening on what we call projections of boxes, that is the flanges of the lids. But it is not very often used for that—in fact it is not necessary.

2403. Have you any evidence of its being insanitary?—No, certainly not—nothing of the kind.

2404. Is it cheaper than other glue?—No, dearer. The cheapest glue is glue-size—tub glue as it is called.

2405. Cake glue is the best, is it not—the most wholesome at any rate?—There is no difference in smell or offensiveness. There is a slightly nasty smell with tub glue, but it is no worse to smell than cake glue. Glue is objectionable in the house and everywhere else where it is allowed to boil over. It is bad enough then.

2406. Is there any part of the boxes you make that cannot be made by machinery?—Yes—plenty. You could not make a thing like *this* by machinery (*producing a specimen*). That is the inside of a box. That is a part of a box which was made outside. A woman can earn 12s. 6d. a week making that kind of box and lid. It is simplicity itself—the class of lid.

2407. Were the letters from Charitable Institutions that you put in for work inside the factory, or for home-work?—Work inside.

2408. I thought so. You said that there is a kind of box—a boot box—which you could not now get much money on and had given up making?—Yes.

2409. Are not they made at all now?—Yes.

2410. But by firms that give worse pay—is that so?—We imagine so. We do not see how else it can happen. We know the cost of the materials of these things, but the thing we do not know is the wages that are paid.

2411. Do you suspect that they are made in this country?—Yes.

2412. By people who are not paying as good wages as you think ought to be paid?—Yes. That is just it.

2413. I rather gathered from what you said before that when you say a Wages Board should be established for certain well-known kinds of boxes, you mean boxes that are made by those firms which undercut your firm?—In answering that question I am dealing with it from the point of view of the worker. I cannot say anything about the firms that are doing these things. We cannot do it. We cannot get the work done. Our people would not make it at the price it evidently is made at, and we cannot get it made. My answer is all bearing on what is received by the workers. I do not come to tell you that we have a complaint against another box-maker. We should not like to do that.

2414. Do not answer unless you like, but I understand that you make generally a sort of box that you call a novelty?—Yes, to a large extent.

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2415. Different

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Mr. Bridgeman—continued.

2415. Different kinds that are perpetually changing?—Yes.

2416. And those are the sorts of boxes which afford the best wages for the people who work at them?—Yes, and that is the class of box in regard to which we are subject to foreign competition. This is a little thing I brought just to show you as an illustration (*producing a box*). That box is sold filled with sweets for a penny.

2417. Would that be a box that could be arbitrated upon by a Wages Board?—Certainly it could be, but our objection to the arbitration on novelties is that we should give the people who would arbitrate upon them an opportunity of seeing the novelties we are producing before they are on sale you see. That is the thing.

2418. With regard to what you call the established kind of boxes, would they be cheaper to make than those, or dearer?—I should think cheaper relatively. You cannot compare a box that holds a pair of boots with a little tiny thing like *this*.

2419. But would the home-worker be earning more by making a box like that, than on what you call the standard style of box?—She can earn as much.

2420. Would it be possible to describe the box which you state has an established sale as a box which has been on the market for a year, or something like that?—That would be a better expression. I ought to have used it. It puts the case clearer certainly.

2421. That would satisfy you—that any box that has been on the market a certain time might be arbitrated upon by the Wages Board?—Yes.

2422. Can you give us any idea of the length of time that it should have been on the market for you to consider it a box which has an established sale?—It is difficult to answer the question, because it is asking as to a state of affairs that I do not think will ever exist. These things change, not quite from year to year, but in a couple of years' time, judging from ordinary experience, this box will not be made. Something else will have superseded it. When people buy novelties they want a change from time to time.

2423. If a novelty has been out for six months, how would it hurt the manufacturer for people to know about it from the evidence at the Wages Board?—I do not quite understand your meaning.

2424. You said that employers would not like to have their novelties exhibited at the Wages Board. Supposing that a novelty was six months old, and had been sold for six months, it surely would not hurt the employer for the Wages Board to be considering it?—I follow.

Chairman.

2425. Was not your suggestion rather this: that the novelty would have ceased to be made?—And there would be another novelty.

Mr. Arthur Henderson.

2426. You have just said that it goes on for two or three years?—When there are things in cheap sale that is so. We should not mind at all the thing being arbitrated upon after we had had the first fair run out of our own brains. We want our brains protected.

2427. Yea, that is so. I want to know whether

Mr. Arthur Henderson—continued.

you can give any idea of the length of time?—Do you want me to formulate a time after which all these fancy articles should be liable to the consideration of a Wages Board?

2428. I want to know that, if you can tell me?—I should think it might be taken as after 12 months—after the first year's run. That is the thing.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

2429. You have been talking all the morning of Arbitration Boards rather than of Wages Boards?—I answered the questions put to me.

2430. I take it you mean just the same thing, do you not? When we speak of Arbitration Boards we usually mean that their decisions are not binding, whereas Wages Boards' decisions are binding. Do you mean the same thing?—Yes; I do not think it much use going to arbitration if you do not obey the result. We should consider it binding on us.

2431. This Bill contemplates something different from an Arbitration Board. I suppose some of your people work for other firms as well as yourselves?—I do not think they do much; but if we are slack, they go to other firms to work for them. Speaking generally, they like to work for us. I think they do. With regard to the home-workers, it is very difficult to define what they do. Some of these people have had work out in various quantities. One of them out of the list I have here, worked 52 weeks, another 49, another 32, and another 16. They are all on our books still, and we have nothing to complain of; but they please themselves as to the amount of work they take. Our arrangements fit in with that, and they are able to help us by doing this work at home, which we are able then to store if we choose, or we arrange for delivery from time to time in various lots. We have to fit these things all in as closely as we can—the making and the delivery—on account of the value of space; and in that way both sides are helped.

2432. I imagine that sometimes in the year you have very little work to give out—much too little work to go round among your regular workers. Is not that so?—Not now. It used to be more so, because a good deal of fancy work is not done now. We used to do a bigger proportion than we do now, and then it would be so; but that is guarded against by the fact that, with regard to novelties for the season, we start producing what will be sold about Christmas time in the previous January or February, otherwise they could not be catered for. The stuff is in our place waiting for delivery when the proper time arrives.

2433. Do you find it necessary, in many or any cases, to make deductions for work that is either badly done or spoiled? I want to know whether the wages you have given us represent net wages or allow of a deduction?—The net wages. It sometimes happens when a woman sends home work, or brings it herself, that one or two little matters have got rubbed. We allow her the use of a room in our place to make it good, to relieve her from going back. If these things

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things come too heavy, and she constantly brings bad work, we cannot go on employing her.

2434. But does that often happen?—Not very often.

2435. Would you say that many of your boxes are exported?—Yes—filled.

2436. And therefore the number of boxes that come into England is probably no greater than the number of boxes that go out. Can you say whether that is so?—I cannot say that. I know when we are driven in a corner sometimes with a fancy article, and we lose the order, that it goes away and it goes out of England. That is what happens.

Mr. Ernest Lamb.

2437. You spoke about the only objection to Wages Boards, as far as you are concerned, being your desire to protect your novelty business?—Yes.

2438. If that one difficulty can be overcome in some way or other, if designs of novelties could be protected for a given time, you would have no objection to a Wages Board?—I should have no objection if the novelty, having been produced and having been accepted, is taken on as fixed; but our trade is of such a nature that sometimes after a little time people who have had a thing say, "I would like this a little bit altered, the lettering taken out or some put in, and some little alteration made," which opens the question again.

2439. Is not your great fear that your competitors would get to know the customers who have the boxes?—No. They would know our designs. We have the honour of having our designs copied.

2440. But is not your great fear that they would get to know your customers?—I do not think that matters. I do not care very much about that.

2441. You do not think that matters?—One moment. They would get to know who is having that particular box. They know very well who buys boxes. We have to produce this particular thing and in many cases it bears the label of the person for whom it is intended.

2442. But with regard to a Wages Board fixing the rate it would not be necessary that the box should bear that label while the arbitration is going on?—The labelling is included in the payment for making.

2443. But you would have no objection to their knowing who your customers are?—I am hardly prepared to answer that question.

2444. I understood that that was the statement you made. That is why I was surprised?—I am speaking under correction, but I believe the statement I made was that we did not like the sort of box we were catering for for a firm (I put it in other words, but you will recognise the meaning) to be known to people who were competitors with us in the business at the time when the thing was being tendered. There is another objection which I have not mentioned. These samples and prices are wanted very quickly. We get an order in the morning "I want such and such. Come round and see me." You go round to see the customer or you do not go

Mr. Ernest Lamb—continued.

round, as the case may be—there are more or less definite instructions. That sample has to be made and tendered in about a couple of days. There is no time as far as I can see with regard to these things.

2445. Do you think that the other suggested remedy would be feasible in your business—that of licensing the out-workers?—I do not think there is any necessity, if sanitary inspection is carried out properly. I quite believe it is.

2446. But have you any objection to it?—No, not from the employer's point of view.

2447. That is the point?—I do not see any.

2448. You say you have built up your trade in the face of severe foreign competition?—We have.

2449. Have you also built up your export trade?—We have no proper export trade.

2450. Have you any at all?—Yes, we have some.

2451. What do you mean by "no proper export trade"?—The bulk of our stuff is bought by wholesale houses, filled with their goods, and sent away. They are the exporters.

2452. You have no export trade of boxes yourselves?—We have a little, but very little.

2453. You say that an ordinary worker might earn 12s. 6d. at week at home work?—Yes, that would be quite an ordinary worker. They might earn more than that.

2454. What number of hours do you say would be necessary in order to earn 12s. 6d.?—About the same time as is worked in the factory.

2455. What is the number of hours?—We go to work at half-past eight and leave at half-past seven. On Saturdays our hours are half-past eight to one. There is an hour and a half for meals on five days of the week and on Saturday ten minutes. One o'clock is the ordinary dinner time. We give ten minutes about 11 o'clock.

2456. An ordinary worker would have to work all those hours in the week to earn 12s. 6d. at your work?—Yes, on common work. The sort of people who do these things are girls. A girl can do the work as well as a grown person.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

2457. Do you employ any large amount of machinery?—Yes, a good deal.

2458. In the case of the larger boxes is it so?—No.

2459. I understood you to say you sent the small boxes out of the factory because you make the large boxes in?—Yes, but our machinery is not all employed on that.

2460. Is it largely employed on, say for instance, boot boxes. Are they made by machinery?—Not at present, as far as I know.

2461. That is just the point. You said you found that your boot box trade went away from you?—Yes.

2462. You complained of foreign competition, but you subsequently said that when you missed an order it usually went to the South of England?—No, out of England.

2463. I understood you to say south of England?—No.

2464. May it not be that your competitor is employing

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employing machinery that you are not employing ?—It might be so in some cases certainly.

2465. And do you not think that if you were to put more capital in your business and get more machines you would be able to meet the competition ?—I do not think we should. I do not think we should care to do it.

2466. Do you say that your goods are exported by the wholesale houses ?—Yes.

2467. Your boxes contain other things besides boots ?—Yes, in the main. I answered that question just now.

2468. Therefore your boxes are really practically used as wrappers, are they not ?—In effect it may be taken that that is so, except that they are ornamental.

2469. Why do you object to foreign boxes coming in as wrappers when your own boxes go out as wrappers ?—Our own boxes go out as wrappers and the boxes are subjected to a severe duty abroad.

2470. But still they do go out as wrappers ?—Yes, but those come in here without any duty.

2471. *Apropos* of that, your business in box-making generally is an increasing trade, is it not ?—The use of boxes is certainly on the increase.

2472. That is in spite of foreign competition ?—The increase in use is going on all over the world.

2473. But I am speaking now of this country. The box-making industry is increasing in spite of foreign competition, I understand you to say ?—That is an opinion. I should think it was undoubtedly because there are more at it.

2474. Your own business for instance has increased, I understand ?—I have not been asked that question, I think.

2475. You say you started over 60 years ago. You must have increased from the time when you started ?—That is a fair deduction but I have not been asked the question.

2476. Are you aware that there is an agitation amongst those who make the boxes in Germany for an increase of wages ?—Yes, I have heard of it.

2477. Therefore you would deduce from that that the workers in Germany are not content with the wages which they are now receiving ?—Yes, I should.

2478. You speak of girls being able to work on these boxes. You gave us one instance of a woman working for 40 years ?—Yes.

2479. Could you give us any particulars of that case. Is that a single or a married woman ?—I think she is a widow. I have not brought those particulars, I thought I might be asked the question as to the length of time, and those named in the list I have read to you have all worked for us for some time. I mentioned in the course of my evidence that they average about five years—the home-workers.

2480. I would like to know if this widow who has worked 40 years for you is able to maintain herself on the wages she earns at your factory. Is that her only income, can you tell me ?—I cannot tell you that. I can tell you what she earns.

2481. When you give out the boxes does the worker know what she is going to receive ?—Always. It is entered in a book ; there is no doubt about that ; and it is given to her. She knows her bargain, and we keep to it.

Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

2482. With regard to the difficulty that arises in submitting novelties to a Wages Board, do not you think, that if a limit of six months were established, you would have sufficient start, as it were, of your competitors ?—No, I think we ought to have the season—the twelve months.

2483. You think it ought to be 12 months ?—Yes, I think so. I think that is only fair.

Chairman.

2484. There is just one point which I would like to put to you : do you know if in Manchester there has been a scale of wages adopted for plain boxes ?—Yes, I have been told so.

2485. But you have no personal knowledge of it ?—I have no actual knowledge of it.

2486. But you have heard that that is so ?—Yes.

2487. You do not know how it is working or anything about it ?—No, I do not know.

2488. You understand that it is for plain boxes ; that is every day work ?—I expect you have as good an opportunity of getting knowledge as I have. We have no actual knowledge. It is a sort of talk amongst people meeting in the trade, that is all.

Mr. Parkes.

2489. What are the wages of the woman that you say has been working for 40 years ?—She earned in four weeks 17s. 8½d., 18s. 9d., 17s. 6d. and then 10s. 1½d. She did not work that week the whole time. The figures show that at once. Some of the people have relatives living with them. This one has a grand-daughter.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

2490. She is a very expert worker, is she not, after so many years' practice ?—There is no doubt about it, that she has been, if she is not now. The fingers get a little stiff when you get old.

Mr. Ernest Lamb.

2491. You cannot commit yourself to the statement that the women you are speaking of now work no more hours than those inside the factory, in order to earn the wages ?—We cannot absolutely say it. We have every reason to believe that none of them do so. We do not wish them to, and we have told them so, but we often hear that it goes on elsewhere.

Chairman.

2492. You said that if they worked for the same time at home-work as in the factory they would earn the same money ?—I think it is practicable. They are paid at the same rate.

2493. Would those wages be a representative sort of wage for women working on the work in the factory ?—Yes—at the rate.

2494. But would the total be about what a woman in the factory would earn ?—No. With regard to the 10s. 1½d., the woman working in a factory and working all her time, would earn more.

2495. What do you say about the others ?—With the others it would be so. I did not go into the detail, and I cannot speak absolutely.

I brought

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Mr. WATTS.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

I brought the figures to show you what people are able to earn, and what they are earning, and to show you that there is no difference made between people working at home, and those working in the factory. The prices paid are the same.

2496. If they work the same length of time

on the same scale, they ought to earn the same money?—Yes, that is it.

Chairman.

Thank you, very much.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Mr. NATHAN BUCKNER called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

2497. Do you live in the East-end of London?—Yes.

2498. Will you tell me what your occupation is?—Machinist for a tailor.

2499. Are you an employer, or a worker?—A worker.

2500. Have you any special position in your trade as representing the workers?—I have been Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of the Government Workers' Branch. I have been for 20 years in the contract work on Government and Municipal clothing. Mainly, we are all unorganised. On account of women being employed, and the helpless position they are in. I have been asked by my fellow-workers to come forward. I know everybody in London who is in the trade, and I have been asked to come forward and give evidence of our opinion, and how necessary it is for a Wages Board to be in existence, and a minimum wage to be fixed.

2501. Do you work in a factory, or at home?—In a factory at present.

2502. You communicated with us on note-paper, from which you cut the heading?—Yes—as a private individual—as a workman.

2503. What was the reason? Was it a business heading?—It is my own paper. I used it long ago.

2504. In any official capacity?—No.

2505. You have spoken of Government and Municipal uniform clothing?—Yes.

2506. What would you like to say to us with regard to that?—On account of the unorganised position of our workers on the Municipal and Government clothing contracts, and the large number of women who are employed, there is a continual reduction of wages going on, until it is absolutely impossible to make a living at it. I will not trouble you with many figures. I will take one or two items to lay before you. In 1904 and that period, for the making of a khaki drab jacket, 2s. 7½d. was paid to the people employed. In 1907 it was reduced to 1s. 5½d.

2507. Is that in the factory?—Yes, in the factory. This is Government work, which has to be made indoors. It cannot be given out. It must be made indoors in the factory on the contractor's premises. So it has been with the War Office work and with the Post Office clothing work it has been the same. In 1906 telegraph boys' jackets were paid at the rate of 15s. a dozen for making, and now they are paid 10s. 2d. per dozen for making.

2508. Are these jackets precisely the same?—Yes. The old contract was up. On the new contract it is 10s. 2d. a dozen.

Chairman—continued.

2509. What is the date of the new contract?—The new contract came out in February, 1906, I believe.

Mr. Dewar.

2510. When was the 15s. contract entered into?—It ran up to about January or March. The jackets were paid for at the rate of 15s. per dozen, but after that the new contract started in 1906, from about April.

2511. But when was the 15s. contract entered into; when did it begin?—It began three years previously to that, and ended in 1906.

2512. That was during the pressure of the War?—No; it was after the War. The Post Office has nothing to do with the War.

Chairman.

2513. When did the contract begin?—During the period up to 1906—April.

2514. Did the contract begin in 1904?—It was going on in 1904.

2515. But how long was it given out before 1904?—It was given out three years before 1906.

2516. That would be 1903?—1903.

2517. That would be after the War?—Yes; I am taking purposely 1904 to show what was the normal condition existing. I should not take the drab jacket War Office work at the prices that were paid during the War, because those would be high prices. I purposely take these.

2518. Have you any figures about police clothing?—I have this from our own books. Police clothing, which is Municipal work, in 1904 paid 2s. 8d.—making police tunics indoors. In the present year they paid 1s. 9d. for making those indoors.

2519. The same tunic?—The same tunic.

2520. Correct me if I am wrong; but I understand that these are the prices paid to the worker by the contractor?—Yes.

2521. They are not the prices paid by the Government at all?—No.

2522. They are the prices paid by the contractor who takes the contract from the Government?—Yes.

2523. You rather indicated to us that this reduction is brought about by the competition of the home-worker?—By the outdoor master and the employers themselves—each employer.

2524. Not the home-worker?—Not the home-worker. I principally allude to the outdoor worker, that is, the master who takes work from the factory—and also the contractors themselves—each one competing. The competition that exists between contractors has a direct tendency to reduce wages. If I may be permitted to explain; supposing

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

supposing three contractors wished to tender for one contract, probably two contractors may think that the prices paid for the making of that garment are sufficiently low: consequently they will endeavour to reduce their management or introduce some other method of cutting the clothing by which they can tender for the contract; but the other contractor, being free the same as they, does not. He has a perfect right to reduce the payment for the garment, consequently he receives the contract. Each contractor tries to reduce the price for the making of the garment, because that is the largest price which they can go for.

2525. Do I understand that the workers in the factories are unorganised?—Yes.

2526. Are they mainly men or women?—Women.

2527. You work in a factory?—Yes.

2528. There are a number of men?—Yes.

2529. Are the men organised?—Yes; but they cannot help themselves. The reason why we cannot help ourselves is that, supposing we refuse to accept any garment, the woman takes it; she is there.

2530. And the women are not in your organisation?—No.

2531. And they undercut you?—Yes, we cannot blame the women. We know their position. For instance, there is the widow who may have one or two children to keep, and to pay a neighbour 1s. 6d. for each child to look after them while she is working in the factory. On the whole, her earnings will come to 12s. or 13s., or 14s., or 15s. a week. It is impossible to expect her to organise and stand up as a man. She may lose work, and she has to remember her children.

2532. Do you say that there is another phase of the competition, and that is that the contractor gives the work out to other sub-contractors who have workshops?—Yes.

2533. Does that tend to cut down the wage?—Yes. Supposing that Municipal work (and in that I include tramway, police, railway and all other uniform clothing) is permitted to be done either outdoors or indoors, as the contractor pleases, the contractor or his manager lays before us a certain price for a garment. He says that the garment is such and such a price. We indoor workers find it is utterly impossible to make that garment. Now he comes up and he says: "Very well, the outdoor hand will make it cheaper; consequently, if you do not accept the garment at the price which I offer you, it will have to go outdoors." That has been done in my experience. I can give you the names of the contracts, and so on, where it has been done.

2534. In connection with the London County Council and some of their contracts, do they fix the prices that must be paid?—Yes.

2535. The prices that must be paid to the workpeople?—Yes, in connection with that work. That is a proof that a minimum wage can be fixed on our work, and it is the only solution. And it is not only the County Council, but there are Borough Councils who fix a minimum wage—the West Ham Borough Council, the Camberwell and the Lewisham.

2536. Let me understand. When they let a contract, do they go beyond specifying that there

Chairman—continued.

shall be the trade union wage? Do they specify the actual figure that shall be paid?—The clothing expert of the Council has laid down a specified price for each garment that is to be paid away to the employee. When the contractor tenders for the contract he takes that into consideration, that that specified price must be paid away, just the same as he does a certain amount of cloth at so much per yard. Therefore we are protected, the employees are protected.

2537. Is it your experience that those prices are paid?—Yes.

2538. Do the workpeople know what price is fixed?—I have brought with me a list which comes from the Council. This is affixed to every workshop on every floor. It is put up for the workpeople.

2539. This is fixed up where the work is done—Yes, it must be fixed up.

2540. So that all the workpeople know what price the Council has decided should be paid?—Yes.

2541. And do you find as a matter of experience that that price is paid?—Certainly. The employee sees that price and the employer knows that under a penalty (and there is an inspector) he has to pay that price, and if he does not pay that price the employees will speak about it outside or the trade union organisation will take the matter up. Again, the price has to be entered in the employee's book; consequently we are positive it is paid.

2542. Your experience of the fixing of the price by the County Council and one or two Borough Councils is that the system works and is adhered to?—Certainly.

2543. Naturally you would like some similar arrangement to be brought about in connection with all work in this trade?—Certainly. It is the only solution.

2544. Am I right in saying that your view is that a Wages Board would secure that. You see no practical difficulty in the way of working it?—The Wages Board would have to consist of representatives of the employees and the employer and an independent person to act as Chairman. The reason I say this is because they must know the technical part of the work. No doubt you know that lately a question has been asked in Parliament, if I may speak of this subject, with regard to War Office clothing. It was stated by the Minister that 1s. 5½d. was not an infringement of the fair wage clause. I can prove that that work occupied from 7 in the morning till 9 at night. If a Wages Board were in existence there is no employer of labour who could say that this was a fair price. I am working with an old contractor. I have been working on the War Office work for the last 15 years. I made War Office khakis last year, and it was utterly impossible for any good man working from 8 o'clock in the morning until 7 o'clock at night to earn more than £1 5s. a week.

2545. You are a thoroughly qualified tailor?—Yes, I am experienced. To show you that, I can produce my wages book with the wages that I had in 1903 and 1905 and 1906.

2546. Are you in employment now on the same work?—Yes, I am doing all kinds of work.

2547. What wages do you make now, roughly?

—If

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

—If we are on exceptionally good trimming work, which still is paid a little well, and if we have a large intermixture of Council work my earnings would run from 35s. to £2 a week—if I have a proportion of Council work, which I am doing at present.

2548. Do I understand you that in the same factory one rate would be paid for County Council work and a very much lower rate paid for similar work?—Yes. I have made electric tram overcoats for West Ham. They are absolutely similar and easier to make than tram overcoats for other Borough Councils, and the difference in payment is this: we receive altogether 6s. for a garment when we are working on the West Ham Corporation work but we only receive from half-a-crown to 3s. when we are working on the ordinary tram overcoats where the Municipal Council or Borough Council has not fixed their minimum wage.

2549. I do not know whether you know, but I should like to ask you if you do, whether the garment, when made, is supplied at a lower rate to those other Corporations than to the West Ham Corporation?—Well, I should surmise it is, but I do not know whether there is very much difference.

2550. You have no knowledge?—No.

2551. You have no idea?—No, but I should surmise it is.

2552. Your point would be, I suppose, that if there were an effective Wages Board the result would be that all the work would be paid for at rates somewhat similar to those paid by the best boroughs?—Yes, certainly it would be so. There is no borough paying a high price. Even the County Council price is only just considered a fair wage. They require good work to be done.

2553. If this wage had to be paid by everybody the contractor would be placed in no unfavourable position?—Exactly so, you see the difficulty is this, if I may explain further (I am dealing mostly with the War Office clothing). There were in last year, 1907, in the East End, within five minutes' walk of each other three contractors. The prices varied. Working with one contractor, who paid 1s. 5½d. from 7 o'clock in the morning till 9 at night, the men could earn something. Another contractor paid as high as 1s. 11d., and he found the sewings. On a garment the sewings found would amount to about 3½d. That made it about 2s. 2d. With regard to a Government contract there is supposed to be a current wage, but there is no current wage. There is no fixed minimum. Consequently, as we have pointed out over and over again, we are absolutely at the mercy of the contractor. Whatever he likes to pay is current.

2554. The Government, whilst nominally providing for the Trades Union rate of wage to be paid, does not issue any list of prices like the London County Council?—No, there is a contract form of the Post Office work—clause 15 (*handing the same to the Committee*).

2555. "The wages paid for all work performed under the contract shall be those generally accepted as current in the trade for competent workmen in the district where the work is carried out"?—Yes. That is where the difficulty is.

2556. But there is no list of wages, and therefore there is nothing to test this by?—No.

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Chairman—continued.

2557. This is the one that is now in force, is it?—Yes.

2558. This is dated 27th December, 1905?—Yes, they are all the same—all fair wage clauses.

2559. You are strongly in favour of a Wages Board?—Yes. The fact that there is a large or great reduction of wages in the case of the indoor hand is the result of the competition between the middleman and the indoor hand. The middleman takes out work from the factory at a lower price than is being paid to the indoor employees. The employees employed by the middleman have the privilege or advantage of working longer hours. It is said that they stay from 8 in the morning to 9 at night. A good many work a little longer when it comes to pressure when they are finishing up work. Therefore they do the work at a lower price than the employees inside. To give an illustration, I worked indoors for a firm. Certain police contract work was to be done. We were walking about idle. We asked, "How is it there is no work?" They said, "You can do it at threepence cheaper." We asked the reason, and they said, "The outside master can make it threepence cheaper." The Employer does not have to pay for Factory Staff and the machinery where it is going and general expenses and consequently it is better to give it out to him, as he can do it threepence cheaper, than to have it made indoors.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

2560. You told the Chairman that you cut off from this paper your own heading?—Yes.

2561. Were you in business for yourself at any time?—That is my brother-in-law's heading.

2562. Were you in business for yourself. Had you an establishment yourself?—No, never.

2563. In your opinion, the County Council Regulations, I take it, are for the advantage of the worker?—Yes.

2564. And you would recommend that the system adopted by the London County Council should be adopted generally, and that there should be a Wages Board?—Yes.

2565. Have you any suggestion to make to remedy the defect you spoke of in regard to what is generally called the fair wages clause for Government work?—There is only one remedy. There would be an advantage to the employee and an advantage to the fair contractor in making a fixed price for the wages of the people that are employed. That is the only remedy there is.

2566. That means to say a fixed payment for each garment?—Yes.

2567. Can you account for the fact that whilst you have a presumed safeguard in Government work that current wages are to be paid, yet within a short period the price of khaki jackets goes from 2s. 7½d. to 1s. 5½d. By what means can 1s. 5½d be regarded as the current wages within such a short time?—That is entirely left to an inspector. He goes round, but he very seldom speaks to the employees separately when the employer is not there. He goes to the offices and there are several excuses made: "This one has been out, and so and so, and so and so," and that is the whole thing.

2568. Would it not be remedied if the inspection

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Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

spection were more thorough or more complete? —No; there is no remedy at all. There are divers ways; those in the trade know well enough that that is so. It is utterly impossible to be up to the tricks of the employer.

2569. Do you mean to say that no inspector could be appointed who is intelligent enough?—I do not mean that; he is very intelligent, in fact. I can pay a very good compliment to the Inspector of the Post Office Department. He is a very, very intelligent man, and yet he is "doubled on." I have given him some good tips, as I could show you, but I have not them here.

2570. Could not your organisation approach the Inspector with some of the information that you have given us?—We have over and over again laid these facts before him. I was secretary of the Government Workers' Branch last year. A deputation approached the Postmaster-General with these facts, and proved them to be facts. I have shown them to the Inspector over and over again, but he makes the same cry that we make. He says that if he makes a fixed price for his work, what about the other work that is being done not at a fixed price? Consequently an employer will pay fair for that work, but the other work is not being paid fair. I will illustrate it like this: take the London County Council. The County Council lays down a specified price which is fair, say, for the employee for making a garment. Now the employer does not only make this garment; he does not employ men separately, solely and alone on this particular work, but he does work for other boroughs, and other kinds of work where no specified price is laid down. Consequently, as I can prove to you, a short time ago, where a specified price was paid for making, say 6s., the other work was paid for at a very, very reduced wage. He gives us a little work for which a fair wage is paid, and he gives us a large amount of work on which the sweating rate is paid; consequently the Council pays for having the sweated work done.

2571. Your suggestion is that the County Council, by means of paying good wages for their work, is encouraging low wages being paid by others?—No, they are not encouraging it; they cannot help themselves. They are trying to mend the evil.

2572. But, apparently, not succeeding?—That is not their fault; it is the fault of the other people. It is the Government and others who let the people sweat—not the Council; they try to do their best.

2573. Have you made any attempt to organise the women workers?—Yes, but, as I explained here over and over again, it is utterly impossible to tell any woman to stand up in the face of knowing that if she dare stand up and grumble at the price she will be victimised. I will not say much more.

2574. How long has the County Council's present tariff been in existence?—I worked on Council work in 1906—on fire brigade work—and the following year the fire brigade work was put on a scheduled list, as far as I can remember; therefore I received immediately a little higher price than I did the year previously; but the ordinary work, I believe, has been in force about

Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

12 or 14 years, say. I should not like to be certain.

2575. Has there been any alteration in the schedule during the 12 years?—No.

2576. It is identically the same as it was 12 years ago?—Yes.

2577. To sum up, you recommend that Government work should be given out under the same conditions as the County Council work?—Not the Government work alone. This is what I wish to specially lay down. All garments that are made in the clothing trade, as I can prove, from a braided frock coat to a bib apron, can be divided under the modern system, and a minimum wage fixed. If one garment is left out, or any particular is left out, then it is useless.

2578. You think there would be no difficulty?—There is no difficulty at all. I have just brought up what we made years ago—a garment like this. *This is a copy of a garment made last year. This is all by machine. This can be reckoned out and divided into each section of the trade, and a minimum fixed for that amount between employer and employee.*

2579. What is that?—It is a band tunic. The difficulty which I wish to impress upon you is that the employer says the same as we do. He says, "Supposing I wish to pay you a fair price for the garment, I am not protected from the other contractor, who is not so conscientious, and who does not pay the same as I do." As I prove to you here, the current rates in the East End district—Bethnal Green and Commercial Road, and so on—differed from 1s. 11d. to 1s. 5½d. for a similar drab jacket. That is the contention of the contractor.

2580. It has been suggested that manufacturers would not like to have their novelties shown to a Wages Board. I presume that that would not apply to the tailoring trade?—No.

2581. What does the part that is crossed out on the price list mean?—It is a separate section. As far as I understand, the numbers follow one another.

2582. Does it mean that the part crossed out did not apply to the works where it was shown?—It applies, but it is a different contract, I suppose. Each department has its own separate contracts.

2583. With regard to the Feltham Industrial School, it did not apply, did it?—If they had the contract it applied.

2584. But the part that is crossed out?—I could not say what that is for. I know there is a schedule list for the Feltham Industrial School. They are made by a friend of mine.

Mr. Arthur Henderson.

2585. You have told us that in the contract that expired in 1906 the prices were very much higher than in the contract that began in 1906?—Yes.

2586. I should like you to tell the Committee, if you can, anything about the change in the wages or the amount that the workpeople were able to earn on the new contract as compared with the old contract, taking the same workers and the same work?—Yes. Take another instance, with regard to War Office work. In 1903 and 1904—here is my book (*producing the same*)—

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[Continued.]

Mr. Arthur Henderson—continued.

same)—My wages amounted to £2 9s., £2 5s. and £3 a week on the average on common work. I got my 9s. a day when I was on day work for the same firm. In 1906 I came on to Government work and I earned £1 0s. 10d., simply and exclusively on Government work.

2587. The same work as you were doing in 1903 and 1904?—Yes.

2588. Did you work the same hours in each case?—Yes, from 8 o'clock to 7.

2589. Is your experience typical of the experience of most of the employees connected with those contracts in the different periods named?—Undoubtedly. They earn more or less money. The only difference is that with regard to the very expert there is always a rush to the firms where they have specified logs. That is issued with a contract, and we can make a bit of a living there.

2590. Do you think, from your experience, that there a large number of employers who would welcome some machinery for the reasonable employers to protect them against the cutting that goes on in the trade?—Yes, that is a positive fact, which I know from my own personal experience in discussing these matters with a contractor.

2591. If the Committee were to recommend the formation of a Wages Board such as you have indicated—so many employers and so many employees—do you see any difficulty in working a Board if it had to cover say the whole of the County of London?—No, there is no difficulty at all.

2592. You think there is no practical difficulty?—There is practically no difficulty. Take the whole County of London. The garments are made similar; rent and living are absolutely similar, so there is very little difference.

2593. Would you have the Board, if it covered the whole of the County of London, to deal with the articles made for the Government, for County and Borough Councils and for private sale?—For private sale also; every department of the tailoring trade.

2794. You think there is no difficulty?—Not the slightest.

2595. I suppose you realise that there would be a very large variety of articles if we had to touch the whole of the sale of the shops in London?—On the private department there would not be so much as there is in regard to the municipal and other uniform clothing, but here the Council has more uniform than all the others, and they practically cover that. There is very little difference. Take the Police Force. There is very little difference in making. There may be a little, but which can be easily adjusted under an amalgamation log, and as to private work it is very simple. It is most important that a minimum wage should be fixed. Mostly, in the private work, the machinists and the pressers receive piece-work wages.

Chairman.

2596. May we see that wages book of yours?—Certainly.

Mr. Hugh Law.

2597. You told us that in the same workshop you have work being done for the London County

Mr. Hugh Law—continued.

Council for a fair rate of wages, and similar work being done for other people at a very much lower rate of wages?—Yes.

2598. I could not quite catch what you said. Did I understand you to mean that the contractor was recouping himself for having to pay such high wages out of the other contract. How exactly does it work? I did not understand what you said?—He does not recoup himself, or he does to this extent, because he can get the employees to work where otherwise the worker might starve. We would rather starve without working.

2599. They would not work at all?—They would not work at all.

2600. You say that the prices paid by the London County Council are paid actually to the workers. Do you know that they are paid?—Yes.

2601. Does that apply to work done by home-workers?—There is no home-work on the Council work.

2602. None at all?—No.

2603. You also told us that your workers in the workshops were subject to pressure by the contractor who was over them, to work at a certain price, and if they did not feel able to take it they would be told: "Very well, I can get it done more cheaply outside"?—Yes.

2604. If the work can be done more cheaply outside, how is it that the work is not all given out?—The whole of it?

2605. Yes, if it can be done more cheaply outside?—If the contractor abolished his whole factory (I suppose that is the idea), he would not be a very large contractor, would he; and besides, there is Government and municipal work and other special work which has to be done directly on the premises, and certainly he wants to be known as a modern contractor who employs machinery and has sanitary conditions, and he has it done indoors.

2606. In the absence of any provisions such as those of the London County Council, requiring that work shall be done in a workshop, there would really be nothing to prevent an employer from sending away all his workpeople and giving the work out, and making a larger profit on the out work?—Perhaps he would if he could do it, but there are certain reasons why he cannot get the work as well done outside as inside.

2607. Not as well done?—No, nor the quantity either.

2608. Do you think that a greater profit is made on the work given out? Does he make a larger profit on it?—He saves certain things.

2609. He saves rent, rates, lighting, insurance, and a whole lot of things?—Yes.

2610. We also know on the other hand that the out-worker is rather less efficient, perhaps, and the work is not regulated; but taking those factors *pro* and *con*, that is, one side and the other, into consideration, do you think he makes a larger profit on a given class of goods on work that can be made outside the factory than on work done inside?—If he can get it done in or out, if it is preferable to have it made out and he thinks he can get it done as well, he would rather give it out, because it is done cheaper in every case,

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excepting that at periods of very, very high pressure he may pay even slightly higher if it is given out than otherwise.

2611. That being so, is it your experience that out-work is increasing or decreasing, or being maintained at the same level?—My experience tends to prove that out-work is increasing.

2612. In the tailoring trade?—Yes.

Chairman.

2613. Do you mean home work?—Home-work does also to a certain extent increase, though not so much on the contract work as in the private work. The majority of women who have husbands who do not earn sufficient to keep them have to go out to work to help. A woman may have one or two children, and during the time she is away she may have to pay a neighbour 1s. 6d. a head to look after the children, while she is at the factory. Owing to the continual decrease, the reduction of the wages indoors, it is just as good for her to stop at home altogether and take a less quantity of work. She will do less, but it will save the 3s. that she would have to pay somebody for looking after the children. She can fill in her time doing a little bit at any hour she likes. That sort of thing increases home-work.

Mr. Hugh Law.

2614. Home-work then is increasing?—Yes, there is no question about that.

Mr. Arthur Dewar.

2615. Have you a long apprenticeship as machinists?—We have not a long apprenticeship at all.

2616. Does the work need any special skill?—It all depends on the ability. There is skilled and unskilled.

2617. Can a man start straight away at it after a week or two's practice?—No, not after a week or two's practice.

2618. How long would he need?—At first he would be a second machinist, that is a machinist doing plain work, and then by continual practice he would come to be a first machiner.

2619. With regard to the higher-class work which you now do, how long would it take you to reach that from the beginning?—It depends on the ability of the man.

2620. Certainly, but approximately how long will the average man take—a year or a month or two?—About a year.

2621. Is that a class of work where a man can start in a year, if he is a fairly intelligent and smart fellow, and earn what you earn now?—I do not think he would exactly earn the present prices I am earning now.

2622. Not quite so good?—No.

2623. Probably you are specially skilled?—There are a good few of us who are special.

2624. You told us of a very large drop in the wages in the trade compared with three years ago. How do the wages compare with six years ago?—They are still lower.

2625. Were they higher even six years ago than they were three years ago?—I have not the figures with me, but the Post Office work

Mr. Arthur Dewar—continued.

certainly paid much more than the other Government work (I am not alluding to the war at all), and the municipal and the railway work certainly paid much higher than at present.

2626. But I am rather thinking of the amount you could earn per week. You told us what you could earn now, and what you could earn three years ago. Taking another three years before that, is there a steady drop?—There has been a very large decrease in the last few years.

2627. That is what I wanted to get at. When did that begin? You have told us what the wages were three years ago, and what they are now. I want to know what they were six years ago?—Six years ago. An average worker could earn 30s. or 35s. three years ago; he could earn 38s. or £2 six years ago.

2628. If you take it before that again, were the wages still higher or just about the same?—They were very, very slightly higher. There was not such keen competition as there is at present.

2629. May we take it generally that wages have been sinking for the last eight or ten years?—Very largely in the last five years now.

2630. I know, but may we take it that they have been decreasing for 10 years?—Yes.

2631. How do you account for that?—The only way in which I can account for it, is that it has been explained to me by managers and employers, when we have discussed it at deputations to employers, that there is continual competition.

2632. I understood you to say that before, and I quite see that, but why is there more competition now than there was six or eight years ago?—That I could not say. I suppose they found it paid.

2633. They found that it was a good paying department?—I expect so; I should say so.

2634. They found that this was a class of work where you could earn a first-class wage. You got from £2 to £3 a week?—Yes.

2635. And a great many people flocked in, and so reduced the price?—Mostly women. Many firms have preferred women to men.

2636. Did I understand you to say that the difference between a garment that is contracted for for the minimum wage and one where the minimum wage is not in the contract, is from 3s. to 6s. to the machinist?—No, between 3s. 6d. and 3s. on the garment.

2637. If you do not know, say so; but can you tell me whether the Corporation that stipulates for the minimum wage pays more for a garment than a Corporation that does not?—I cannot say positively, but I should think it is so.

2638. You do not know?—No, not positively.

2639. You have not made inquiry?—No, I could not.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

2640. I think you told us that you had made representations to the Postmaster-General?—Yes.

2641. I am not quite clear what result that had?—That on the new contract he would endeavour his utmost to improve matters.

2642. Have

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Mr. BUCKNER.

[Continued.]

Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

2642. Have they been improved up to the present?—The contract is not out till next year.

2643. Have you ever approached any of the other Government Departments?—As far as I know, the organisation—the Amalgamated Society of Tailors—have approached the War Office.

2644. No improvement has been introduced up to the present?—No.

Mr. Parkes.

2645. Clothing is made in different towns besides London, I suppose?—Yes.

2646. How would you fix the price? Could you fix one price that would meet all the towns in the country?—No.

2647. You could not?—No. By that I mean that a London man could not fix the price to be paid in the country town. The country town fixes its own price.

2648. Then, according to that, there would be competition between different towns for the orders?—It is so now to a very large extent. If a London contractor has contract work to offer, and it is refused, it is done in the country.

2649. That would be to the detriment of the London wage?—No. If there is a minimum in the country and a minimum in London, he would keep to London. Unless it was cheaper in the country, he would keep to London.

2650. He would get it done cheaper in the country than in London?—Yes, but if there was a minimum wage fixed for the country also, it would not be, I suppose, such a very low rate as to give him the privilege which he now has.

2651. But if you cannot fix the same rate of wages all over the country, you must have a lower price in some parts than others?—Yes.

2652. Would not the tendency be for the orders to flux from the place where the wages were higher to the place where they paid the lower wages?—I take it that the position existing now, where a contractor can have it done cheaper in the country than in London, and yet executes contracts in London, would still exist; and note different rates of Trade Unions.

2653. You say that home-work is increasing?—Yes.

2654. While it would be comparatively easy to fix the rate of wages in a factory, would you find it equally easy to fix the rate in the home?—Undoubtedly. The direct cause of the increase of home-workers, we know, is the bad pay in the factory.

2655. Does that mean that they get more in the home-work than in the factory?—They have the advantage of working longer hours, and the expenses which are incidental to being in the factory are taken off.

2656. But I want to know how you would enforce the rate of wages being paid in the home the same as you do in the factory?—It should be the same rate.

2657. But how would you enforce it?—By a fixed price.

2658. But how would you see that the fixed wages were paid?—If a certain minimum wage was fixed for a certain garment, and a Wages Board was in existence, and it was known to everybody—the outdoor worker is invariably in touch

Mr. Parkes—continued.

with the indoor worker—and the indoor worker would soon get to know whether the outdoor worker received that price for the garment or not.

2659. But suppose there was a middleman between the two, and he took the work at a certain price from the factory, and gave it out at the price he liked to the home-worker, how would you stop that?—If his employees had not the minimum wage, there would be the difficulty with regard to the minimum wage. The employees employed by the middleman would also have to have a minimum wage. It would have to be all round.

2660. You say that reduction of wages is brought about by competition?—Yes.

2661. Is there foreign competition?—Not in this work—not on the contract work.

2662. Not in Government work?—And not in municipal and uniform contract work.

2663. What about private garments. Is there foreign competition in that?—I could not say.

2664. What do you think is the great reason for reduction in price in the last few years?—I cannot give the reason exactly. The only thing is the large influx of woman labour.

2665. And foreign labour?—No. The foreigners are rather better than the English workers.

2666. Better?—Yes, the foreign labourer is usually a man, not a female, and he receives a better pay, and if he does not he will start on his own.

2667. Is it a fact that machinery used for the manufacture of garments in the last seven or eight years has been improved?—Yes.

2668. Has not that partly accounted for the reduction of prices?—The earnings would be the same.

2669. A man would receive a lower price, but the same money at the end of the week?—Yes.

2670. That reduction would be through the improvement of machinery, I take it?—If the wages were fair there could not be any reduction whether machinery were put in or not.

2671. That is not my question. The reason for the reduction is partly through the improvement of machinery. A man may earn as much money as he could before, and yet get a lower price for the garment?—He does not earn now as much as he did before.

2672. You do not answer my question. You say that machinery has been improved?—Yes.

2673. Therefore a man can make more garments in the time?—Yes.

2674. And that accounts partly for the reduction of price?—No, I do not say that.

2675. Then I do not know what it amounts to?—I do not say that.

Mr. Fell.

2676. Your experience has been almost entirely in the making of these uniforms?—Yes.

2677. It may be very easy to fix a price for the manufacture of uniforms which are identical, but does that give you any guide to a fixed price for ordinary work?—Yes. Uniforms and frock coats and dress coats and jackets are done indoors—the Government work with the private work. I worked on private work in the north for years.

2678. There is an enormous number of children's garments and so on?—They can be classified.

2679. Do

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Mr. BUCKNER.

[Continued.]

Mr. Fell—continued.

2679. Do you think so?—Yes. It is very simple.

2680. You have had large experience besides that which you have had with regard to uniforms?—Yes. I worked for Hart and Levy, in Commercial Street, ten years ago, and we did all private work, and we do a large amount of private work in the present factory.

2681. Your wages have not decreased anything like proportionately to the prices paid per garment, because you make a many more jackets now than you used to during a week?—We make different garments. Some may have decreased 25 per cent., some 50 per cent., and some 10 per cent. We make a varying amount in the week.

2682. The example you gave us of the khaki jacket was of a fall from 2s. 7½d. down to 1s. 5½d.?—Yes.

2683. Can you make a great many more jackets at 1s. 5½d. than at 2s. 7½d.?—No.

2684. Can you make no more?—No.

2685. Your wages in that case would drop to nearly half?—On a drab serge jacket my wages were £2 5s. or £2 on the average, and if I worked now on the drab serge jacket the same hours, I cannot earn more than a sovereign to 25s. a week.

2686. You said that Council work was distributed with other work. You said that if you get a fair proportion of Council work you earn 35s.?—Yes. We could not make a living at all unless some good class of work was given in between.

2687. A well-paid class of work?—A well-paid class of work.

2688. Suppose you had all Council work for instance, what could you earn?—About £2 a week or two guineas (that is about usual), working 54 hours a week. That is what we have to work to do that.

2689. You said 35s. a week when you have a fair proportion of this better work. Would it be only 5s. a week difference?—I am putting an average. It may vary. It may be more one week and less another, so I am taking an average.

2690. I notice on looking at your wages book that your wages were about 9s. a day in 1903?—Yes, I was on the Artillery tunics.

2691. That was in 1903. What would they be now, about?—Do you mean day-work?

2692. You frequently put down 9s. a day and

Mr. Fell—continued.

half-a-day 4s. 6d. What would your wages be now for that work?—I would not work, if I could get it, under 7s. a day. I would not get 9s. a day doing the ordinary low class of work, but for the exceptionally good class of work I would get 6s., 7s. or 8s. a day.

2693. The reduction is from 9s. to 7s., you think?—Lower than that.

2694. You were getting 9s. a day three years ago, and you are getting 7s. now?—I possibly could get that, but the employers prefer to pay piece-work now. That is the usual system. It is universal.

2695. I wanted to know what the reduction of the wages was, whether the payment was by piece-work or ordinary wages?—You could not take me or some of my fellow-workers as an example.

2696. No, I am only taking you as a very skilled hand, and I want to get the proportion of reduction?—I can get 6s. a day anyhow.

2697. You think that the reduction is largely owing to the influx of women into the business?—Yes.

Mr. Trevelyan.

2698. Can you tell me about how many firms are employed in this Government work?—In London?

2699. Yes?—Of very large ones I should say, there are about 10 or 11 employing thousands of hands.

2700. As far as you know, are the same sorts of prices paid by all of them?—That is where the difficulty is. One pays a higher and one pays lower.

2701. There is no current rate?—There is not; that is the whole difficulty.

2702. Do you know at all how the County Council made up that log of prices?—I believe they have an expert who is an old working tailor, and he specified a price that ought to be paid.

2703. But you do not know how they arranged it—whether they met the employers and the men?—That I could not say.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Wednesday, 1st April, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Bridgeman.
Sir William Bull.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Hugh Law.

Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.

MR. TREVELYAN IN THE CHAIR.

Miss VYNNE called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

2704. You have made a great many investigations into trades where home-work is carried on?—Yes.

2705. All over the country?—Yes.

2706. Would you tell us whether it is on behalf of any organisation that you appear here?—It is on behalf of the National Home Workers' League.

2707. What are the main objects of the League?—To protect the home-workers from legislation which they consider decreases the amount of work given out, and so lowers prices.

2708. What is your view of sweating, and the extent to which it exists?—It exists, I find, wherever local conditions favour it. I find that it has little to do with the trade. It is not because the people are working at home, but because the local conditions favour sweating. For instance, I find sweating in the tailoring trade, as it is called now, in Leeds and in Glasgow, but not in Bristol, where the local conditions differ, and not in the glove-making trade, where the local conditions differ.

2709. What are the conditions under which you think it is most prevalent; could you give us any indication?—Wherever I have found high rents and high rates and a large, crowded factory town, especially if there are a great number of aliens, I have found very low rates of pay. The women give us the reason of that, that where the rates and rents are exceptionally high, many women who would not otherwise work, work to help their husbands, and that creates a great demand for home-work. The women do not pay the rates directly, but the high rates and rents raise the price of food. When you go to Bristol, where the house rents for good houses are exceptionally low, you find the women well paid; the married woman who can get

Chairman—continued.

six-roomed house for 6s. or 6s. 6d. a week, with bathroom and garden, has enough to do to look after her house, and also she lives in sufficient comfort, with that low rent and with the very low price of food or comparatively low price of food, to do without home-work.

2710. Have you any special information to give us with regard to the hosiery and glove trade?—The glove trade round Yeovil in all the districts is well paid and prosperous, according to the women's account. The figures might not seem to show that to anyone who did not understand, but a small sum in Yeovil means much more than a larger sum in a big factory town. I have seen the wage books of some manufacturers. Some women earn 22s. a week. On account of the low house rent and because they live in the country and have a garden where they grow their own vegetables and make their own cyder which they drink, they can live in comparative comfort. In many places, where you find only a small wage set down, it is because the woman does not work full time; because each different kind of work is paid at the same rate. A woman who has leisure to work the full day will earn a high sum. A woman who only does a little in the evening will earn a small sum. That would reduce the average in figures, but it would not reduce the average in comfort.

2711. In the case of Yeovil, you think there is not what is generally understood as sweating?—According to the women there is no sweating. Some firms pay a little more than others, but there is a general feeling of contentment in Yeovil, and the proof of that is that they are signing petitions. By every post we are receiving signatures against further interference or against any interference. In Leicester, where they make woollen gloves, I found the pay very low, because the

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the work is so extremely easy that the most unskilled person can do it. Anyone without intelligence, without physical vigour, even invalids in bed can do it. Consequently it is very, very badly paid. But even then I find that the women would be very reluctant to give it up.

2712. How do you mean, would be reluctant to give it up. Would they be reluctant to get higher wages paid?—Nobody would be reluctant to get higher wages, but they none of them believe that this legislation would give them higher wages.

2713. What do they think would be the effect of it?—May I finish first about the badly-paid gloves? I have seen a statement that many people are making gloves and receiving parish relief. That at first gives the impression that as they could not live without parish relief, therefore this work is being paid for by the parish. The case is exactly the opposite. The women are old, and not capable of vigorous or skilled work. They get a little outdoor relief, and they make up the rest by making gloves. I have seen old and feeble people doing that. I have seen an old couple, both in bed with rheumatism, who had a little parish relief, but who felt independent because they earned the rest by glove-making. They were doing the easiest thing in the world simply taking a crochet needle and drawing thread through a loop in the ruds of woollen gloves. If that work was taken away from them, they would go to the parish altogether.

2714. In your experience, are there many home-workers who do this work simply in order to get pocket-money, and not from necessity?—Scarcely any. The vast majority are people who must either earn or want bread, and who would not be received in a factory because of age or ill health, or could not go because they could not leave their homes. I have met in the course of my investigations two or three exceptional cases. Might I give those?

2715. Yes?—I met one woman who had no family, but had a nice little house, which she kept very clean; she was burnishing silver tea-pots. Her point of view was, "It does not take me long to clean my house and clean myself and put my dinner on; and when I have done that, why should not I sit down at my fancy-work like a lady?" Then there is another case: A woman said that her husband was earning good money and giving her a proper amount, but she said, "My mother lives with us, and I am not going to have my mother a burden on my husband." Then a third instance was a woman whose husband had also received good pay, but, she said, he had been out of work for 13 weeks in the winter, and she would like to have a little home-work to keep her name on the books, so as to provide against emergencies. But it is only in those few exceptional cases that women work for any other reason than necessity.

2716. It is your experience that the homes in districts where home-work is largely prevalent are very dirty?—No.

2717. And require looking after by the sanitary authorities?—No. From one end of England to the other I have found the home-workers' houses much cleaner than the average. I said some time since, that when I could not find the address, I

Chairman—continued.

looked in a dirty street for a house with clean windows and blinds, and there was always a home-worker there. This was curiously confirmed when I asked three politemen which was the worst slum in Bristol. I went there and I only found one home-worker, and I found her in a clean house. The claim of the home-workers that they are the cleanest, I have found supported by every sanitary authority in every town that I have visited. For instance, some years ago an investigation was made into file-cutting, and it was made by people who believed file-cutting to be a dirty and dangerous trade and wished to stop it. They investigated (I will read the figures if you do not mind, because I cannot remember them) 187 houses, and found only four dirty. In Glasgow the sanitary authorities visited 2,040 houses, and found only 25 insanitary.

2718. Where did you get those figures?—From the report of the Glasgow Chief Sanitary Inspector.

2719. In what year, do you remember?—That would be three years ago, just before I gave up the work.

2720. In 1904?—Yes. The latest figures are in 1907. In Bristol 1,376 homes were visited and only 40 found insanitary; and those were insanitary through the fault of the landlord, not of the worker. They are now put right. I have that in a letter from the Chief Sanitary Inspector. The figures differ a little in the paper I sent in, because the sanitary official quoted from memory. The correct figures are 1,376 and 40 insanitary.

2721. In your experience you have found, I think, that there are a great many women who prefer home-work to factory work?—All the home-workers. I have not met any home-workers who would rather be in a factory.

2722. What reasons do they find they give?—I will give first, because I think it is more important, a reason not set down because I hoped to bring that witness here. One of them said to a candidate for Parliament: "If I go to the factory I must buy milk for my child. If I stay at home I can give it the breast, as I ought," and I think that the married women here to-day will confirm that.

2723. May I ask you this, on that. I think you mention, in your *précis*, that the Medical Officer of Health at Yeovil holds that view?—Yes, he holds that view. He thinks that the exceptionally low infant death-rate at Yeovil is on account of the breast-feeding of children, and this is because the mothers do not go to the factory. You see at Yeovil the centre factory is only a small town, with plenty of air and light in it; but the greater part of the work is sent out in carts to little country villages.

2724. Do you happen to know what the infantile death-rate in Yeovil is?—I can put in Dr. Page's Report, if I may.

2725. You have marked extracts. It is not worth putting in. You might read out a few lines?—"This is a most important factor in vital statistics, recording the number of deaths of infants under one year of age during the year to 1,000 registered births. The number has been 28, and its ratio to 1,000 births gives the infantile mortality rate of only 89.74, which is as much as 12.0 below the last decennial (1897—1906) rate; and,

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and, further, is the lowest of seven out of the 10 years. The rate for England and Wales was 118." I should add that even that is lowered by the fact that at Yeovil there is a home for the birth of illegitimate children. Strangers come there, and a number of the infant deaths that have to be counted in at Yeovil include deaths of strangers.

2726. Does he give the statistics of mortality of other towns in the neighbourhood?—No. He says that the rate for England and Wales was 118.

2727. The rate there is what?—89-74.

2728. Would you like to give us any other reasons why women prefer home-work?—They all of them say that 9s. earned at home is better than 14s. earned in a factory. They say that what you earn in a factory you earn to give away. What you earn at home you earn for yourself. They explain that if they go to the factory they must pay someone to look after the children. They must pay for their washing to be done, and they must buy cooked tinned meats, which are expensive. If they stay at home they can do their own house-work and their own shopping; and they lay special stress on better meals for their children, and the fact that they can get their children off comfortably to school and know that they do go to school, and can receive them properly when they come in, and see if they are wet or dry. Then they also say that you waste time if you go to the factory. If there is no work, you sit with your hands in your lap doing nothing (this is if you are on piece-work); but if you are at home you do not waste that time. You can be cleaning down your house, or making and mending the children's clothes. Sewing, I believe, is rather dying out amongst women, but I had a big meeting of London home-workers last night, and they all could sew. I asked if they could make their children's clothes; they answered: "There is a great deal more mending than making with us, but we can do that." They were a much wittier and brighter set than I had expected. A great many elderly women who have borne children object to enforced early rising; if they do not feel very bright, if the baby has been crying in the night, for instance. They say that with home-work they can "hang on an hour longer in bed," and then they feel all right. If they go to the factory they must get up at certain times and they must rush for the train. And I am sorry to say that I have found among these home-workers several men helpless through heart trouble, which the wives attribute to anxiety about rushing for a train in the morning. They gave this as justifying their desire to avoid it themselves.

2729. These objections which you have been bringing forward are obviously against the suppression of home-work; but you do not mention any objection on the part of the women to legislation to improve their conditions whilst home-work continues. Would you say what you think their objections are to a Minimum Wages Board?—Yes. Might I first mention the Yeovil young people, because I have laid stress on the fact that it is chiefly the older married women in most towns; but in Somersetshire and Bristol the young girls prefer a country life at home. Their mothers, if they know anything of factory towns, strongly object to their going to a factory

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Chairman—continued.

town, and the girls do not want to go; they would rather work at home. The chief objection to all this legislation is, that as a practical fact they always find that any legislation, any agitation, any worrying about home-work makes the masters stop giving it out. A Sweated Industries' Exhibition in a town instantly means that two or three manufacturers stop giving out work, and the people suffer—that is the first effect.

2730. The people suffer because they do not like going to factories?—They are too old to go to factories, or not strong enough. Those are the people who suffer first. Then they have a very great objection to being put under inspection that other people do not have to submit to. You see, they know their own record for cleanliness. They know they are a less danger to the public than anyone else, and they resent, as we all should, being treated as though they were a greater danger to the public. I think I have mentioned that the Medical Officer of Health at Yeovil confirms that. There was a serious epidemic of measles, and he told me he found less trouble with home-workers than with the factory people. There is the sewing-machine—you cannot disguise it—and he could easily find home-work and stop it. In the case of factory work, he found one house infecting five factories, but he did not find it until the mischief was done, because you cannot trace a factory worker so easily. They very much resent any further inspection at all, but I should like to make a serious point of this—I find everywhere the friendliest feeling between them and the Sanitary Inspector. The Sanitary Inspector's visit is not resented by anybody. In some cases he is welcomed because he has done good and has kept the landlord up to the mark. But I find a very strong feeling against any visit from the Factory Inspector, where the Factory Inspectors have been visiting home-workers. Where they have paid no attention to home-work, the home-workers know nothing about it, of course.

2731. Would you like to make any suggestions supposing any Bill were promoted?—Yes. The Bill that I have found the women disliked least was the Bill promoted by the Scottish Council on Women's Trades, which would give power to the sanitary authorities; but even if they had that Bill, it creates a power which should never be given to one small official. The three Bills, I think, are the same. The other Bills, John Burns's Bill and the other, would give power to the Factory Inspector. The Scottish Council of Women's Trades would give it to the Sanitary Inspector. In each case this man would come into a home, and act on his own opinion. The words of the Bill are that "if it appear to him" that the house is not right, he will refuse the certificate. They would have that altered to a question of fact. I have known one case—this really sounds like a joke, but it is absolute fact—in which an Inspector came into a woman's house and told her that soot was dangerously infectious, and she would be fined if she did not have her room, which was papered, whitewashed, and her ceiling white washed. He was outside his rights, because according to the decision of Mr. Chester Jones, she was a home-worker, and he was treating her as a factory, because she earned her entire income herself.

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herself. According to Mr. Chester Jones's decision she was a home-worker, because she employed no one. Because of that instance—because these things are possible—the home-workers think that it should be made a matter of fact whether the house is or is not insanitary, and also they think that there should be some appeal. Mr. J. R. MacDonald's Bill gives an appeal from the Inspector, who comes to the Inspector who sends him. But they scarcely think that sufficient. They think that there should be an appeal to an independent authority, and I may add that all the sanitary officials agree with that. I have not found one sanitary authority that wishes for any such power in anyone's home.

2732. Is there any objection taken to a penalty?—There is objection taken to the time clause. There must be no limit as to time. A woman knows that whatever hour is set down as the hour in which she does not work, the day would come when she had perhaps three minutes' work to do, and I am sure she would do it. If bad luck sent the Inspector round then, she would lose her licence. But the strongest objection was to the £10 penalty on the employer; because, as I said just now, every penalty—everything that harasses the employers—makes the impatient ones stop giving out home-work. In Yeovil and Bristol, where manufacturers depend very largely on home-work, they would have to face the penalty; but in many places the home-work that is given out is given out from good nature to the old hands, who are no longer fit for the factory. I think we all know that a good many men will be good-natured when it does not cost them anything, but when it comes to a question of risking a £10 fine and a day in Court and counsel's fees, then they will not risk it. The home-workers are quite sure that the result of that £10 fine on the employer would be largely to decrease home-work. At every meeting of home-workers that I held they have unanimously voted that a small penalty on any woman who obtained home-work would do very much less harm.

2733. Is there anything else you want to put before us?—I should like to point out that the women themselves feel, and I, as their representative, feel, that they have a right to resent the suggestion of protecting the public from them as such protection is not needed. They have seen the statements made by people favouring these Bills, that they will stop home-work. It has been admitted again and again that the effect of these Bills will be to drive work into the factories; and most people advocating these Bills have spoken in public again and again of their desire for the abolition of home-work. There is one thing about sweating I should like to point out. I think I have said that it is the result of conditions; and in the Sweated Trades Industries Exhibition at Bristol, which I went to see, except in the case of Honiton lace, there was not a single exhibit of skilled work. They were exhibiting all the cheapest, worst and most ill-paid work, that no woman would ever accept, except as a last resource; and such an exhibition gives an unfair impression of home-work. Then, I noticed that one witness said it was impossible to organise

Chairman—continued.

home-workers, "because they were so depressed and miserable; they could not read, or think." I wish very much that people who think that, had been at the London Meeting last night. They all think. They all can speak up for themselves, and they, nearly all of them, read the newspapers—they told me which newspapers they read.

2734. What part of London did they come from?—Shoreditch. You will find the exact districts from Miss Lawson, or from the workers that we have here.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

2735. Are you acquainted with the evidence that Miss Squire gave in connection with glove-making in Yeovil?—No, I am not acquainted with her evidence with regard to Yeovil.

2736. Do you agree with this statement. Speaking here about Yeovil and glove-making, it was stated to me by most of the women that their husbands' wages were quite insufficient to keep the family, and that, therefore, they were obliged to supplement them, and in nearly every house glove-making is carried on?—Yes. The husbands are mostly agricultural labourers; and agricultural labourers, you know, are paid badly all over England. That is why the Yeovil women do the glove-making to supplement their husbands' wages; so the agricultural labourers are better off there than elsewhere. But if you took away that glove-making, you would still have the agricultural labourer paid in Yeovil as he is paid elsewhere. He is not paid any less than he is paid in other districts, I think you will find.

2737. But in other districts the families do not make gloves?—No, but the men do not get a penny less because the women earn a little.

2738. Do you suggest that all over England agricultural labourers are not able to support their families?—I have not the figures; I have only read the newspapers; but I gather that agricultural labourers are so ill-paid that there is an extremely great shortage all over the country.

2739. That is not quite an answer to the question. I ask you: are you of opinion that agricultural labourers throughout England are not able to earn sufficient to support their families?—They are not able to earn sufficient to keep their families in the same comfort as they get in Yeovil, where the women can help. I suppose they could barely live in Yeovil without the glove making, as they barely live in other districts.

2740. Do you find many cases in which the workers are receiving out-door relief in Yeovil?—No.

2741. You find that the glove-making really takes the place of what might be out-door relief in other districts?—No, certainly not. I never saw people able to afford white serge skirts and white silk blouses on out-door relief yet. You find prosperity in Yeovil. I do not mean what would be prosperity with other classes; I do not mean motor-cars and that kind of thing; but you find an amount of comfort and contentment and happiness in the homes that you do not find in other districts.

2742. You

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[Continued.]

Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

2742. You ascribe that to the earnings of those making gloves?—Yes.

2743. You referred to a meeting in Shoreditch?—Yes.

2744. A witness told us that wages in the East End of London were higher than in the North and South, and that a lower and worse-paid class of work was to be found in the North and South of London than in the East. Do you agree with that?—My meeting last night was my only experience in London. You will hear, however, about London from Miss Lawson.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

2745. When was the Home Workers' League founded, of which you have spoken?—It was founded, I think, some six or seven years ago. The home-workers in the file-cutting trade were threatened with an order to stop work in the rooms where eating or sleeping went on. From the nature of file-cutting, you must work on the ground floor, because you have a little anvil let into the floor. The houses that they live in at Sheffield, are generally built four in a block—three-roomed houses: the house place, chamber and garret. The work was bound to be done in the house-place. The workers sleep in the chamber, and the children in the garret—

2746. We do not want too much detail about the particular case. I wanted to know when the League was founded; you say six years ago?—Yes, about that; at the request of these women.

2747. Of whom does the League consist at the present time, first, as regards its officials, and, secondly, as regards its members?—There are now about 3,000 members, I should say; but when saying there are 3,000 members, I must state that our funds are very limited, and 3,000 members mean, practically, the 3,000 women we have been able to afford to interview. Our League represents 99 per cent. of the home-workers that we have had money enough to visit.

2748. Do they live all over the country?—All over the country. When it was started, I was the Honorary Secretary, and there are Local Secretaries in each town.

2749. Now, I want to be quite clear as to what number of places, approximately, you have seen in England. You have told us chiefly about Yeovil, but I want to know on what basis your comparatively optimistic view of the life and conditions of the home-workers rests. Is your own personal experience very wide, or is it confined to a small number of places?—Perhaps you will count them, if I go through them: Leeds, Glasgow, Dundee, Sheffield, Bradford, Paisley, Greenock, Leicester, Bristol, Winterbourn, Yeovil, Nottingham, Buckingham and Northampton—

2750. I think that is enough?—Nearly all centres. I went to the Home Office, and they wrote out a list of the centres for me, and I went to them all

2751. In each of those towns did you visit a very considerable number of home-workers?—A very considerable number.

2752. Did you get out their addresses from the out workers' lists?—Occasionally from the out-workers' lists, occasionally from the manufac-

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Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

turers, and some from the women themselves. When you first call on a woman, she thinks you are a new kind of Inspector, and receives you with dignified hatred. When she finds what you are, she passes you on to another, and it spreads like wild-fire.

2753. Is it your opinion that the condition of the home-workers that you have seen, taking all these towns together, on the whole is nothing like so bad as the public has been led to imagine?—Nothing like so bad.

2754. Either because of the rate of pay or the sanitary conditions?—The rate of pay is a question of figures—

2755. But I want your general impression as to whether these people are very badly paid. The general impression is quite wrong.

2756. But your general impression I want. Do you think the home-workers that you have seen in all these towns are very badly paid, or very well paid. You have only spoken about Yeovil; You have given us full particulars about Yeovil, and you have said that there the life of the people and the general conditions are very good. I want to know whether what you say about Yeovil applies to some extent to the workers in the other towns you have visited?—No, only to Bristol. In Bristol I found conditions very good, and I found the skilled workers on the same level, even in the other towns.

Mr. Bridgeman.

2757. You said that all the exhibits at the Sweated Industries Exhibition were practically confined to the very lowest and worst classes of work?—Yes.

2758. Your evidence to-day has not dealt with that class of work at all?—Except with regard to the gloving in Leicester.

2759. Could you give us any reasons why you think a Wages Board would be objectionable—if you do think it—in those very lowest and worst classes of work?—For the reason that one of the advocates of the Bill has admitted in this Committee that it would largely stop the out-work. Those who are promoting the Bill, who have studied the subject, say themselves that it would largely stop out work. And the next thing is that any harassment whatever of the employer makes him stop the work of the oldest and poorest. The skilled workers are worth taking a little trouble for, and the employers would be more likely to keep them, and drop the very oldest and poorest, who need it most.

2760. In your opinion there is no kind of home-work that ought to be stopped?—I think that no kind of work ought to be stopped until you have given a substitute. In the same way, if I found a man eating the worst food I would not take it from him unless I was going to give him something better.

Mr. Parkes.

2761. I suppose the number of people, the 3,000, is the whole of the number whose opinions you have been able to get on this question of home-work?—Yes, that is the whole number.

2762. What class of home-workers are they?—All classes—the most skilled and the most prosperous, and the oldest and poorest. A woman

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with only one capable hand, for instance, who got a little parish relief. With her right hand she could just make enough in the gloving to keep out of the workhouse.

2763. Is the work to which you refer among the sweated industries represented by the exhibits you have referred to?—Yes. One was doing the same kind of work I saw in the Sweated Industries Exhibition in London.

2764. Would many of the 3,000 represent the lowest kind of work?—No. I think that the proportion would be about the same as the proportion of the people doing the lowest kind of work. I think it would be bound to be the same proportion, as we do not select women to visit, but take them as they come.

2765. What is the general opinion amongst the home-workers, both those who are in the good trades and those who are in the worst trades?—Unanimously against legislative interference with their work.

2766. Of any kind?—Of any kind. I have kept the suffrage out of it as much as I could, because I was not on that tack, but when it came to discussing the questions before you, they roused a desire to have a vote in a good many of them so that they could get a hearing, I explained that I hoped they would get a hearing here.

2767. Have you talked over with them the question of a Wages Board?—Yes.

2768. What do they think about that?—That it would stop the work for the unskilled. I presume they would take a medium worker as the standard. The worker who could not earn up to that standard would get no work. The employer could not be troubled with her. That is their impression. It is certain that that would be the result.

2769. It would crush out the learner and the old?—Not the learner. She has a chance in the factory. It would crush out the old and the partially disabled.

2770. Have you explained to them how this Wages Board would work? Do they think they know how it would work?—Mostly they were ready with their opinion before I said anything. They know by experience. Every fresh discussion lessens home-work.

2771. Generally, then, they are against legislation altogether?—They are against legislation altogether in connection with their work.

2772. Do you yourself think there is any remedy required in any case?—Most drastic remedies, which these things would simply delay.

2773. What remedy would you prefer in dealing with home-workers?—That is a very large question. Have you time enough to go into that?

2774. At any rate, you are against Wages Boards?—I am against Wages Boards.

Mr. Parkes—continued.

2775. And registration?—And against registration very strongly; but time is very limited, and others will come after me who are perhaps more important. But if, at another time, I might tell you the things that I have learned from the women that would be likely to help them I should be most grateful.

Chairman.

2776. You might give, shortly, an idea?—It would not seem to apply at all here, but the real evil is the high rents and high rates that drive women into the field who would not otherwise be working.

Mr. Parkes.

2777. But how are you going to cure that?—Firstly, by direct rating. That is why I say it scarcely applies to this Committee, but if I could get any Member of Parliament to listen to me I should be grateful.

Chairman.

2778. It would be going rather far?—Yes, it is too far afield for this Committee, I know, but I want to answer the question. I think there are remedies, and far stronger remedies than any of these that have been suggested, and they are very simple and would really not create party feeling. I have learned this chiefly from the experience of people who suffer.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

2779. With regard to the gloving industry, where you consider the workers in such a good condition, is it not a fact that the price of gloves, especially ladies' gloves, has risen very much recently?—Really, I ought to be ashamed of not being able to answer a question on feminine dress, but I do not know.

2780. Do not you know that the price of gloves generally has risen enormously?—I must be a most careless person about my own shopping, because I have not an idea of it, but I can tell you what is more to the purpose, I find the people in exactly the same state of prosperity now that they were in two or three years ago. I do not find much change there. The only changes I find are changes for the worse in the towns where there has been agitation against the home-work.

Chairman.

2781. Thank you very much

(The Witness withdrew.)

MISS ELIZA COOPER, MRS. BROPHY, MRS. SOMERSET, MISS ROSE BAMFORD, MRS. MITCHELL, MRS. KING and Mrs. COLE called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

2782. (To Miss Cooper.) May I ask you a few questions? I think you live in London, do you not?—Yes. I live at Chiswick.

Chairman—continued.

2783. Would you kindly tell us what the work is that you do at home?—I am working at ladies' underlinen—night attire.

2784. Can

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2784. Can you tell us what wages you earn?—I and a cousin live together and we combine our money, and by so doing we can keep our home. I have been in my house 22 years. We have been always comfortable together and we have earned from about 34s. to £2 a week.

2785. What is the rent of your house?—£30 a year.

2786. The 34s. or £2 that you earn is for the work that you do together?—Yes, that is for the work we do together. We combine our money and so we are able to live all right like that.

2787. I suppose that your work is skilled work?—Yes, we take the best of it. It is woollen work mostly. We have it sent to us.

2788. You would not consider that you were an average worker, would you. I suppose that you are much better than the ordinary home-worker?—We take the best of it, so I consider that we are some of the best.

2789. Do you know that there are proposals being made to us to pass laws to settle the lowest wages at which women may work at home?—I have heard it, but I think it would be rather unjust.

2790. Are you afraid of it affecting yourselves at all?—No, I do not think it would affect us at all.

2791. You think you would still get the work?—I think we should still have the work and go on much the same as we do now.

2792. I daresay some other members will like to ask you questions later?—Thank you. I will answer to the best of my ability.

2793. (To Mrs. Brophy.) You come from Glasgow do you not?—Yes.

2794. Would you tell us what the work is that you do?—Paper bag making.

2795. How much can you earn a week at that?—12s. a week.

2796. Do you get that paid regularly?—Yes, that is paid regularly.

2797. Have you been working for some years?—Yes. I have been working for some years in the house; since I was married almost.

2798. Is your husband in work?—Yes, he is in work, but his wages are not sufficient to keep the children as I would like them to be kept, and I work to keep them comfortably and as I would like them to be kept.

2799. You would find it difficult, I suppose, to go into a factory?—Yes, I would, with a baby that I am feeding at my breast.

2800. Do you see any objection to having the prices fixed by law?—Yes.

2801. Would you be afraid of that affecting you at all?—Yes, it would affect me because there are other girls who cannot make half of the bags that I would make in the time.

2802. How are you paid for the bags?—By the thousand—5½d. per thousand. Some of the other sizes are 6½d. per thousand.

2803. How do you think it would affect you supposing the prices of those bags were settled by law?—You see we are piece-workers, and then if I made 10s. the others could only make 5s.

2804. The less skilled ones?—The less skilled ones.

2805. But now they make much less than you? I suppose?—Yes, they make less than me—some

Chairman—continued.

of them—because they have not the knack of doing it. It is just how you learn it. Some girls do not want to be skilled workers when they have something else behind them to keep them from being worried about clothing and so forth, and they just get into that kind of way that they do not care what they earn because they have an income in some other way. But it is not so with me, because I have always to look after myself.

2806. (To Mrs. Somerset.) I think you come from Sheffield?—Yes.

2807. Is your husband alive?—No, I am a widow. I have been a widow 12 years.

2808. You depend upon the home-work?—Yes, I do.

2809. Is file-cutting the work that you do?—Yes, that is my trade.

2810. Is that, in your opinion, a healthy trade?—I was a poor delicate girl when I began; I was 16 years of age, and I was not able to go out to service or anything. I was taken very bad and nearly got to death, so I learned what I could do in the house, and I have worked 36 years at cutting files. I supported my husband six years before he died. He was having strokes and he was paralysed the last six years. He had softening of the brain for two years before he died. I kept him at home till three months before he died, and then they took him away. I supported him, myself and my two children. My youngest child was not expected to live when she was born. She is now going on for 14 years of age, and if I had not looked after her myself I do not think she would have been alive. She has been delicate all her life, and I could not have done it, gentlemen, if I had not done it at home.

2811. Can you tell us how you are paid in your trade?—We have so much a dozen. It depends on the size of the work and the quality of the work.

2812. Have the prices paid to you for the work altered much in recent years?—No. I have the same price now that I had when I first began. I have the full statement price.

2813. How many years do you say you have been working?—Thirty-six years.

2814. Putting it generally, there has been no alteration in price throughout the trade?—Some people are a little inferior. I have the best work. The inferior ones, if they earn a shilling, have 3d. or 4d. taken off from their shilling by the gentlemen that employ them. I get my full money.

2815. How much do you get a dozen?—It depends on the size of the files. Some are little and some are big. I suppose it averages about 4d. or 5d. an hour.

2816. How much do you make a week?—On an average I get up towards 10s. a week. Sometimes I get more. It depends on whether I have the work or not.

2817. Has the work been pretty regular for some time?—Yes. It has been very irregular since there have been so many machines put down to cut files. It has taken a lot of the handwork away.

2818. But the price has not fallen much?—No, there is no difference.

2819. But

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2819. But there is less work?—I get my price just the same as I always have.

2820. I suppose the women who are working at the less skilled work get less wages?—Yes, they get less wages than I do.

2821. You get about 10s. a week?—Yes, I get that.

2822. What objections do you see to trying to fix the lowest price that can be paid for work of that kind?—I do not think that anyone that puts inferior work into it should have the same price as me, that puts the best work.

2823. But do you think that there should not be a less price?—They should have the same price.

2824. But it would not be the same price for all, of course?—No.

2825. I suppose that some women do not earn much more than 6s. a week?—Yes, there are plenty that do not earn more than that.

2826. Would you have any objection to the rates being fixed at such a point that they would get rather more than 6s. a week?—I say that I think it is right that every woman should have what she earns. If she earns a little, she should have a little. If she earns a lot, she should receive it.

2827. (To Miss *Bamford*.) You live in Leicester?—Yes.

2828. What trade do you work at?—I do the stay-work now. I have been doing the gloves.

2829. For how long have you been doing that stay-work?—For about two or three months.

2830. You have not a very large experience of that particular work?—No, not the experience of the stay-work that I have of the gloves.

2831. Were you able to earn enough for yourself at the glove work?—Yes.

2832. Besides the wages that you earn at that, have you any relations that you live with or anybody that helps you?—My father is with me.

2833. You live with your father?—Yes. He is 80 years of age.

2834. Is he earning anything now?—No, he is not earning anything now.

2835. How does he live?—We have a little bit of parish relief.

2836. Besides your wages?—Yes.

2837. Could you tell us how much a week you have been earning recently?—I have made about 5s.

2838. You can get about 5s. at the glove work. Can you get as much at the stay-work?—At stay-work I can get just about the same.

2839. Besides that you have a little assistance which enables you to live?—Yes.

2840. You get the help that you have spoken of?—Yes.

2841. You could not go into a factory, and you do not see any other way of working?—I like doing my work at home. I enjoy better health at home. When I was in the factory I used to have to have weeks at home. I cannot stand being closed up in the factory. I have enjoyed a lot better health since I have been at home, and I have been home now 15 years.

2842. When you were in the factory, were you working at the same sort of work that you were

Chairman—continued.

working at outside?—Oh no, I did shirts and pants when I was in the factory.

2843. What did you earn a week then—do you remember—rather more, I suppose?—We got different money. I was rather quick at it, so some weeks I got close on 17s.

2844. So that you would have preferred, I suppose, going on in the factory if you had been strong enough?—I should have preferred to go on in the factory if I had been strong enough.

2845. But your health broke down under it?—Yes.

2846. Thank you very much. (To Mrs. *Mitchell*.) You come from Leeds, I think?—Yes.

2847. Is your husband alive now?—Yes, he is nearly blind. That makes me have to work.

2848. Does he earn anything now?—Yes, he is earning 16s. 8d. a week.

2849. You work in order to increase the family earnings?—Yes, the income.

2850. What do you work at?—Tailoring—finishing.

2851. Do you work alone or do you have any assistance in the work?—I work alone.

2852. Do you get regular work?—Yes.

2853. Are you a skilled hand?—Yes, I can do anything in the finishing line amongst the tailoring.

2854. Have you been earning pretty regular wages recently, for the last year or two?—Yes, very good wages.

2855. Have you been able to get as much work as you want. How much have you been able to get a week?—I average about 12s. and 13s., sometimes more. I have earned 15s. and 16s.

2856. Have the prices been going down or rising, or have they been about the same?—All about the same.

2857. For some years?—Yes, I have worked for this firm for nine years.

2858. Do you always get your work from the same firm?—Yes.

2859. For a considerable time, then, there has been enough work?—Plenty of work.

2860. (To Mrs. *King*.) Where do you come from?—London—from Clerkenwell.

2861. Is your husband alive?—Yes.

2862. Is he in work?—Yes.

2863. Is his work regular?—Not always regular.

2864. What does he get?—His money varies. He does not earn the same two weeks alike. His money always varies. It is according to the hours that he puts in.

2865. So that what you earn is supplemental to his money?—Yes.

2866. What is your trade?—Artificial flower mounting.

2867. How are you paid?—We are paid so much a dozen.

2868. What are you paid a dozen?—It is all according.

2869. Does that vary according to the different kinds of work?—Yes, it varies according to the different kinds of work that we are doing, and according to the prices paid.

2870. What are you able to earn a week?—

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Our money varies, sometimes I earn £1, sometimes more and sometimes less. I have earned as much as 30s. at times.

2871. Does it vary according to the seasons?—Yes, according to how the seasons are.

2872. Is it a very skilled trade?—Yes, you have to be very well up in it to earn good money.

2873. How long have you worked in it?—I have been in it 30 years now.

2874. So that you are a very skilled worker?—Yes.

2875. During that time have the different prices paid fallen or risen?—I cannot see much difference in them. They might by chance be a bit lower; other times higher. They vary according to the seasons.

2876. Is there in your trade any very cheap work, or are the prices paid all fairly good?—The majority of the work is very good.

2877. Is it all, or very nearly all, skilled work?—Yes, what I do is all very good work. I have been doing my work at home, and find it a great benefit to my home and children. I went out to the factory and left one child. It was neglected. My second child I have brought up entirely myself, and found great benefit in having work at home and looking after my child and home, and I find that in every way I can get on much better.

2878. You went into the factory?—I went into the factory for a long time.

2879. Was that the same work?—Yes, that was the same work. I have never worked at anything else but flower mounting. I found my child neglected. When I had the second child I stayed at home and looked after it and had work at home. I found improvement in my health, in my home, in my children, and in every way.

2880. When working at the factory, apart from your health, were your wages as good in the factory as outside?—Yes, just the same inside as out. The same wages are paid.

2881. Thank you very much. (To Mrs. Cole.) You live at Bristol?—Yes.

2882. Is your husband alive?—Yes.

2883. Is he in work?—No, he is working with the unemployed. He has four days on and four days off.

2884. What is his trade?—Labourer.

2885. Has he been out of work long?—Yes. He is in and out all the time.

2886. What do you work at?—Corset making.

2887. Have you worked at that long?—Yes, 18 years.

2888. Then you are a skilled worker?—Yes.

2889. Have you had recently regular work?—Yes.

2890. Can you generally get work all the year round?—It is slower in the summer than in the winter.

2891. What sort of wages can you earn a week now?—About 9s. or 10s.

2892. Have you been able to earn that for many years?—Yes. We used to earn more years ago than we can now.

2893. The prices are falling?—Yes, compared with what they were years ago.

Chairman—continued.

2894. In order to earn that, how many hours in the week have you to work?—Of course, you have to stick at it to earn your money.

2895. Have you ever worked in a factory?—Yes.

2896. Why did you leave off working in a factory?—I would rather work at home than I would in a factory, because you are better off with 8s. at home than you are with 15s. in a factory.

2897. Why do you prefer to have the smaller sum of money?—Because you can look after your own home and do your own washing and sewing and so on when you have time to spare.

2898. You can keep your own home more comfortable?—Yes; and when you work at a factory you have to wait about, whereas if you are home you can do your own cleaning and keep your home tidy and also the children. And you can do the mending and sewing. Times will not allow you to pay for sewing and so on, if you can do it yourself, besides I prefer to do my own.

2899. You are able to keep a comfortable home with your home-work?—Yes, and clean. Anyone can go in my home, although I live in the outskirts of Bristol.

Mr. Fell.

2900. (To Mrs. Brophy.) Could you tell us how many hours you work at this paper bag making?—I could not just say; a working woman does not count the hours, but I should say I work about six hours at a time when I have constant work on. I work perhaps for three hours, and then I stop for the children, or for this baby here, or something else that may crop up. A friend may come in, and I may have to stop.

2901. About six hours a day altogether?—About six hours a day altogether.

2902. The rest of the time you have for looking after the house and the children?—Yes.

2903. And you earn about 12s. a week by piece-work?—Yes.

2904. I did not gather what would be your objection to having the price fixed. You would earn just as much in proportion. You say you are very skilled?—Yes.

2905. It seemed to me you were afraid that other people would have their wages lifted up, and that you would only get this the same amount that they earn. It is all done by piece-work?—Yes, it is all done by piece-work. I was in the Glasgow Exhibition, so you can guess I am a skilled worker. Very few are more skilled.

2906. You would still earn more than others, as you are more skilled?—Yes. Some in the factory do not earn as much as I can at home.

2907. You would not have much to fear from a Wages Board?—I would not like to kill myself when other people not half as quick as me would get as much money as I do.

2908. You do not understand that the Wages Board is not to fix the wages. I thought you did not. It is only proposed to fix the price which is to be paid for the thousand bags, and if you got more for a thousand bags than 5½d., you would not mind?—No, I should think not.

2909. Others who could only make 500 in an hour

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hour would only earn half what you do, if you can do, as you say, 1,000 in the hour?—Yes.

2910. I am afraid there is a misunderstanding with regard to this Wages Board probably amongst all of you. You would rather not have anything that would interfere with your business?—That would just be it. I think it would be awful cruel to interfere with us, because it means poverty for a good few of us if we are not able to earn something to help the husband.

Chairman.

2911. Thank you.

Mr. Parkes.

2912. Is there much paper bag making in the factories?—Yes, there is an awful lot of paper bag making done in Glasgow.

2913. Do they earn much more money in the factory than outside. Some do. It is according to their skill. I could earn as much outside as some earn inside, and more.

Mr. Bridgeman.

2914. Do you have to keep a great deal of glue at home for your work?—No. The master supplies us with paste made from flour.

2915. And you find no unpleasant smell and no bad effect from that?—No. We get it regularly every day.

2916. You have no difficulty in keeping your house tidy and clean, although it is full of paper and paste?—No. The Sanitary lady came into my house, and she said she knew what kind of house it was from outside.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

2917. Do you have to fetch your work and take it back yourself, or does someone else do that?—I have a brother who is at school who takes it back. I carried it myself sometimes before I had baby. It did not injure me anything.

2918. It does not take up much of your time?—No. I am quite conveniently near to the work, you see.

Mr. Chiozza Money.

2919. Do you quite understand that the proposition of a Wages Board is a Committee partly consisting of workers like yourself, and partly consisting of employers, who meet together just as we are meeting here. They do not propose to take your work away from you, and they do not propose to drive you into the factory. They simply propose to fix the piece-rate per 1,000 for your bags. Do you think it would hurt you?—Yes, I think it would hurt me.

2920. Do you mind telling me why you think so? Tell me what you have in your mind?—I cannot really give an idea about it, but I just think I would be killing myself and other people not.

2921. But do not you see you are a skilled worker who can make a lot of bags in an hour?—Yes.

2922. A woman who was not skilled would only make a few bags in an hour?—Yes.

2923. The Wages Board would not fix the rate per week or per day, but would fix the rate per 1,000 bags so that the poorer workers, who cannot work as you do, would not earn so much. Do you

Mr. Chiozza Money—continued.

understand that?—No, I cannot really understand it.

2924. Has it been put to you before in that way?—No, I cannot understand it.

2925. Well, I will not bother you. Would you just think that over?—Yes.

Sir William Bull.

2926. What you wish is to be left alone?—Yes.

2927. You thoroughly understand that?—Yes, I understand that. I think that it would be awfully cruel to take our home-work away, because it would mean desolation to not a few but a good many. I have a sister who is the upkeep of a house of six children. Her husband is a casual worker in American boots. Sometimes they are late sometimes they are early. She has to work to keep the six children up.

Mr. Fell.

2928. (To Miss Cooper.) Your rent is very high?—I do not find it too high for my money.

2929. 11s. a week, is it not?—Yes, it is.

2930. Do you let off any of your house?—No, not unless the work goes down very low, and I let a furnished room then; but I have not done so for some time.

2931. Yours is not season work then?—My work is regular all the year round. When my work runs short I tell them, and they send me more on, and it is taken by carrier and fetched, except when I go to London, when I take a small parcel. I am able to keep my home and we live very comfortably, and if it was altered it would be very bad for us.

2932. Do you and your sister work?—Me and my cousin. I have no sister.

2933. Is she as good a worker as you are?—She is very quick.

2934. You work always for the same employer?—Yes, only one.

2935. You have for years?—Yes, ever since we started this woollen underclothing—about six years I think it is.

2936. You do not employ any assistants, do you?—Not at present.

2937. Have you at times employed assistants?—A long time back, when I was in a different trade, but not much in this.

2938. About how many hours a day do you work?—We generally begin a little after eight and leave off at eight.

2939. With time off for your meals?—Yes, with time off for meals.

2940. But you do not do much housework in the time?—No. I get up early in the morning and do my housework, and everything is done before we sit down excepting on Saturdays when one of us takes the Saturday morning to clean the house and do what is necessary.

2941. Do you work about 10 hours a day?—Yes, I think so.

2942. Do you understand the suggestion of what is unfortunately called a Wages Board, that is a Board to fix the price. Do you think there would be any difficulty in fixing the prices of the articles which you make?—I think any change would make it harder to get work. If there was no alteration in any way we should be perfectly satisfied.

2943. But

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2943. But the prices might be raised?—I do not think it would raise them in our case; I really do not. They pay us very well, and we are very well satisfied. A few years ago, if I may say so, I had an ill father, and together we used to look after him and we found it a great benefit to have our home-work.

2944. (To Miss Bamford.) You said that the air in the factory made you ill?—Yes, I did say that.

2945. What factory was that?—It was among the shirts and pants. They are only small windows, and I cannot do without I have plenty of air.

2946. Were many of you working in the room?—There were over a hundred.

2947. But anyhow you are much healthier since you left?—Yes. I have enjoyed better health since I have been at home.

2948. You are making very low wages?—Yes, but I find it very useful. I can keep a home over my head with my wages and the bit that my father has.

2949. You would not be called a skilled work-woman, would you? You have only lately taken up this work that you are doing. You used to do some other work before—glove-making?—Yes, I did do that. Now I am on corsets I find that I can get more money with the corsets than at the gloves. That is the reason why I have stopped doing the gloves and am doing corsets.

2950. When you are more skilled you will earn higher wages?—Some work is paid 2s. 6d. a dozen, and I shall get that when I can do it better.

2951. How much do you get for that?—When I get better into it I shall have more. The lowest is 3d. a dozen, then 4d. and right up to about 2s. 6d. a dozen.

2952. You do not get the best class yet?—I do not get the best class just now, because I have only been at it about two or three months.

2953. About how many hours a day do you work?—I work about four hours and then I get the dinner ready and do a bit of straightening up, and then I begin again and I sit for about three or four hours.

Mr. Bridgeman.

2954. (To Miss Cooper.) I do not know if you have said exactly what your objections would be to a Board such as is suggested. You understand that it is not a Board to fix the rate of wages that you could earn in any given day, but to fix the price of any particular article which is given to you to make?—I do not think it would really help me in any way. I do not think it would benefit me.

2955. What harm would it do?—If they paid less it would mean a good deal of harm to me. They might fix it a little lower than what I am getting now, and that would mean a very great deal of harm.

2956. They might fix the lowest wage, but if you could work rather better than others you would still get the advantage of your skill?—I think as they are paid it is very fair now, and the quicker we work the more we earn.

Mr. Bridgeman—continued.

2957. But so you would then?—Yes, but then it might not affect us well.

2958. Supposing they fix the rate exactly at what it is now, how would that affect you?—It would make no difference, if it was at what our work is now.

2959. In your trade there is no danger of your being made to give up work altogether or go into the factory, I gather?—They would not take us into the factory after a certain age, and we can get our living at home.

2960. You are not afraid of that being taken away from you altogether if a Board was formed which fixed your pay at the same rate as you are getting now?—I do not know. If it would make a difference to me, I should be very, very sorry indeed.

2961. Your feeling is that you would not like to run the risk?—Yes.

2962. (To Mrs. Somerset.) Is that your feeling too. You are paid by the number of files you cut?—It depends upon the size of the files. Some files are 5-inch files. Those are about 10d. a dozen. I wish I had brought one with me, and I could better have explained. For 6-inch files I get 1s. 1d. a dozen.

2963. You do not find that there is anything unwholesome about your work. You said that your health had improved?—I have been healthier since I have been a file cutter than ever before. I have worked with lead for 36 years, and I work for the same firm now that I worked for when I started. It was proposed to work with block tin a few years back in Sheffield.

2964. I should like to find out exactly what it is you are afraid of, supposing this Board is formed. Supposing a Board was formed, consisting of 12 people, yourself and five others representing the workers, and, say, myself and five others representing the employers, and one man from outside to umpire between the whole number, and they fix a price which should be paid for each size of files?—In Sheffield we have a statement for each size of files, and on the different cuts of files. Some are what they call common files, some are second, and some are smaller. They vary in price according to the different cuts.

2965. Are you afraid that all home-work would be stopped if there was a Committee sitting to fix the price?—I do not know anything about that. I hope that home-work will not be stopped, because I could not go into a factory. I should have to go into a little workshop.

2966. You are afraid that it would stop home-work altogether?—Yes, and I should not like it to do that.

2967. I quite understand that, but I want to try and find out why you think it would stop it altogether?—I do not say that the price would stop home-work, but all the same I hope that home-work will not be stopped, and that we shall be paid according to what we earn. If we earn a little we get a little. If we earn a lot we get a lot.

2968. (To Mrs. King.) Perhaps you can give me some reason for the objection?—I am very well satisfied with what we are earning, and I think if the pay was made general it would affect the very slow ones, who would not be able to earn the

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the money. They would not be wanted, especially in our work. We take it out daily. It has to be got in from one day to another. A line of work given out to-day has to be taken in to-morrow. The slow hand would not get the work.

2969. Your idea is that it would not hurt the quick ones, but would drive the slow ones out of the trade altogether?—I think it would ruin the slow hands entirely, and the quick hands would lose by it because they would be classed as medium hands. That would govern the price, would it not?

2970. It would be fixed by the Board?—By the medium hand. The quick hand would lose by it.

2971. No. It would probably be the lowest that could be paid for the work that would be fixed and rising from that?—I think, myself, that we should lose a lot by it.

2972. You think it would have a great effect on the worker?—It would have a great effect on the worker.

2973. On the less skilled worker?—On the less skilled worker, and an effect on the skilled worker, because she would not get the price because they do not price the work by a very quick hand, as a rule.

2974. How do you mean?—They would not price the work on a quick worker, would they, in the way you are speaking of? They would price the work by a medium hand.

2975. Probably, yes?—We are well satisfied with our prices, and I do not think we ought to be interfered with in any way.

2976. Do you think that the less skilled workers in your trade are the poorest generally?—I think that everyone ought to have a chance of working. If persons are slow and not skilled, they ought to be able to get their living. If they are not allowed to get their living they will have to go to the workhouse.

2977. Could you tell us whether your impression is that, in your trade, the poorest, those who have the greatest struggle for a living, as a rule are the less skilled workers?—Yes, they must be. They are, as far as my experience tells me.

2978. And you think that they would be driven out entirely?—I think they would. I think they would lose greatly by it.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

2979. Do any of you find that deductions are made from your wages for spoilt work, or in respect of work which is not up to standard. What I want to know is this. Supposing your work is not perfect and you get 10s. a week, do you ever find that the employer takes part of the money off because your work is not up to standard?—(Mrs. King.) Not in our trade. If our work is not done to pattern it is returned, and you have to undo it and do it again.

2980. But that does not happen in your case, I expect?—No, not in my case.

2981. Do any of you lose owing to what are called deductions?—(Miss Cooper.) I do not. (Mrs. Mitchell.) I do not.

Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

2982. That, no doubt, is because you are all very skilled and capable workers, but, if you were not, it is quite possible that some of your wages would be deducted because the work was not up to the standard?—(Mrs. Mitchell.) It is returned, and you have it to alter.

2983. Does that happen in your case?—Yes, it does happen in my case, if our work is not done as they want it, they give it to us to alter.

2984. Have you experienced that yourself?—Yes, in my experience I have had to alter it at times. You are shown how to do it and you make it right.

2985. But you do not think that that has ever been unjustly done?—No.

Mr. Hugh Iaw.

2986. (To Mrs. King.) You worked at this artificial flower mounting in a factory for some time before you started working at home?—Yes.

2987. Do you earn as much at home as you did in the factory in the same number of hours?—Yes.

2988. Had you any help in the factory that you do not have at home. Had you anything done for you in the factory that you do not have done for you at home?—No, nothing whatever.

2989. It is just the same in one case as in the other?—Yes.

2990. You said just now, I think, that you thought the effect of what is called a Wages Board would be that the quick hand would lose a certain amount, and that the slower hands would be driven out of the work altogether?—Yes.

2991. You said, I think, that, as you understood it, the price would be fixed by the average hand or the medium hand, neither very skilled nor very bad?—Yes.

2992. But do you quite understand that it is not proposed to say "So much shall be paid, and no more, to a particular worker," but, "No less than that sum shall be paid to a particular worker." Why, if the manufacturer can afford to pay you a certain rate now, which yields the wages that you have spoken of, do you think he should pay any less in the future? He does not do it out of pure philanthropy. He does it because it pays him to keep a good hand. Why do you think he would pay you any less? If the law simply says he shall not pay any less than a certain sum, and he is paying more now of his own free will, why do you think he would pay you less in future?—I look at it in this way; out work is paid according to the pattern and according to the work in it. If they take a medium hand and alter the prices, making them the same as are paid to that medium hand, it would hurt us.

2993. Do they do that at present?—No, I say if they are going to pay on a medium hand the quick hand must lose by it, because now a pattern maker makes a pattern and she prices it, and the governor sees what the prices are. If he cares to alter them he does, but I am well satisfied with the money we earn, and we are all well satisfied. I do not think we need any interference at all.

2994. You

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Mr. Hugh Law—continued.

2994. (To Miss Cooper.) You say that you are satisfied with the rates that you are paid for the work you are doing?—Yes, I am.

2995. Are you always working for the same employer?—Yes, now.

2996. Do you know whether other employers in the same trade are paying the same rates?—No I do not. I have worked in this same class of work only for the one employer. I began it when he began, and I have been working at it ever since.

2997. Is it a special class of work?—It is a special class of work.

2998. You do not know whether other workers, working for other employers, are getting the same, or less or more?—No, I know nothing about them.

2999. Suppose that another employer in the same trade is paying a smaller rate to his workers than your employer is paying to you, and supposing that the law in future said that no employer must pay less than the rate that is being paid to you now, how would you be hurt by that? Would it not mean that the other workers would be paid at the same rate as you?—Yes.

3000. If you work it quicker you would get more?—That comes in with it, of course, but at the same time, if it interfered with our home-work it would be very hard on a very great many.

3001. You mean if it prevented you from working at home?—Yes, it would be very hard indeed and I think it would cause a very great deal to be put on the rates for helping paupers.

3002. If people were prevented from working at home?—Yes.

Mr. Chiozza Money.

3003. (To Miss Bamford.) What is the lowest price you have been paid for making corsets? Threepence a dozen.

3004. Have you to supply materials for that price—cane and so on?—We have to buy our own cotton. When we have done 12 dozen they return the money.

3005. Do you supply the cane or bone?—We supply nothing except cotton, and that is given back.

3006. When they give you these corsets do they give you particulars with them?—They just tell us how they want them done.

3007. Do they give you in writing the particulars of what you are to do and what you are to be paid for them?—No.

3008. They never do that?—No.

3009. Has anybody told you that Wages Boards would take away home-work altogether. Is that what you understand?—It is like this: you see some are quick and some are medium and some slow. I understand that they would take the medium, and those that are slow they would not have anything to do with at the factories and it would stop their working altogether.

3010. If the corsets are paid for at so much a dozen and you are a slow worker that would not drive you out of work would it. You would only get a little more money for the dozen that you make. Is not that so?—I do not see it myself.

Mr. Chiozza Money—continued.

3011. Has it been put to you in that way before? Do you understand that the Wages Board is not to fix how much you are to earn in a week but only fix how much should be paid for the making of a dozen corsets. Do you understand that?—Yes.

3012. (To Mrs. Somerset.) Do you understand that the idea of the Wages Board in your trade would be to fix how much per dozen should be paid for file-cutting?—Yes. We have a statement.

3013. You have a statement already?—Yes.

3014. Do not you think that it would be a good thing if in trades where there was not a statement they had a statement like you have?—I think a statement is very useful.

3015. What Wages Boards are for is to make a fair statement in every trade?—I find it a good thing in my own trade. I do not know about any one else.

3016. You think a statement is a good thing?—If I had not a statement I should not know the price of the work.

3017. I want you to imagine a poor woman working in a trade where there is not a statement. She might be put upon?—Yes.

3018. Would it not be a good thing to have a statement like you have?—Yes.

3019. What the Wages Board is for is to make a statement in every trade. Do you understand that?—Yes, I understand that.

3020. Would not that be rather a good thing?—I find it all right in my own case. I cannot speak for anyone else.

3021. From what has taken place do you understand that the Wages Board is not to take away home-work, but merely to fix a statement in every trade?—Yes. I might say that many cut the statement price down and they rob the people who ought to get the statement price.

3022. Thank you very much. Would not it be a good thing if there was a law to prevent their cutting the statement down?—I think it would be a clever law to catch them.

3023. If the law were clever enough you would not object?—They are backsliders that do that. I stick up for a right cause because I like my price. I think that everyone else would do the same. I do my work so that I do not care who looks at it. I think it is nothing but right that everyone should have justice done to them, but all the same many people tell me they get the same price as I do and I know that their work is inferior, and it has come to my knowledge that they allow the masters so much on purpose to find them work.

3024. If there were a Wages Board in your district, as you have raised that point, you could bring up the case of a woman who was taking less and then the employer would be punished. Would you think that a clever law?—I will say this—that I do not know that from the master. The master has never said it to me. I have found it out from watching people. The master I work for now is a good master and is a gentleman, and I should not like to do him any harm by punishing him for the sake of punishing others.

3025. He would not want punishing, would he?—Well, if he was to be punished, he would turn all the hands away and would not employ anyone.

3026. Will

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[Continued.]

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

3026. Will you tell us what this statement to which you referred is?—Is it the file-cutters statement. We get it from the File Cutters' Trade Union.

3027. Are you a trade unionist?—No, I am not, but my husband was when he was alive.

3028. Does it refer to women as well as to men?—It refers to all classes of work.

3029. Is it an agreement between the workmen and the employer to have a steady rate for file-cutting?—We have a statement and it refers to women's work as well as men's—the trade all through—file-making and all.

3030. That is practically what is known as a Wages Board. Do you find that it acts well. Is it satisfactory in its main provisions?—Yes, I find it all right as far as I understand.

3031. It has had the effect of keeping your wages at a satisfactory level?—I have always had the statement price. I have always been paid the same as that.

3032. Answer yes or no. Do you find that your wages have been kept at a satisfactory level?—Yes.

3033. Have you had any other income besides 10s. a week?—That is what I earn now. If I earn a little I get a little. If I earn a lot I get a lot.

3034. Have you been able to support yourself, a sick husband and two children on 10s. a week for a number of years?—No. I had more than that when he was living. I had a daughter working. She is not able to work in a factory, and she does a little bit beside me in the house.

3035. What work does she do?—She is a file cutter the same as I am.

3036. Does she earn pretty much the same as you?—She does four dozen a week of round files, and she averages about 7s. a week.

3037. How many hours do you work?—We do not work regular hours. We might work about three hours in the morning. We begin again about half-past one and give up about four for tea. Sometimes we work for a couple of hours after.

3038. Practically you would work a minimum of about 8 hours a day?—Yes, it might be eight hours a day.

3039. (To Miss Cooper.) I wish to ask you one question. If by stress of competition your employer was obliged to reduce the payment that you are now receiving for your linen you would be very glad to have a Wages Board to put it back

Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

again, would you not?—I hope it will not be lowered.

3040. But answer the question, please?—Yes. It has not altered since I began it.

Mr. Parkes.

3041. (To Mrs. King.) You have different classes of workers in your trade. You have the good worker, the medium worker and the slow worker?—Yes.

3042. How would you arrange a scale of prices to meet all those different kinds of workers?—I do not know how we could arrange our work like that, because all our patterns are different. Every pattern that we make is a different class of work. One takes longer than others, so I do not know how they could fix the price of our work. Perhaps we get a spray of flowers about *that* length (*describing*) with a lot of work in it. Perhaps we get another one about *that* length (*describing*), that takes not more than five minutes to do. They cannot put it all at one price in our line.

3043. But could a Wages Board fix the price?—I do not think it could. I do not see how it is possible to fix the wage.

3044. You do not see how it is possible to put the quick and the slow worker on the same basis?—I do not see how they can price the work now, because all the items are different.

3045. Who prices it?—We have a pattern maker who prices the work. The employer sees what she has priced it at. If it does not suit him he lowers it or highers it. We are well paid and well satisfied.

3046. The patterns change every day almost?—Yes, the patterns change every day. They are always changing patterns. We get a different one every day in the week.

3047. You do not think a Wages Board could fix the price?—I do not think a Wages Board could fix the price. I do not see how it could interfere.

3048. Have you mentioned the Wages Board to people you are acquainted with?—No, I have not. I have only just heard of this.

Chairman.

Ladies, we are very much obliged to you. Thank you very much for coming, and for the interesting evidence you have given.—(Miss Cooper.) I hope that we have done a little good. (Mrs. King.) I hope they will not stop the home-work.

The Witnesses withdrew.

Miss EDITH LAWSON called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

3049. You are connected with the organisation known as the National Home Workers' League?—I am the honorary secretary.

3050. It is you who have got these ladies to come before us to-day?—Yes. I have not chosen all of them. Miss Vynne chose some. I have chosen the London ones.

3051. You have paid a good deal of attention to the tailoring trade?—Yes.

3052. In Leeds, chiefly, I understand?—In Leeds chiefly.

Chairman—continued.

3053. And the hook and eye trade in Birmingham?—Yes.

3054. And the lace-making in Nottingham, and artificial flowers and cardboard box making in London?—Yes.

3055. You wish to take the same view generally as Miss Vynne?—That is so; we find that that is the view of the people. We wish to express the views of workers. At meetings we have found, when we have put the Wages Board before them—perhaps not exactly as you do, for we think you have

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

have a one-sided way—invariably when we have simply explained what it would be and have not pointed out anything, they have expressed their opinion, especially with regard to the fining of employers. We have not prompted them in any way, but simply read the Bill to them as it stands.

3056. I think that you wish to challenge the idea that there is a different rate of payment for home-work and for factory work?—I do.

3057. Would you like to say anything on that?—I have read all the evidence, and I must admit that since I wrote that *précis* I have come across nine cases where it was not the same, and when those nine women were asked why they preferred to be worse paid when they might go into the factory, (for they were all able-bodied women), they said that they preferred the smaller wage earned at home, because it went so much further, and the usual reasons were given with regard to the care of the children and that kind of thing.

3058. The result on the children is one of the things that you specially wish to call attention to?—Yes, because I am very much interested in that subject.

3059. You think that infant mortality is increased by the amount of factory work?—I feel sure of it, but I should not like any law to prohibit married women going into a factory. I do not think that that would be just. I should like to see public opinion brought to bear on the subject, but I never believe in legislation for that sort of thing.

3060. What do you say about the cleanliness of the home-workers' houses?—I think all sanitary inspectors and voluntary workers agree that the home-workers' houses are far superior to those of other workers with regard to cleanliness. You can pick them out in the streets. In Leeds, for instance, we can go down the slummy streets and very often pick them out by the clean curtains and so on.

3061. Have you anything special to say about child labour. Do you find it very prevalent or not?—I do not. I went down to Nottingham last September, because there was a great outcry in the papers at that time about it, but I did not find a single case. On one occasion I saw a little girl sitting with her mother "snipping." She was doing it purely for pleasure. She would run about and then come and snip a little and then run away again. I do not call that child labour. In Birmingham I saw it.

3062. In the hook and eye work?—In the hook and-eye carding. I saw a great deal of poverty and unemployment in Birmingham, both last year and this. I tried to come in contact with as many social workers as possible, and when I went to see Miss Cecile Matheison at the Woman's Settlement in Summer Lane, I received some interesting information from several of the ladies there. One new worker happened to come in while we were having tea, and after introducing us, Miss Matheison said to her: "Miss Lawson, is in favour of home-work, and has come to Birmingham to inquire into the conditions under which it is carried on here. What is your opinion of home-work?" After some consideration, the lady replied that, on the whole, she was in favour

Chairman—continued.

of it, because in spite of the awful poverty in the slums of Birmingham, she had not seen so many starving children there as she had in other towns, where there was little or no home-work. She thought that when the father was suddenly thrown out of work, it was an advantage for the mother to be able to earn a little, even if it only sufficed to get food for the children till the father got another job. I do not think this was quite the answer Miss Matheison expected!

3063. Is there anything else you would like to add to what Miss Vynne or yourself or the other ladies have said?—I should like to make a few remarks about our investigations in London, which have not been as thorough as I could wish, though I have had two assistants to help me. The home-workers in a large metropolis are often so scattered that it takes a long time to visit a comparatively small number, and as we have not access to the lists supplied to the Sanitary Authorities, it is only by the courtesy of manufacturers that we can obtain any lists at all. We go into any factory we happen to pass, and having copied their list of workers, we visit as many of them as possible. I mention this to show that we have taken factories and workers haphazard, and so far the majority have been comfortably off. Some of them keep servants, as was mentioned by Miss Looker in her evidence last July. Most of my experience has been gained in the N. and N.E. of London, where I have found the conditions very good on the whole. The Medical Officer for Shoreditch reports that there are 2,975 out-workers in that district, of whom 2,259 reside there. He considers the conditions good as a rule, and states that of the notices sent in, nearly all the nuisances affected the landlord—not the worker. I think the Witnesses here to-day were inclined to lose their heads under cross-examination. They were very nervous (as I am myself), and did not make their points as well as they do when speaking at our meetings. Mrs. King, perhaps, was the only one who gave you the same impression they give us when we question them in their own homes.

• Mr. Fell.

3064. The witnesses that you brought here must have been much above the average I should think?—I do not think so. We have been very careful to guard against that. Mrs. King was above the average, but the others we expressly chose so that they should not be above the average, because we knew that people would say that we had chosen the aristocrats of the trade. Mrs. Brophy, from Glasgow, is working at one of the worst paid trades. There is one thing I want to say about Miss Bamford. If she were not able to get this work she and her father would be on the parish entirely.

Chairman.

3065. That she told us.--I was out of the room part of the time she was being examined.

Mr. Chiozza Money.

3066. They are on the parish now partly, you know?—Yes, but they would be entirely on it if there were no home-work. So far from the parish

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parish helping home-work, we maintain that home-work relieves the parish.

Mr. Fell.

3067. These witnesses you have brought to us to-day all seem so have steady work?—Yes.

3068. I think that none of them complained that their work is seasonable work or that they cannot get as much as ever they want?—That is chance. They have been chosen at meetings in the ordinary way.

3069. None of them appear to work more than eight or nine hours a day?—I do not think home-workers do as a rule. I have never found them working long hours except in the hook and eye carding, at which I believe they do work long hours. It is very unskilled and badly paid work, and there is tremendous foreign competition.

Mr. Parkes.

3070. What is your general objection to Wages Boards?—We think that they would be impracticable in a great many trades. As some of the workers have just told you, the patterns change every day. An example of the difficulties of a Wages Board was given me by one of the kindest manufacturers in Leeds. I call him this advisedly, because when I was doing a lot of house-to-house visiting in that town, the workers would often say: "But then I work for a good master," or, "But everyone ain't got the luck to work for a good master, like I've got." When I asked their employer's name, the same one was always mentioned. It is that of a small firm with unpretentious premises, but they pay their hands well, and treat them honestly and kindly. I went to see this employer, and when I asked him his opinion of a minimum wage, he said he was afraid it might ruin him. His reason was that he often makes a very cheap class of goods for the export trade, and he thought that as this was not a usual line, it would not be allowed for by a Wages Board, which would have enough to do to consider prices for the ordinary lines. As an example of what he meant, he showed me two little boys' suits, one belonging to a class for which the worker receives 1s. 11d. a dozen; the other to a class for which the worker gets something like 5d. a suit. I am getting to know something about machining and finishing, but I had to examine the suits carefully before I discerned the tremendous difference between them. One was badly finished, and the buttons hung by a single thread. The other was beautifully finished work. The employer informed me that the workers often made more money on the cheap than on the better work, and when I questioned the women, they confirmed this statement. They told me they could make a dozen "run-ups" in the time it took them to make one and a half of the better suits.

3071. How often in the course of a week would a Wages Board, if there were one, be asked to decide the price of the different articles?—That would depend on the trade. There would be less change in the tailoring trade than in artificial flower making or lace making. The pattern in the lace trade changes very often, I believe.

Mr. Parkes—continued.

3072. Is there a feeling among a certain class of these people that home-work ought to be done away with?—Among which people?

3073. Amongst the home-workers themselves.—I have never met one who thought it ought to be done away with. They generally take it from choice, you see. There are very often factories and they can do either. But that is not the case in every district. And the old ones could not do anything else as a rule.

3074. Is home-work, do you think, increasing or decreasing, as compared with factory work?—I really could not say. I think it would depend a great deal on the trade and the district.

Mr. Bridgeman.

3075. Do you think that the women who gave evidence to-day really understand that what we call a Wages Board (I think it a very stupid name) means a board to fix piece-work prices?—Yes. That has been gone into. These women have been at our meetings. It is difficult to say the same thing every time you speak, but I think they understand that. I believe they think that every interference with home-workers causes manufacturers to build factories, so that they will not have the bother of home-work any longer. Of course it depends on the trade. In the lace-curtain trade, it would be almost impossible to put it into the factories, so it does not have that effect there; but in the tailoring a good many firms have built premises and have all the work done in them. For instance, Barrons' of Leeds do not give out any now.

3076. Should you yourself be opposed to Boards being established in certain very poorly paid trades if it were confined to two or three of the worst paid?—Theoretically I do not know that I am opposed to that, but practically I am, because I think that it would throw so many people out of work. I am certain of that, and I think that as long as we cannot cope with the question of the unemployed we ought not to throw anyone out of work who has employment, even if it is badly paid.

3077. You mean that it would throw them out of work because of foreign competition which would cut them out?—Yes, and I think in many cases the people who are having small wages are infirm people or not very clever people. The people who are making the wages that may seem large, whom you have seen, are quite average. They are not particularly skilled. They are not picked because they have large wages. I was the other day looking at wages books in different trades in London, and I found that a large number of out-workers earn about a pound a week. Manufacturers kindly allowed me see the wages books and I looked right back. I often pay surprise visits and ask to see the wages book and have never been refused yet.

3078. You would not object if it were confined to two or three of what we consider the worst paid?—Yes, I should object. Partly because it would delay more important remedies.

3079. You would, even as an experiment?—Yes, I should. I think it would come very hard on the old and slow workers.

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Mr. G. P. Gooch.

3080. I gather that, in the course of your experience in different towns, you have found, on the whole, very few bad cases which really deserve the name of sweating?—Very few.

3081. You know very well that that is the direct contrary of a great deal of the evidence we have had?—I know; I do not deny that such cases exist, but I think that a great many of our opponents take cases that are not typical and cite them as typical. Mr. Cohen explained that he had offered £100 to anyone who could prove that 1s. 5d. had been paid for a costume. I was in the room at the time. I saw in the Press last week, after that, that at Bristol the Anti-Sweating League were still talking of costumes made at that price, although they cannot accept a challenge to find out one worker to support it.

3082. I do not want to go into the details of that, but, as a matter of fact, Mrs. Ramsay Macdonald has explained in the Press why it was that they were not able to accept the challenge within the time?—But you would not think that it would take very long if there were so many cases, would you?

Mr. Hugh Law.

3083. The workers here to-day expressed a fear that home-work might, from the operation of the Wages Board, be stopped altogether, and you yourself have rather indicated that?—I think it would throw a great many people out of work.

3084. But practically?—There are many things that we agree to theoretically that we know are totally impracticable.

3085. I do not think you caught what I said. I understood you to say that you were afraid that the effect of the establishment of Wages Boards would be to throw a number of people out of work, by destroying home-work?—Yes, I think it would.

3086. Both theoretically and practically?—Yes.

3087. That is what I was speaking about? I want really to try to get at the bottom of why you think so. I think you said just now that, if the employers who have home-workers were to have more restrictions placed upon them, they would say: "This is not worth the bother, and we will take all the work into the factory." Is that your point of view?—Yes, and I think that our opponents admit that, because nearly everyone who has given evidence on the other side, or who has written or spoken on the other side, has always admitted the wish to see home-work abolished. I think I could find that in evidence or in the Press, in the statement of very nearly every opponent.

3088. Let us leave other people out of the case. Your fear is that the effect of placing restrictions, or, in this particular case, the fixing of a rate at which certain work is to be done, is that the employers would say: "It is too much bother having these restrictions placed upon me. It is not good enough, and I will take the work all into the factory." Is that your view?—That would be one effect.

3089. Have not the employers at the present moment a great many restrictions placed upon

Mr. Hugh Law—continued.

them in the factory, from which they are free when they give the work to out-workers?—Yes, and that has caused several manufacturers that I know of to move their factories to Belgium. One manufacturer I know of has three factories in England, or had three. Now he has one in Belgium and two in England. And he told me last week that if there were many more restrictions he would remove the other two to Belgium.

Chairman.

3090. We cannot go into all the effects of the Factory Act?—As I was asked about the factory, I think I ought to be allowed to explain.

Mr. Hugh Law.

3091. Certain restrictions are placed on the factories?—And it has driven work out of the country.

3092. The out-worker is free at present from certain restrictions placed on those in the factory?—Yes.

3093. I want to know what the balance between the two is. Do you think that a legal minimum, not a statutory rate, fixed by a Wages Board in certain trades would counterbalance and more than counterbalance the advantages which the employer at present enjoys in giving work out, as against keeping it in the factory?—I see your point. I think that even if it did not stop him it would prevent home-work being given to any but the very skilled, because if they had to give a minimum rate, and it was raised from what it is now, they would not only take the quickest, but the very best workers.

3094. Why?—Because if you have to pay a certain price you will want the very, very best worker.

3095. Quite so. I quite understand if you said to him: "You must pay for certain work no less than 15s. a week," he would then dismiss those not worth 15s.?—I am not confusing wages and rates of pay at all; but, even at the same rate, there are different workers. One weaver, for instance, weaves very much more beautiful cloth than another. Therefore, if they are going to pay the same rate they will only employ the very best weaver, if there is a choice. I know that this does not apply to home-work, but it is an illustration.

3096. Now take the case of Mrs. Brophy, who makes paper bags. That is a very poorly paid trade. She gets from 5½d. to 6½d. per 1,000 for bags. Now suppose that another employer in that same trade is paying 4½d. or 5½d.?—They are probably not so well made then. The best employers get the best work.

3097. Supposing that you said that not less than 5½d. was to be paid, what would happen, do you think?—They would have to pay 5½d. They would, therefore, turn off the rather indifferent hands and would only have the best hands, and the rest of the work might go out of the country.

3098. In New South Wales the provision is that the standard is to be such as is paid by reputable employers. Do you think there is an objection to

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to that?—The people who produce really first-class goods give first-class pay; and when the pay is poor it is really very slop work, and the people who do it could not do the better work. They are very different workers altogether.

Mr. Chiozza Money.

3099. You represent, I think, that the ladies whom you brought with you are an average selection?—Yes. But I should say that Miss Bamford was a good deal below the average, because she is new at her trade and is delicate, and labours under a great many disadvantages.

3100. Your evidence is that sweating is quite a rare thing?—Yes, I should say so, considering the number of out-workers. I admit that there is sweating.

3101. Did you hear Mrs. Somerset say that she earned 10s. a week irregularly. Do you think that that is sweating?—I do not think it is worse than factory rates. But I thought Mrs. Somerset said she earned 10s. a week *regularly*.

3102. Did you hear the statement with regard to only earning 6s. a week?—I did not hear that, but I can quite believe it in some cases.

3103. Would you call that sweating?—"Sweating" is rather an elastic term. Anyone who does not earn a living wage is sweated, I suppose.

3104. Did you hear her say that she worked under a price statement?—Yes.

3105. Would you like all those in her trade to work under a price statement?—I should not like anything compulsory. We do not like legislation. It is not elastic, and often does more harm than good.

3106. Do you know that Miss Bamford said that she earns 5s. a week and supports an aged father?—Yes, and if she could not earn that she would be in the workhouse. That is why we brought her. She is one of the poorest workers I have met.

3107. Would you mind answering the question. Is she partly supported by the rates? Do you realise that two of the seven women that you yourself have brought here have given evidence that sweating does exist?—"Sweating" is used to convey so many different things. Would you mind defining "sweating?"

3108. A state of gross underpayment.—I do not think that any of the Witnesses admitted that they were underpaid for their work.

3109. Of the seven you have brought here two have shown that there does exist gross underpayment?—How have they shown that?

3110. One earns only 5s. a week?—I should not call that sweating. She is learning a new trade. You could not call that sweating. Under the Wages Board she could not earn anything at all. She is not worth more to anyone at present.

3111. Another earns only 6s.?—They must work very short hours, and have probably a large family to care for.

3112. Have you seen the investigation into the conditions of West Ham, which is a neighbourhood where there is a great deal of underpayment?—No.

3113. Are you aware that a very considerable number of houses were carefully and scientifically investigated, and very few of the workers were

Mr. Chiozza Money—continued.

receiving over £1 a week?—In the factories the people earn still less.

3114. But are you aware of that—that is my question?—I am aware of it.

3115. I thought you said that you had not read the book?—I have not read the book, but I am aware of many of the facts from the Press.

Mr. Richardson.

3116. Did you visit Nottingham?—Yes.

3117. Did you go among the home-workers?—Yes, to Sneinton and all round the Irish colony and that district. I was told that was the worst district. I also went towards Carrington, where the conditions are very good.

3118. How did you find the average wages paid at Sneinton?—I found them very low.

3119. What is the average—have you any idea?—I tried to find out what a woman might earn per hour. Taking the week is not fair, because you do not know how many hours she works. I find the hour is the best guide. I found that they did not earn much above 2d. or 3d. on the average. Many earned 4d. and 5d., but the average was very low.

3120. Did you find anything as low as 1½d.?—No, I did not find anything as low as 1½d. 2d. was the lowest I found.

3121. That would be 1s. 4d. a day working continually—or 8s. a week. Would you consider that poor money?—I should consider it poor money.

3122. Would you consider it sweating?—You cannot call it sweating for this reason—that you cannot expect a manufacturer to pay more than the stuff will fetch in the end. The work is quite unskilled. I do not think your question is a fair one put in that way.

3123. You consider it is a poor wage?—I consider it a poor wage, but not necessarily poor payment for that work.

3124. You would welcome the raising of the wage of the home-workers if it does not damage the industry?—I should welcome anything that would really raise the condition of the poor people.

3125. Do you know that in Nottingham, two years ago this summer, there was a Society of Manufacturers formed with the object of drawing up uniform prices for better wages for the home-workers. It has been partially successful and partially a failure, because the balance of the employers would not come in?—I have not seen any signs of its having been successful.

3126. That is so. The manufacturers themselves would welcome legislation that would assist them in carrying out their own views in relation to this matter?—Personally I think it is the good manufacturers who might benefit most by Wages Boards. It is the workers who would lose.

3127. How would the workers lose?—Because I do not think the manufacturers would employ anyone who is not really very quick and very efficient. They are willing to employ the less skilled now because they can pay them less, but they would not be philanthropic enough to employ them if they had to pay them at the same rate as they pay the skilled.

3128. But why. They employ them now?—I think

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think they would be much more strict. They would only have the very efficient ones. There would be much more trouble in giving the work out.

3129. But that is done by middle-women?—It would be the same thing with the middle-women. She would have all the trouble and would get rid of the slow worker, so it would be the same thing.

3130. Why should she?—Middle-women have told me themselves that if a minimum wage were fixed they would only employ the best workers.

3131. The manufacturer has to pay?—But it is left entirely to her to choose her hands.

3132. I think you said that, as far as you had

Mr. Richardson—continued.

heard the evidence, most of those who gave evidence with reference to Wages Boards objected because the establishment of Wages Boards would get rid of home-work altogether. Did you hear Miss Squire asked whether she would suggest that this would do away with home-work altogether?—I have read the report. I did not hear the evidence given.

3133. "(a) No, I do not suggest that."—I know she does not suggest it, but she is an exception.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Thursday, 2nd April, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Fell.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

Mr. Arthur Henderson.

Mr. Massie.

Mr. Masterman.

Mr. Parkes.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

Mr. Trevelyan.

Sir Thomas Whittaker.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. J. G. NEWBY called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

3134. You are a member of a large firm of hook-and-eye makers in Birmingham?—Yes.

3135. You have been good enough to come here to give us some information with regard to the home-work in carding and other matters in connection with that trade?—Yes.

3136. Will you kindly describe to us the method of distributing this work in the first instance to these home-workers?—In the majority of cases the women themselves come and fetch it away; they can have any quantity from a pack, that is 144 cards; they can have that quantity, or any quantity above that, and if they care to have just a pack or one shilling's worth to do, immediately they bring it back they receive payment for it. It is just checked in and they get the payment, so that there is no excuse for any middle person taking a profit. They know they can have it if they like to come and fetch it, and in the case of middle people who take it away in large quantities in perambulators and distribute it, that is merely for the convenience of the workers.

3137. Then there are some cases in which people

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Chairman—continued.

do take it in that way?—Yes, there are many large out-carders, but I think the majority, as far as numbers go, are small ones who take away just what quantity they want to do themselves.

3138. Would you think these middle-women make much out of the distribution, or do they merely get a small payment which is only an equivalent of the labour they put into it?—I do not think they make very much out of it; I think the usual thing is about 1d. a pack; that is if they get 9d. they pay 8d.

3139. And they save these people the time and trouble of coming to your place for the work?—That is so.

3140. And payment is made immediately?—Yes.

3141. What is about the payment per pack? I would like just to understand; a pack is a gross, 144 cards?—Yes.

3142. How many hooks and eyes will there be on a card?—There will be two dozen on each card.

3143. And 144 of those cards are what you call a pack?—Yes.

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3144. Will

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Mr. NEWBY.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

3144. Will you kindly tell us the rates of payment?—The rate is from 9d. to 1s. 10d. a pack; that is the rate paid by my firm; 9d. is the minimum.

3145. What is the difference?—The difference is mostly in sizes. We always pay a little bit more for the small proportion of our proprietary articles, that is our named goods which we do not do by machine. The majority of our named goods we do by machine, and it is very much neater and cleaner; but where it has to be given out we pay a higher price. The other variation is more in point of size than anything else. I am afraid I have not a very small one here, but those two cards (*handing in the same*) illustrate that there is some difference in point of size. There is a large card easy to handle, and there is a smaller hook and eye which would not be so easy to handle; but that one is machine-carded and the other is hand-carded.

Mr. Massie.

3146. I suppose the number is the same?—No, those two are different, but they are worked out at a proportionate price per gross.

Chairman.

3147. You have referred to machinery. To what extent is machinery used in the trade—to what extent do you use it, may I ask?—We are doing about 40 per cent. of our output by machine.

3148. Would that be fairly representative of the trade generally?—No, there is no-one else in this country using machinery.

3149. It is a comparatively recent introduction then?—Yes.

3150. How does the cost work out, putting them on the cards by machinery, as compared with the hand labour?—It is slightly in excess of the price for hand labour.

3151. That you formerly paid for hand labour?—Yes. I think on the whole it would average about the same; on the small sizes we save a little by machine and on the larger sizes we do not.

3152. The point I was putting as to price was not as to the price now, because one would imagine that prices would tend to equalise themselves. I was rather thinking of the cost of carding by machinery as compared with the cost before the machines were introduced. Has it brought about any reduction in the rate of payment?—No, we pay just as much to out-carders as we did before, and the tendency in the last few years has been to pay more, especially since small sizes came more into vogue.

3153. Is there any advantage in the way in which the machine does the work; does it do it better?—Very much better; it is very much neater and cleaner, and there is no necessity to send the work off the factory; you do not get it lost or spoiled.

3154. That is really the advantage of the machine work?—That is the advantage.

3155. You have spoken of the change in prices: I understand the prices have gone up rather than down?—Yes, that is so.

3156. What would be the reason for that?—During the cycle boom in Birmingham 10 or 12 years ago we had great difficulty in getting carding

done. The men were all earning good money and it did not matter whether the women worked or not, and we had to pay more, just as would take place in any similar trade. If the men earned good money the women would not be so anxious to take this low-paid labour.

3157. May I take it that in many cases where this work is done at home by the women, it is done, not to secure the sole means of livelihood, but to supplement their husbands' wages?—That is so.

3158. Have you any cases where women are earning their livelihood entirely by doing this carding?—Not that I know of; if they had nothing else to do but carding they would have to seek out-relief, and in many cases where a woman is left with her children in Birmingham and no man to help, she has got to have out-relief whether she is working at carding or whatever her occupation is.

3159. That would mean, I suppose, that at the rates that are paid for carding a woman could not, working constantly, long hours during the week, earn enough to keep herself?—And her family; no, and she could not at warehouse work. There are dozens of occupations in Birmingham, and I have no doubt in other cities, where a woman could not keep herself and her family at the wage paid in the trade; for instance, I have a woman in the warehouse who lost her husband a little while back; she had two or three little children and she was getting 11s. or 12s. a week, which was as much as she was worth as a wrapper-up in the warehouse, and I interested myself to get the parish relief as well, because I knew she would starve on that amount if she did not get it.

3160. Are you increasing the use of machinery in your factory?—Yes, we are increasing every week.

3161. Putting in fresh machinery?—Yes.

3162. What age are the girls who work at this work?—The machinery?

3163. Yes?—We take them straight from school for preference and we bring them up to it; they are fairly expert when they have been there a few weeks, whereas an older girl would not get into it quickly.

3164. Do they remain right along to womanhood?—We have only had it for about three years; we have only been working it generally about two, but they all seem very happy and very satisfied; in fact it is quite the model room of our factory.

3165. About what wage will they earn?—We start them at 5s. straight from school—4s. 6d. or 5s.—and when they have been there a fortnight they want to go on to piecework. Then they will earn perhaps 6s., 7s. or 8s. and we have had instances where they have earned 12s. when they have been there less than a month. They will average from 8s. to 15s. when they have been there a month or so.

3166. You say your workers on the machine average from 8s. to 15s.?—Yes.

3167. How long do they work?—They work 50 hours a week.

3168. Of course, when this work is taken home by a worker, you have no accurate knowledge as to the length of time they work at it?—No, we have not.

3169. But about how much would they earn per week; if you have any taking the work pretty regularly

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regularly you would know roughly what their earnings would be per person per week?—I can pick several cases where they earn about 5s. a week. There is one woman in particular I know who takes out work every week; she has no children, she has a husband who is at work casually, and she makes on an average 5s. a week. She does the whole of the work herself.

3170. You do not know how long it takes her to earn 5s.?—No, I do not know; but her home, which is right in sight of the factory, is tidy and comfortable, and I do not think she overworks herself.

3171. She just does it in her spare time?—Yes.

3172. Do any of your factory workers take work home as well?—Yes, we have a good many instances where girls take home-work out.

3173. Is that a violation of the Factory Act?—I do not think so; we really do not know. They might give it to someone else to do; they simply ask for the work, and take it, and make a little extra in that way; whereas, I suppose, a lady would do fancy work.

3174. How much do they make, roughly, in that way?—They generally give them the best class of work off the factory, and they will make 2s. or 3s. a week just in their spare time.

3175. I do not want to discuss Tariff Reform with you, but I want to give you an opportunity of expressing your opinion, which I understand is that foreign competition is a very important factor in fixing or in causing you to fix the prices which you can pay; and I should just like to hear what you care to say to us on that point?—I would be very glad to see a minimum wage fixed, providing that minimum wage could be maintained in every country where hooks and eyes are manufactured; but if a minimum wage were fixed in Birmingham, say, and it were 2d. or 3d. a great gross higher than the present minimum wage, it means that the price is already so fine cut on these low goods that we would have to get that 2d. or 3d. somewhere.

3176. In hooks and eyes I gather that competition from abroad is keen?—It is very keen indeed.

3177. Is there much of this kind of produce imported into this country?—Yes, there is a big quantity of hooks and eyes imported from abroad.

3178. From where does it chiefly come?—From Germany and France.

3179. Have you any information you could give us as to the rates of payment there for the same kind of work?—I cannot give actual figures as to France and Germany, but I believe they are as low, or slightly lower, than our own. In America, I know for a fact (I have just come back from there) that the wages paid for carding are double what our own are.

3180. Is there any importation here from America?—There is an importation from America, but only in certain grades of hooks and eyes, which are carded by machinery. We buy no hand-carded goods from America; they could not compete.

3181. Do we get much in the way of hooks and eyes from America?—Only advertised goods, special brands.

3182. Do you know if the carding is done in

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Chairman—continued.

Germany and France by home-workers, or is it done in the factories?—It is done by home-workers.

3183. The same as yours?—Yes.

3184. And you feel that this item of cost is so important that if it were seriously increased it would lead to a very large importation?—The trade would go to France and Germany, and there is a factory in Belgium.

3185. Of course you will be aware that the proposal we are considering is that the Wages Board should consist one-half of employers and one-half of workpeople; consequently we may assume, may we not, that when they were considering the rates of payment, they would both of them be keenly interested in keeping the work in this country, and therefore would be likely to fix rates which would not drive the trade away?—Yes, that is so; but in that case they could not raise the rates under the present system.

3186. The result of that would be that they could not raise them?—They could not raise the rates under the present system, without some measure of protection from foreign competition.

3187. There is one phase we have had put before us with regard to some trades, and that is that there are some makers paying much lower rates than others. Would that be so in your trade, do you think?—I think the rates are so low that no one dare pay any lower.

3188. Because it has been suggested to us that one effect of the Wages Boards, in such cases as those I have referred to, would be to level up the lowest to the best?—Yes, I have only one instance of a firm paying a lower rate than we are. I believe the figure Mr. Graves gave of 8d. is correct in one case; but 9d. is our minimum.

3189. You regard that as so extremely low a rate that it could not be reduced?—It is a poor rate.

3190. And the reason why it is poor is that you have to compete with similar low-paid labour abroad?—That is so.

3191. That is the view really that you wish to impress upon us as important?—Yes; so far as hooks and eyes that are sold in this country are concerned, if there were no foreign competition I myself would undertake to get the rates doubled.

3192. Now as to the practical working of the Wages Board, do you see any difficulty, apart from the difficulty of increasing the wage?—Only that it is rather a peculiar class of people we have to deal with; I do not want to say a word against them, but they are very often the poorest of the poor, and they are constantly moving from one place to another, and I think there would be considerable difficulty in getting representatives from amongst that class who would work on a Committee and work consistently and regularly. For instance, at the present time the Medical Officer of Health in Birmingham insists on a return of all the names and addresses of these carders whom we employ, and we have endeavoured—I have had a man at work for weeks trying to get out that list complete, and when I thought it was complete I sent it in to him and he finds that 40 per cent. of the names and addresses we have given him are wrong, and we have got

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a summons in at the present time for not furnishing the correct names and addresses. We are absolutely powerless, because we ask for the name and address and they give it and it may be wrong, or if it is right they might move the next week. They are that class of people who are moving about, and there is very little reliance to be placed upon them.

3193. Are hooks and eyes made in other parts of the country than Birmingham?—There are a few made in London; there are a few made in Gloucester, but I do not think they card them there; they only put them into packets in Gloucester.

3194. I wanted just to ask your view as to the fixing of a rate locally and the fixing of a rate nationally. We have had a good deal of evidence before us which has generally gone in the direction that these bodies must be local, that you could not get representatives of the workers from all parts of the country, and that you would have to fix it locally; what is your opinion on that?—If the rate were fixed locally for carding hooks and eyes, it would have to apply to Birmingham, and I think outside the Birmingham district there would be very little trouble; but on the same line of argument there are many trades which are carried on in several centres where there would be difficulty, and a rate applying to one centre should apply to all of them. If you were to follow the same line of argument to its logical conclusion, everybody who is supplying hooks and eyes or the class of goods particularly concerned in a particular country, should be subject to that rate whether they are foreign manufacturers or whether they are British.

3195. Of course we could not regulate the rate of wages outside the country?—Then shut the goods out.

Mr. Fell.

3196. We have had evidence before that the outworkers gives names and addresses which I believe are actually wrong; you say they give you an address and then move rapidly?—Yes, that is so.

3197. We have been told that they give an address to one employer and another name and address to another; they will be working for two employers and give different names to each. Have you come across that?—I have not actually come across that. I cannot quite see what their object would be.

3198. I imagine it is that they would not want one employer to know that they went to the other employer?—They think that the two employers may be in communication?

3199. That they might see the lists?—Yes.

3200. You have not come across that among your workers?—No.

3201. What would be the ultimate result, leaving out foreign competition, if there was a Wages Board or a Board to fix prices for this carding. If you raise the price of some of your poorer work, it would enable people who were still less efficient than many of them must be to get the work and do a little?—I am afraid not, because if the price of the poorer work were

Mr. Fell—continued.

raised we should not do any of it. There is no profit on it at the present time. On a common card of hooks and eyes like *that* or *that* or *these* lines (*showing some cards*) there is very little profit. Those are just common swan bill and if we had to pay 25 or 50 per cent. more for carding on this class we could not do it—they must go.

3202. Because the competition from other towns or from abroad would make it impossible?—Yes, from abroad.

3203. What I am trying to get at is the classes that would be affected if prices were slightly raised. Would it not tend to make a less efficient worker able to get some work at home who at present could not get it?—No, I do not think so; I think if people want carding now they come for it, and their efficiency has very little to do with it.

3204. But the speed at which they do it must vary immensely. You say that they must begin as children from school?—No; I was speaking of machine carding when I said that we liked to get children from school—that is, machine carding at the factory. At out-carding, I know they often begin young, and I know that the children help quite a lot with it; but we are powerless to stop that.

3205. You mentioned the case of a woman whose husband died, and who took up this work?—No, she was at work in our warehouse on different work altogether—wrapping up parcels. I gave that as an illustration that there are many cases where a woman, if she is left without a husband, cannot support her family without parish relief; not only in carding, but in many other occupations.

3206. I thought it referred to the carding. In Birmingham the expenses of living are high?—I do not think they are higher than in the rest of the country.

3207. We heard witnesses yesterday, widows, who were bringing up their families successfully on 11s. a week, living in cottages in the country?—In the country they might live lower, because they would have a garden, and perhaps a pig.

3208. The evidence of the witnesses really came to the effect that sweating was occasioned where rents were high, and that it was only in towns where rents were high that there were really bad cases of sweating?—It is possible to get a back house in Birmingham for 3s. a week, or 3s. 6d. perhaps.

3209. I was wondering why they must necessarily have parish relief if they are earning 11s. or 12s. a week?—There were three small children in this case, who had to be fed and clothed and minded while the woman went out to earn her 12s.

3210. Of course you have no evidence at all as to what hours they work?—At carding, no; but some evidence was given by Mr. Graves, which I cannot think is typical of every case. He cites a case where a woman worked for 55 hours, I think, and she had five children to help her a good part of the time, and her total earnings at the end of the week were 2s. 7d. Now, I made a test in our factory to see what a girl who was not skilled, and who was carding a low class of work, could actually do, and she earned at the

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the rate of 1d. an hour. She just sat there and did five hours' work, or rather less than five hours' work, and earned 5d.; and at that rate this woman alone, if she had only been as efficient as this little girl in the factory was, would have earned 4s. 7d. without the help of her children. This only goes to show, not that Mr. Graves has given wrong evidence, but that there is very little reliance to be placed on some of these cases he has cited.

3211. You mean that the woman may have been very inefficient?—She must have been very inefficient, and she must have given him more hours than she actually worked.

Mr. Parkes.

3212. I see in Mr. Graves' evidence he says the price is from 8d. to 1s. 2d.; you say it is 9d. to 1s. 10d., I understand?—Yes.

3213. How would he get his information? Would that mean that another factory would pay those prices?—I do not know another factory where they are not paying a higher rate than 1s. 2d. It is quite likely that he got the information from some of the carders.

3214. Still your rate is from 9d. to 1s. 10d.?—Yes.

3215. Is that the general rate paid?—It is our rate, and I suppose we do more of it than anyone else.

3216. You have no means of knowing whether those low prices are paid by others?—8d. is the lowest price paid anywhere; I know that is paid in one case in Birmingham.

3217. Is machinery gradually ousting the hand labour?—It is in our factory, in the better qualities; but there is so much difficulty in standardising the different cards which different customers want that we should have great difficulty in bringing machinery out, for instance, to make a card like that (*showing a card*), where the hooks and eyes are sewn in one straight line and two crescents. That is what our machine will do (*showing a card*); it will card two dozen in two straight rows, and of course it means a radical alteration in every possible way to do a card so dissimilar as the first one I have shown you. There is another card with eight in a row (*showing the same*).

3218. I suppose in the factory the girls can earn more than they can outside at home as a rule?—The little girls who do the carding—yes.

3219. Would they earn more by machinery than they would by hand labour in the factory?—We do not do any carding by hand labour in the factory.

3220. I suppose that some of the carding which you did some time back by hand labour is now done by machinery?—A good deal of it.

3221. And the tendency is to replace hand labour?—That is so, for instance there are two cards (*showing*), and one of these is carded by hand and the other by machinery.

3222. Now, in the case of a Wages Board being established, would it be for the settlement of wages inside the factory and outside the factory, and would they be bound by the same prices both inside and outside?—It is an entirely different process we are

Mr. Parkes—continued.

carrying on inside, and I do not see how that would be affected by a regulation which affected the price to be paid for hand-work outside.

3223. So that the kind of rate which would apply outside would not necessarily apply inside?—I should think not, because they are different processes entirely. In most trades of course it would.

3224. You say it would not be necessary to fix the price throughout the whole of the country?—I think it would be necessary, because the same industry might be started in other parts of the country if it is not carried on at the present time.

3225. Is there any unanimity now in the prices in the different parts of the country?—The industry is only carried on, as far as carding hooks and eyes is concerned, in Birmingham. I think there are very few, if any, carded outside Birmingham and district.

3226. Do you get any complaints from the workers about the rate of wages?—No.

3227. As to this 2s. 7d. a week case which was given to us by Mr. Graves, you think that is a very exceptional case?—Yes, I think it is exaggerated, probably by the woman herself.

3228. Would there be any such case under your firm, do you think?—If that case had occurred under our firm we should not have known of it, because we should not have known what hours she worked. We would simply pay her what she earned.

3229. How many workers have you in homes working for you?—We have had 500 people fetching work away and we have had about a thousand visits a week when busy.

3230. What would be the effect on these people if you were to make more in the factory? Would those you would deprive of work outside be able to come into the factory?—No.

3231. Why?—Because in most cases they are women who have families and homes to look after, and they do this work in their spare time just as an extra.

3232. What would they do if you made it all in the factory?—I suppose the tendency would be for their children to take their places to a certain extent, that is to say their children might come in and work in the factories, but it is taking money away from them in a way, because they are largely dependent upon this as an extra to their incomes.

3233. Some of them would fall on the rates, I suppose?—They probably would.

3234. I see that Mr. Graves said that a pack could be made by a woman with the help of her children in about 10 hours: is this correct?—My test is that a pack can be carded by a single person in 10 hours, or under 10 hours.

3235. Would that be the 9d. or the 1s. 10d. rate, or between the two?—The pack that was carded in the factory was a 9d. or a 10d. one.

3236. By one person?—Yes, she did half of them in five hours and she was not an efficient carder, just someone we took out of the warehouse and told: "Do these."

3237. A girl?—Yes.

3238. Is there much of this stuff imported from abroad?—Yes, there is a lot of it imported from abroad and at a very low price.

3239. At a lower price than you can do it for?—We meet it; we are going to keep the flag flying as long

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long as we can in the hopes of something different happening at some future time.

3240. I suppose the profit on these things is very small?—In the case of those common carded goods, we do not reckon to make any profit at all; we do it for turnover to keep the people employed and the machines running and it helps with working expenses to a certain extent. If we were to reduce the size of our factory and give up this low class of trade, if we could give it up without losing some of the better as well (it often helps to introduce better stuff), we would be just as well off without it.

3241. You get your profit out of the named stuff?—We get the profit on our better quality and named goods.

3242. But as a general rule you do not get any profit on the common stuff?—Not on the common goods.

3243. What do you think would be the effect, generally speaking, of a Wages Board? Would it reduce home-work, or increase it, or what?—I do not see that it would have any effect upon it, unless the price of the article were altered.

3244. If it were raised, then, it would kill home-work?—It would kill a certain amount of it.

3245. How about a Wages Board in your own factory; is that necessary?—No, I think not; it is quite optional whether these people take the carding out or not, we do not send for them, they come for it.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

3246. Did I understand you to say that your firm was the only one that employed machinery?—Almost; in this country. Another Birmingham firm are doing a small quantity of carding by machinery.

3247. Is not that a very curious situation, that you should find machinery useful and profitable and that nobody else should? How do you explain it?—We have gone in for machinery in the first place, not to save cost but to improve quality. Of course all these goods are carded in the factory just as samples, and they are fairly neat, even the hand-carded ones, but if you saw a sample of out carding in comparison with some of our machine carding, you would see how much better the machine carding looked.

3248. Is it not rather curious, if that is the case, that other makers should not copy your example?—They have hardly had time yet.

3249. You have been doing this for three years, you say?—Yes.

3250. Do you think other employers are likely to employ machinery?—I think machinery is bound to be applied in the end—in fact I have been to America to see some machinery within the last month with a view to improving it.

3251. So that you think it quite possible that the work may, sooner or later, be transferred from the home to the factory, even without any fiscal change, owing to the superior advantage of machine work?—Yes, in the case of the better work, but with work that varies to such an extent as the common work does, I do not see how it is to be done.

3252. Do you know exactly what the other employers in Birmingham pay in the way of

Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

rates? Do you know yourself what they pay?—They pay just about the same as we do, in most cases.

3253. How did you find that out?—We bought one or two businesses and amalgamated them with our own, and we have always found the rates about the same; they might be a penny higher in one case or a penny lower in another, but just about the same.

3254. You think there is practically no difference in the rates paid?—I do not think there is.

3255. Does competition affect the whole range of your trade, or can you say there is any part, however small, which competition does not touch?—Our name is unassailable, and named goods are always unassailable, except that a foreigner can take any particular line which is selling largely in this country and can put out something similar and cut against it. *There* is an instance (*showing a card*). For the carding of that line we were paying 6d., that is 1s. a pack, and a foreigner came along with a cheaper line and we had to get a common line out against it, for which we had to pay 5d. for the carding, because he was doing it cheaper.

3256. Could you perhaps answer my question by saying what sort of proportion of your total output is free from foreign competition—one-fourth or one-half?—None of it is free from foreign competition.

3257. Is work regular, by which I mean have you always enough work to give out to everybody who applies for it?—No, we have not.

3258. Does it vary with different seasons of the year?—Yes, our turnover in July is about double what it is in January. In January we could get a lot more carding done than we have to do, and in July we have difficulty in getting enough done.

3259. Could you say that half the year is full work and half the year is slack work?—Something like that.

3260. Do you ever, or often, have to make deductions for work that is badly done?—We never make deductions; if the work is so badly done that we cannot use it, in many cases we make them do a few cards over again, or something of that sort.

3261. May I ask if you often bring out new patterns or new arrangements, and is the result that you get a sale on the market owing to their novelty and attractiveness?—Yes.

3262. Because in evidence we have been told by more than one manufacturer that they would object to Wages Boards, among other reasons, because before getting anything on to the market they would have to produce their article at the Wages Boards and their rivals and competitors would see what they were producing. Would you think yourself that that would be a difficulty in your case?—I think it would be a very serious difficulty, although it had never struck me.

3263. In certain cases you invent something new and attractive, and you get a good sale for it before your competitors really know anything about it?—That is so.

Mr. Masterman.

3264. About this foreign competition, have you made

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made any kind of estimate of the proportion of the trade that goes to the foreigner, or could you give me any information as to what it means?—I do not think I could; I could not give you any proportion, but if the proportion is very small it has the same effect of lowering prices, because you have always to meet the competition.

3265. And you feel in practical work that their prices are, on the whole, dragging yours down?—That is so.

3266. Have you tried to find out why they can make cheaper than you?—At certain times of the year, as I have pointed out to Mr. Gooch, trade is slack, and then it would pay us, or it would pay anyone, to sell their goods at cost price so as to keep the factory running and help to pay the working expenses. At certain times in the year we get very much worse competition from France and Germany than at others. For instance, there is a line there (*showing*) which was being sold at 5s. a great gross by three or four makers in Birmingham, and a Frenchman came along and he put out a line which was lighter, but which looked the same, at 3s. 7d. He spoiled the price to the extent of 1s. 5d. straight away, and we had to put out a lighter line against it.

3267. That is what is called “dumping”?—It was simply dumped during the slack time.

3268. Do you suppose that French work was made below cost price and sold on the English market below cost price?—When we came to make a common sort against it we had to make the article poorer, but we found we could just do it,—it was a turn-over, but nothing else.

3269. Have you made any attempt to analyse on this subject how far what we call sweated or underpaid labour enters into the foreign article? Have you any knowledge of the prices paid for that work in France and in Germany?—I cannot give actual prices, but I have reason to believe they are just about the same, or a bit lower than our own, in France and Germany, and I believe it is carried out in very much the same way. The work is taken in by families and taken part in by the children, and it is just an extra to the income the man is able to bring home. It very often pays the rent or provides some little extra luxury.

3270. Are you finding this foreign competition increasing in your trade?—It is always there; I cannot say how far it is increasing. We always endeavour to meet it. We always say we will meet any competition that comes up against us.

3271. And keep the flag flying?—Yes, but sometimes the goods are very poor and unsatisfactory that we come across.

3272. You have no competition from America?—We have in the better goods, but as I say they are more advertised goods which the Americans send over.

3273. You have not analysed as to whether there is any sweating incorporated with those?—There is no sweating in those goods; they are made by machinery on practically the same method as ours.

Mr. Massie.

3274. I suppose the other English makers are in a much smaller way than you are, otherwise they might have set up machinery; I suppose it

Mr. Massie—continued.

is partly because they are rather in a small way that they have not tried machinery?—Yes, in hooks and eyes.

3275. You spoke of a factory in Belgium: Would that be employing machinery, or would they have home-workers only?—Home-workers only, I believe. I do not know much about that factory, and it is only recently established.

3276. You said that in France and Germany it was all on practically all home-workers?—Yes.

3277. You know of no machinery in France or Germany?—There is no machinery in France or Germany so far.

3278. There seems no reason why there should not be, and I suppose there will be soon; but according to what you said that would not cheapen the cost of the article?—The machinery invented so far does not cheapen the cost to any material extent.

3279. I think you said that if you had some protection against foreign competition you would yourself be prepared to double the rates?—I would be prepared to double the rates paid for carding of goods distributed in this country, if I had protection to that amount.

3280. Then of course if the foreign goods were shut out, the rates could be even higher?—If the carders demanded it; I am speaking now of protection for labour, not for capital.

3281. Of course if the rates were doubled the prices would have to be doubled too?—If the price paid for carding *that* article were raised from 9d. to 1s. 6d. it would only be a matter of 4½d. on the great gross—that is 4½d. on 72 cards. It would make a material difference to the worker, but the public would never feel it.

3282. That is to say, you would pay much more, but the public would not feel it?—They would not feel 4½d. on 72 cards.

3283. Do you think then that that very insignificant harassing of the public would not decrease the demand much?—No, it would not. In many cases there is too much given to the public for a penny. *There is a penny card with 50 hooks and eyes on it.*

3284. Is it not the case that in Birmingham more than in any other place in England makers of various things are hit by foreign competition?—That is so, I think.

3285. I suppose all the trades that are hit would equally with you like to have the foreigner shut out?—That is so.

Mr. Arthur Henderson.

3286. I should like to ask if you could tell the Committee if there has been any development in this country in your trade in recent years?—Do you mean increase in business?

3287. Increase in business, and new firms starting this line of work?—I could not say; there have been no firms started, I think, in the stuff we make. Our business has materially increased, but then we have absorbed three other manufactories, and whether their previous total output would be as great or greater than our present one I could not say.

3288. You cannot say whether the volume of your line of business is greater or less during the last 10 years, or the last 20 years?—No; hooks

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hooks and eyes have been used more largely on dresses during the last 10 years than they were during the previous 10 years, mostly on account of the loose nature of the fabric. They have used them instead of buttons, so that it is probable that the use of hooks and eyes has increased.

3289. Your own business has increased; you are quite certain about that?—I am quite sure about that.

3290. And increased in the face of foreign competition?—Yes, increased along with the foreign competition, I would prefer to put it.

3291. We will let you have it that way. It is satisfactory to you to know it has increased?—Yes.

3292. But, unfortunately, I think you have said, the prices have got so low that they could scarcely come any lower?—I would rather go out of business than pay any lower.

3293. Do you really admit that it is so low that it would be impossible for the prices to come lower than they really are?—Yes, I would not pay any lower.

3294. Would you be prepared to admit that they were sweated prices?—It all depends upon what the word "sweated" means. We used to understand that a sweater was a middle person who took the goods out and sweated the people who did them. Now "sweating," since these Sweated Industries' Exhibitions have been held and this Select Committee has sat, seems to have got quite a different meaning.

3295. I think I am right in saying that even on Lord Dunraven's Committee they found an interpretation that did not apply to the sweater, but which applied to every business where there was such an inadequate payment made that there was no hope of getting anything like a reasonable living at the trade?—I do not think that a worker can get a living at this trade.

3296. That will do for that point?—I think, however, that it is a useful extra very often.

3297. You have said twice, and this is a very important point, that if we could stop foreign competition, you would be prepared to double the prices. Will you tell me how you would do it?—I said I would undertake to get them doubled; I think that was my expression. My meaning was this: that I would call a meeting of manufacturers of hooks and eyes in this country, and I am pretty certain, without pledging myself actually to do it, that I could do it. I could get them to pay double the prices for the carding.

3298. That is your explanation. You would call a meeting of all those engaged in the trade in this country?—Yes.

3299. Do you feel that as the result of that meeting the prices would be doubled?—I think so.

3300. In the event of foreign competition being stopped, do you see any objection to a Wages Board to assist in the doubling of those prices?—No, I do not see any more objection to a Wages Board than to a Trades Union; they are both legitimate protectionist movements.

3301. You are really not opposed this morning to the institution of a Wages Board?—No.

3302. In principle?—In principle.

3303. And if the Wages Board could be put into operation without further preventing the

Mr. Arthur Henderson—continued.

development of your trade, or the maintenance of the present standard of your trade, you see no reason to object to it?—I see no reason to object to a Wages Board. What I say about Wages Boards is that they will be of no use under our present system; they will become inoperative. There is no objection to them.

3304. You are quite satisfied then—I think you have already said it, but I want to be perfectly clear upon it—that there is nobody in the trade in this country, for that same article, paying a less rate than you are?—Yes, there are people paying less.

3305. Would it not be an advantage to you if we used the Wages Board to bring them up to your position?—Yes, but the difference is so slight that it is hardly worth discussing. I say that in the majority of cases the prices are about the same all over.

3306. But you admit that it would be an advantage, let us say, to the worker if we could bring them up to your prices?—Yes.

3307. I think you have already told the Committee that your prices are so low that they could scarcely go any lower, and that the worker really cannot get a living at them?—If they work at that and nothing else.

3308. What would be the position of the worker who is working for the other firm at a less rate than you are paying? You see the point?—I quite see.

3309. If the machinery of the Wages Board could protect every worker—protect your work and protect you—would not that be an advantage?—Yes, that is so.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

3310. Where does the machinery you use come from; where is it made?—We make it ourselves.

3311. Is it a patent article?—It is a secret article; we do not patent it, because that would expose it.

3312. You invented it yourselves?—We have invented the majority of it.

3313. You introduced it yourselves?—Yes.

3314. Therefore, as a matter of fact, the machinery is not open to other manufacturers to adopt?—No, unless they can find out what we are doing, or what someone else is doing.

3315. Unless they secure your secret. You spoke about America. Is machinery used there?—Yes, they are using machinery in one factory on very much the same lines as our present machinery, but in another factory there has been a machine invented which is absolutely automatic, and that was the machine I went over to see.

3316. I understand these low rates of wages were current before the introduction of machinery?—That is so; machinery has not lowered the rate.

3317. It would probably make the home-worker extinct in a short time, would it not, if it were developed?—There must always be a certain amount of hand-carding done on peculiar-shaped cards that will not pass through the machines.

3318. Do you think it is for the advantage of the community that a trade should exist where

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Mr. NEWBY.

[Continued.]

Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

where a living wage is impossible?—I think it is to the advantage of the community, as at present situated in Birmingham, that they should have this slight extra money added to their incomes, which are small and precarious.

3319. I am speaking of cases where the Poor Law relief steps in. You have instanced a case in which the Poor Law relief has been called in by yourself in subvention of the wage which you pay?—The wage I am paying to that particular woman would be considered a good one for the class of work she is doing, which is wrapping up parcels.

3320. As matter of fact, the State is really supplying you with labour?—No.

3321. If you employ a woman, and do not give her sufficient to enable her to live, and the State provides Poor Law relief, they clearly are paying the wages which you might have to pay?—Her three children are doing no work at all; they are infants.

3322. You do not answer my question?—Then I will put it in another way: if three women getting these wages lived in one house together they could support themselves; or if one woman getting those wages lived in apartments by herself, she could support herself; but it is not the place of any woman to support herself and three children. The man has to support the children.

3323. Still you state that they work 50 hours a week, and in many trades sufficient is earned to support certainly a single woman, and in some cases a family. If Poor Law relief comes in in Birmingham to supplement the wages of a worker in order to enable her to live, they are practically paying part of your costs of the production of your article: is not that so?—Supposing the woman had been left with seven children?

3324. Will you answer my question?—Supposing the woman had been left with seven children. I would have had to pay her about 50s. a week to keep them, and that would not be an average wage for a woman.

3325. That is quite a legitimate answer. You still attach much importance so the foreign competition; I presume that the workers in France and Germany competing against the workers in this country are paid equally low wages?—I think so.

3326. Would it be possible, in your opinion, to have an International Conference to secure a minimum wage for unskilled workers?—I can hardly answer that question, because my experience

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

does not go far enough; but as it seems impossible for the different countries to agree on such questions as were raised at the Peace Conference, I am sure they would not agree about the prices they should pay for their labour.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

3327. I just want to ask two questions I omitted, and the first is: Do you sell any of your products abroad, or is it a purely English sale?—We sell a great proportion of our products abroad.

3328. That seems to be a very important consideration, about which we have heard nothing. We have heard of goods coming into England, but we have not heard of the goods you sell out of England?—We have a good market in Canada, because Canada gave us a preference; 10 years ago I did not send a gross of hooks and eyes to Canada, but now it is worth my while to go over there to take orders.

3329. So might one say that the danger of foreign competition is to some extent being met, or at any rate relieved, by the development of your foreign market?—No, the home market is always the most valuable.

3330. Have you any notion what sort of proportion of the total number of hooks and eyes sold in Great Britain come from abroad? Would it be one-fourth?—No, I said just now I could not really answer that question; I could only guess at it; but I should think if we said one-fourth or one-third, or perhaps a little more, we should be somewhere near it.

Mr. Masterman.

3331. One question on Mr. Gooch's: Is it this cheaper stuff that you are getting a foreign market for?—Yes, and for better. We get competition with our better stuff from America.

3332. I did not mean that; I want to know what you are selling abroad in Canada and other places. Are you selling this cheap stuff made by these women, abroad?—Yes. That is the card I sell in Canada (*showing the same*) in cheap goods. I also sell many better varieties which are mostly carded by machinery.

3333. If an increased price were paid it would hurt your foreign sales as much as your English sales, do you not think?—Yes. I think it would, especially in the case of Australia, where they buy a lot of cheap stuff.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Wednesday, 29th April, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Brunner.

Mr. Fell.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

Mr. Arthur Henderson.

Mr. Massie.

Mr. Parkes.

Mr. Robinson.

Mr. Stuart Samuel

Sir Thomas Whittaker.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. WILLIAM ARCHIBALD APPLETON called in ; and Examined.

Chairman.

3334. I understand you have had considerable experience in the Nottingham lace trade in connection with what we may call a Wages Board ?—Yes, that is so, extending over perhaps 15 to 17 years altogether.

3335. Perhaps it would be well that we should understand at the outset, what kind of a Wages Board was this : Did it settle all the rates of payment, or did it only deal with the cases that were brought before it ?—It dealt with the cases that were brought before it, but it settled all the cases that were brought before it during a period of 10 years.

3336. But only such cases as were brought before it ?—That is so.

3337. Of course it had no compulsory power ?—No.

3338. No power in law ?—Wherever a decision was arrived at it was generally carried into effect, because there was an understanding beforehand that any such decisions should be loyally adhered to.

3339. It partook more of the nature of an Arbitration Board whose decisions it was understood beforehand would be accepted ?—Yes.

3340. Therefore, I suppose we may take it that it would be only cases in which there was a difference of opinion or some dispute that were brought before it ?—Where there was a difference of opinion as to some matter brought before it, or where there was a new class of work and the price had to be fixed.

3341. If the employer and the workpeople on the new class of work had arranged satisfactorily to themselves a rate, that would not come before the Board, I imagine ?—Certainly ; it was an understood thing that the rates were not arranged privately in that fashion ; all rates for the City of Nottingham were arranged by that Board, that is to say, all rates of wages affecting that particular

Chairman—continued.

trade, the lace trade. It was not permitted for individuals privately to arrange prices, either manufacturers or workmen.

3342. Not on matters that had not come before the Board ?—No ; when a new class of goods was introduced, its price had to be fixed by the Board.

3343. Did that apply to the new patterns ?—It applied to new patterns if the new patterns had new features that took them out of the range of the old decisions.

3344. Should I be correct in understanding you to say that there is no work in the lace trade of Nottingham which is done except on wages fixed by this Board ?—That is the actual lace-making, not the lace-finishing ; I was speaking so far as the men themselves were concerned, the actual lace-makers. There are auxiliary lace-workers, if I may use that term, people who prepare the materials for the lace-makers, and who take the lace after the lace-maker has finished with it and turn it into all sorts of articles of commerce. Over those we have no control, and their wages are fixed mainly by the employer himself or by the middlewoman who takes the work out. I am speaking directly of the workmen, the men who actually make the lace, and I say all their prices are fixed by the Board.

3345. I notice you speak of men ; are there women employed generally in the trade ?—I should say that in Nottingham there are 20,000 to 25,000 women engaged in making articles out of lace, and in finishing the lace.

3346. But not in making the lace itself ?—Not in the actual making of the lace ; the work is too arduous for the women to undertake.

3347. I understand that lace-making is done by men solely ?—By men solely—machine-made lace I am speaking of. There may be a little hand-made lace, but that is a negligible quantity so far as Nottingham is concerned.

3348. Where

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Mr. APPLETON.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

3348. Where the women are employed is in finishing or in making different articles from the lace?—Yes; and when I say finishing I mean such operations as drawing, clipping, scolloping, and many little things the terms of which you would scarcely understand—what they call ripping up.

3349. Does your experience as to settling wages apply to these women at all?—No, I have only had indirect experience of the difficulties connected with women's wages.

3350. May I take it that the work the men do is done in the factories?—Yes.

3351. Your experience is of settling rates of payment for the making of lace in factories?—Yes, there is no machinery for the fixing of rates of wages for the people outside the factories by the home-workers. Efforts have been made by the Christian Social Union and by Mr. A. H. Woolley of the Castle Works, and one or two other people, to get some Board of that kind formed, but they have not been successful hitherto.

3352. Then you have no experience of fixing the payment of home-workers?—No, because there is no machinery for that purpose.

3353. Your evidence would rather be directed to indicate to us the possibility of fixing rates of payment generally, but without special application to home-work?—Yes.

3354. Is the Schedule of Rates a complicated one?—Exceedingly complicated; I know of nothing more complicated.

3355. We have had handed in here by one of our Witnesses from Nottingham, a lace manufacturer, a very brief schedule of rates, if I remember correctly, about six or eight items; but I think from Mr. Askwith we had evidence that there was a much more complicated schedule than that?—I should say instead of six or eight, if you had said 600 or 800 it would be more nearly accurate.

3356. Have you a copy of it with you?—I have not a copy here, but I can supply you with copies. There are three distinct price lists for the three distinct kinds of work: the levers price list for millinery, which is extremely complicated; the curtain price list, which is less complicated; then there is another price list for the plain net, and that of course describes itself—tulle and materials of that description. There are three exceedingly complicated price lists—in fact, I should say, that under the old price list, the levers price list, there would not be 25 per cent. of the men who were engaged in the industry who could reckon their own prices up.

3357. These rates are piece rates, I imagine?—All piece work. I may say that the rates may change with the introduction of a thread or a change in the character of the net, and many other little things.

3358. Before we go into the details of the prices, what has been the history of the Board—its working, and how has it been accepted by the workpeople?—It has had a chequered sort of existence; the men have generally termed it a Board of Reduction, and I think their ideas have been strengthened by the fact that they suffered a very serious reduction in the early seventies, when Mr. Rupert Kettle was the arbitrator.

D

Chairman—continued.

They also suffered a further serious reduction in 1889, and they have been in the fear of other reductions from 1889 to 1905. Fortunately, it was possible to engineer the threatened reductions away until then.

3359. Until then, the general tendency had been to reduce the rates of payment?—It had.

3360. Still, did they accept them and abide by the award?—Force of circumstances compelled them to do that.

3361. Since 1895, what has been your experience?—Since 1895 there has been a constant attack on the part of the employers on the wages that existed then, but those attacks never materialised, because you understand the trade is a seasonal trade, and it was comparatively easy to watch the markets and watch the fluctuations of trade, and to take care that the acute stage in the negotiations came on at the commencement of the busy time. It was only in 1905 that things became really difficult, and Mr. Askwith then came down.

3362. Was this Board ever broken up?—It has been broken up half-a-dozen times and restored again—always broken up by the workmen.

3363. That is to say, they became discontented with its action?—Yes, the wages were reduced, but I think it would be only fair to say that the wages were abnormal in the lace trade, because originally they were fixed arbitrarily, and not according to any other desire than the desire of the employer to get the lace made. He knew very well in the old days that he could always get anything from 50 to 100 per cent. and it did not matter very much what he paid.

3364. By "abnormal," do you mean that they were originally very high?—They were, both wages and profits.

3365. But competition has gradually been bringing them down?—Competition and the introduction of modern machinery has had its effect on the wages and the profits.

3366. But in spite of these troubles, and the breaking up of the Board from time to time, it has always again been re-established I gather?—It has always been re-established, and within my own experience it has accomplished very good work indeed, in so far as it has prevented a large number of petty strikes.

3367. Will you tell us how the Board has been constituted; has it always been constituted in the same method; tell me what has been the proportion of workpeople and what the proportion of employers, and how the chairman has been appointed?—Broadly speaking, it has always been constituted in the same way, equal numbers; there were three sections in the trade, so that there were three sections on the Board of Conciliation. Each section was equally represented, employers and men; each section elected its own chairman and secretary of the section, and each section sought to deal with the matters peculiar to itself. Very frequently they succeeded; if they failed, the matter was remitted to the full Board, and then the efforts of the varying interests, generally resulted in a satisfactory settlement of any difficulty that had arisen. On the full Board the Chairman was, usually, a manufacturer, and the Vice-Chairman a workman.

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3368. Were

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Mr. APPLETON.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

3368. Were the representatives of the men elected by the Trade Union?—They were.

3369. Were practically all the employed men in the Trade Union?—So far as Nottingham itself is concerned, yes.

3370. And the masters through their own organisation?—Yes.

3371. Was there any expense incurred?—Yes, there were expenses incurred; but it was an understanding that the expenses were pooled; each side contributed its share towards any expenses that might be incurred in the year.

3372. Was there any payment to the members of the Board?—The members were paid so far as the workmen were concerned by their own Union: half-a-crown for each meeting.

3373. Did they meet in the evening?—Sometimes in the evening and sometimes in the day; but you will understand they work shifts in Nottingham, and it may be more convenient for the men to meet in the day-time than in the evening.

3374. What was your own position in connection with the Board?—I was Secretary of the Men's Union, and acted as Co-Secretary of the Board, the other Secretary being the Secretary of the Manufacturers' Association.

3375. How long were you in that position?—Eleven and a half years.

3376. In dealing with a matter which you indicated to us, a trade which is very complicated and in which you tell us probably not more than one-fourth of the men could reckon their own wages, had you any difficulty in finding competent representatives of the workpeople who could deal satisfactorily with these complicated items?—No; while on each Board it would not be usual to secure that all the workmen were able to work out sums in proportion, those who did not understand the arithmetic would generally have a very extensive technical knowledge, and so combined they got through all their difficulties without much trouble.

3377. One difficulty we have had suggested to us in connection with the fixing of prices (and I understand from what you tell us that when a new article is made you fix the price at once) was that there would be an objection on the part of the manufacturers to disclose to others, who would possibly be competitors, new designs and new patterns?—Yes, I have heard that objection raised many times, but I have not attached much importance to it from my own technical knowledge of the trade. There is a great deal of piracy going on, but not amongst members of the Board. Sometimes there is little actually new in the article brought forward; perhaps, a feature taken from one class of lace and put into another; for example, a little bit of old Buckingham might be put into a Torchon, and the manufacturer thinks if he got it into the market before the others there would be a chance of his making a little higher profit, but it would not be necessary for him to disclose the details before registering the pattern. He would be then able to bring the matter forward and the price would be fixed. Still I should not attach so much importance to an objection of that description as some of the manufacturers, have attached to it. I have seen all sorts of pat-

Chairman—continued.

terns brought before the Board of Conciliation, and I do not know of one single instance, and I do not think there is a manufacturer on that Board who would allege that there has been a single instance, of any of these patterns having been pirated.

3378. I presume we may take it that your experience is that it is no use having anybody on these boards except those who have a very close technical knowledge of the trade?—No, I am afraid it is not, except that in the case of a chairman you might have a man who was outside if he was known to be a fair man and a capable man; there is a good deal of suspicion on the part of the workpeople themselves, and they are afraid to state all they know in the way they can state it before one of their own employers, or when one of their own employers is in the chair. That wears off in time, and there is not the slightest difficulty with such a board as I was on.

3379. Of course there is a considerable difference between a voluntary board and a compulsory one with power to enforce its decisions?—Yes, and I know that amongst the workpeople themselves there is a very serious objection to a compulsory board, and I feel that you would have to go on the voluntary lines in the beginning.

3380. If we might transfer your experience, as far as it is possible to do so, to home-workers, so as to get your opinion upon that, how do you think the Wages Board would operate with regard to the home-workers, say, in the Nottingham trade?—I think it would be a distinct advantage, because of the publicity that might be given to the award of the Board. It would prevent a good deal of the worst form of sweating that exists.

3381. Of course, you understand the proposal is that the Board should be one with legal power to fix rates which could be enforced?—Yes; I am afraid you would have a very great deal of difficulty if you went on those lines in the beginning, because you would have the uneducated prejudices of both sides to fight against.

3382. We had this difficulty brought before us—that in many of the home industries, at any rate, the workpeople are very poor?—Very poor indeed.

3383. And have a hard struggle, and might feel very great hesitation about bringing their case—so to speak, appealing against the decision of their employer in the matter of wages, fearing they would lose their occupation?—Yes, in going about amongst them, as I have done, both with the people connected with the Christian Social Union and with some of His Majesty's factory inspectors, I have found that the first difficulty you had to overcome was the abject apathy that existed amongst them. You see, they are most of them, very many of them, working for the next meal, and nothing you say about the meal for to-morrow affects them; they are not concerned about that. After you have aroused some interest in them you have also to arouse some sort of courage.

3384. The point I am rather trying to get at is this: is not this rather a difficulty in the way of a voluntary board and a voluntary appeal? If it were compulsory, if the board were appointed to fix the payment, then there would not be a case of a poor workwoman bringing her particular

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

case forward, but the payment would have to be fixed by the board, and, therefore, she would not be under the difficulty and fear that she might be in the voluntary case?—It would be a very distinct advantage to the poor themselves if the wages could be fixed in that way.

3385. One feels that the lower you get down in the social scale (lower in the matter of poverty, I am speaking of), the more difficult it is for the workpeople to exercise any voluntary power you can give them?—That is perfectly true.

3386. I rather wanted to have your view about that, bearing in mind what you say as to the desirability of having a voluntary board first?—Of course, you will understand that I speak as an old Trade Unionist with a strong Trade Union at my back, and feeling all the time that we have strength enough to protect any of our people who might be victimised.

3387. But you realise that there is a great difference between dealing with people who are members of a good strong Trade Union and the class of people we have just been talking of?—There is a vast difference.

3388. I rather wanted to know your view based on your experience as to the possibilities with regard to home-workers?—It would be a very distinct advantage to these very poor people if their wages could be fixed as you suggest.

3389. Do you think there is anything sufficiently complicated in their work to make it more difficult or as difficult to fix as the work you have been accustomed to fix the rate for?—No; it is simplicity itself as compared with the price lists of the men; you have only, perhaps, a dozen occupations.

3390. Would there be any difficulty in getting satisfactory representatives from these people?—No, if you got someone who understood them, and could go down amongst them, and explain in their own way what was really required of them, I think you could get some of them to come forward.

3391. How would you suggest that they should be appointed and elected? They have no Trade Union, I imagine?—No, I should call meetings in the district; I should go amongst them and explain what was really required; I would not put it in the paper or put it on the walls, because they not do read the paper, and do not look at the walls for advertisements of that description; but I should go amongst them and explain as I have explained other things—tell them what was wanted, and ask them to meet me in one of the schools or places of that description in the neighbourhood.

3392. Of course you realise that when you are going to do anything that is to be enforced by law, you must be very careful that everybody concerned is notified and has an opportunity of attending those meetings to elect their representatives; you almost want something in the shape of a roll of voters, do you not, or are you to be content with a personal notification?—You would have a difficulty in getting a roll, because you see these people move about very rapidly; they may not live in a district more than a month or six weeks or three months, it depends very largely on the industrial conditions that obtain, or upon the

Chairman—continued.

patience of their landlord in some instances. They are compelled to move about so that a roll would be very little use; I should say if you utilised the agencies in the district through the churches and chapels, you would be able to organise a body which could notify these people very quickly.

3393. You think you could get a satisfactory representation?—Yes; I would include the churches and chapels, and the local trade councils, and I think you would find you had a body then which could see that the information was taken to these people.

3394. That is rather an awkward suggestion to express in an Act of Parliament, is it not?—Yes, of course it would be very awkward, but I think you would have to allow a certain amount of latitude locally as to the manner in which the information was carried to the people.

3395. You can realise that when you are practically to bring the forces of law to bear, so that they should not work under a certain wage, it is very important that everybody likely to be affected by that should have the opportunity of having a voice in the election of a representative who has to come to this, to them, very vitally important decision?—Yes, but it seems almost impossible to get that representation unless there is some form of organisation; there cannot be the organisation that exists in a trade union, or it would be very difficult to get that form of organisation, and I can only see that you would obtain that organisation on the lines I suggest.

3396. Is there any other point that occurs to you, that you would like to mention?—No; I think not, but I have carefully read a good deal of the evidence which has been given before this Committee, and I have been rather surprised that one man who has taken a very great deal of interest in this work has not been asked for his opinion: I should say from the manufacturer's point of view he knows more about it than any man in Nottingham. You have had a solicitor here who did not know anything about it, and you might have had a manufacturer, I refer to Mr. A. H. Woolley, of Castle Works, who is an expert in this matter, and has done a great deal towards the improvement of the wages received by these very poor people.

Mr. Arthur Henderson.

3397. Regarding the possibilities of having an organisation, do you think it would be possible to obtain from every employer employing outworkers in the area covered by a Board, if a Board was set up, a complete list of outworkers, and in that way make secure that they had a notice of any meeting called to elect representatives?—It would be possible to secure a register of all the middle people, middlewomen and middlemen that the manufacturers employ, but I think it would be very difficult to secure anything in the nature of a register of the people whom they employ, because they are a floating quantity.

3398. Does every employer not keep a record of his outworkers?—I think not.

Mr. Massie.

3399. You said, I think, that this Board had turned

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Mr. APPLETON.

[Continued.]

turned out to be in the main a Reduction Board ?
—That is so.

3400. And that those reductions had been accepted from force of circumstances?—Yes, reductions are never accepted because the people like to accept them.

3401. That I understood, but I was wondering whether by "force of circumstances" you meant increased competition and increased machinery. What did you mean by "force of circumstances"?
—What I meant was that when the prices were fixed you had a little old machine about 112 inches wide, and which went, if I may use the local unit, about 2½ to 3 racks per hour. Improvements have been effected, with the result that you have got a machine 220 inches wide, that will drive five racks per hour. The men with the new machines working outside the Nottingham district were working at perhaps half the price of the Nottingham men, and really getting more money per week; those were the circumstances that compelled the Nottingham men to accept the lower rates of wages.

3402. You said the Board had been broken up six or seven times, and I suppose that break-up lasted for a while?—Sometimes for three months and sometimes six months, and it is partially broken up at the present moment; one section refuses to do anything through the Board, but the other two sections are acting through it.

3403. During these intervals, how do prices get arranged? Is there simply a private arrangement between the employer and workmen, or do the old lists of prices practically obtain?—The old lists of prices practically obtain should there be any difference; it is enforced by the strongest side, either up or down.

3404. You are on the side of rather beginning in a voluntary way with the boards?—I would like to see the minimum wage compulsorily fixed, but I realise that there are difficulties in the way of doing that.

3405. Of course you have observed that lately in New Zealand in spite of the compulsory arbitration, men have refused to obey, and I wonder what resource you think we should have in the case of compulsion and refusal to obey?—It is very difficult for one to answer as to what you would have to do with cases which might arise; I would rather wait until they did arise, and then deal with them as I have to do to-day, according as experience suggests.

3406. You thought wall literature would be rather useless for notification?—Yes, I would rather depend upon the small bill that is put into the house with an explanation.

3407. You have no objection to the wall literature, except that it might be useless?—None at all.

3408. Supposing the law required a public notification like that you would suggest that it be supplemented by the more efficient means you have mentioned yourself?—Yes, and if I were in the district, and taking the part I have taken in Nottingham, I would see that it was supplemented without waiting for instructions.

Mr. Brunner.

3409. During 10 years you say the decisions have always been adhered to; has that been quite invariable?—Yes, during the 10 years.

Mr. Brunner—continued.

3410. What was the reason for the break-up?
—The men honourably accepted the award, but said they would not have any more awards of that description, and so broke the thing up for the time.

3411. Has the Board never raised rates since it was formed?—Only in one instance that I can recollect, and that was where fancy nets or veilings had been made, and some special loose spots introduced created great difficulty in the making of the net, and the manufacturers did accede to an advance through the Board on that particular class of goods.

3412. You have spoken of three sections of the Board, what are these three sections?—The levers which make the millinery lace, to use a term that will be easier understood; the curtain lace-makers, which of course explains itself, and the plain net lace-makers, who make plain net—tulle, mosquito nets, and things of that description.

3413. The Chairman told you about a list which had been put in here containing three or four lines; I think it was put in by a manufacturer, and he told us that that was really the whole basis of it, and that the rest of the matter was a mere matter of arithmetic, can you bear that out?—That would be incorrect; there are three books each containing about 22 pages full of the most complicated details, so far as the men are concerned. So far as the outworkers are concerned, there are perhaps about a dozen items, and the prices would vary; for instance, a woman might get ¼d. or may be up to ½d. per dozen for drawing according to the number of breadths in the piece; if it is a machine 144 inches wide, which is the old standard machine, and the breadth is one inch wide you can understand that the price would be higher than if the breadths were 3 inches wide, because there would be far more breadths for the woman to draw.

3414. I think we can take it then that the small schedule was for outworkers?—It must have been for outworkers, and if it only dealt with two or three items it would not cover all the outworkers' work. I should say you would want, at the very least, a dozen items for the outworkers.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

3415. You have said that the chairman of the Board is an employer?—During the whole of my experience the chairman was an employer, and if he happened to be absent a workman took his place.

3416. Does not that mean that the employers have a permanent majority on the Board?—No, because he only had one vote.

3417. Is there an even number representing both sides on the Board?—There were equal numbers from each side.

3418. So that the chairman was not an odd man, but only one of an equal number representing the employers' side?—Yes, and as a matter of tactics it was sometimes wise to put an employer in the chair, especially if he was a very able man.

3419. Does it often or sometimes happen that there is an absolute deadlock from even voting?—Yes, there were occasions when there was a deadlock; but during my experience the inconvenience of

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Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

of the deadlock generally resulted in both sides making small concessions and a settlement being effected.

3420. You would adjourn the meeting, perhaps, and have another?—Yes. May I say that one of our rules insisted that no dispute should be considered by the Board unless the workmen were at work, so that they were never allowed to get into the street, because the difficulties always increase when that happens.

Mr. Fell.

3421. The Wages Board, I gather, was to settle the prices between the manufacturers and the workmen?—Yes.

3422. It was not for the purpose of getting some of the manufacturers to level up their prices to the prices paid by some of the better class manufacturers?—No, all locally paid the same prices.

3423. There are none who cut the prices and pay lower prices?—There were a few originally who cut the prices, but things ultimately became so uncomfortable for them that they decided to fall into line with the rest.

3424. It was only to settle disputes between the mass of the working men and the manufacturers?—Yes.

3425. If that was the case, then the decisions of the Wages Boards were all obeyed, at any rate by the manufacturers?—Yes, they were all obeyed on both sides.

3426. But when the rates were reduced there was grumbling?—Inevitably.

3427. And that broke up for the time being the Wages Board?—Occasionally.

3428. How were these Wages Boards re-established—at whose instance? When a Board breaks up what starts it again—which side—the men or the masters?—There are difficulties that arise in the trade, and, generally speaking, there are a number of men on either side who feel that that is the wisest way of settling disputes of this description, and their efforts are generally bent towards the re-organisation of the Board. That is what has happened in my own experience.

3429. There has been no difficulty in re-establishing them?—There has been some difficulty, because you always have to overcome the prejudices of the more thoughtless section of your members.

3430. With regard to the out-workers, it did not seem to me that your evidence that you gave at the beginning quite agreed with your concluding remarks. I think you said at the beginning of your evidence that the finishing and the making-up of the lace was done by the home-workers?—Some of the processes connected with the finishing and the making-up of it.

3431. And that there were something like 25,000 women employed in the work?—Taking the whole district, I should think that is a very moderate estimate.

3432. Again, I understood you to say that it would be impossible to fix the price at which this work should be done?—I did not say it was impossible; I think I said it would be very difficult to fix compulsorily the price at which it should be done, but it could not be impossible, because I

Mr. Fell—continued.

am certain that anyone with any knowledge of the trade and with a fair mind could fix the price at which these people could gain enough to live upon, although I do not say they would be comfortable.

3433. I did not take it from you that you said that at first; you did at the end, I know. I understood that it was the making up of the lace into garments, and so forth, which you said it would be impossible for the Board to fix a price for?—I do not think I said impossible; I said it would be difficult. The difficulty would arise in getting your Board together from amongst these people.

3434. That is another point. I thought you meant that in making various garments or articles from this lace it would be impossible for the Board to fix the price?—May I say that in most of these cases the work is done in the warehouses, and it is not so much the actual making up of the articles that is done in the home. That kind of work is very largely done in the warehouses.

3435. By the men?—By the women in the factories or warehouses.

3436. You said that the great difficulty would be the apathy of these poor women of the class which is so underpaid?—Yes, the greatest difficulty is to create an interest in anything amongst them; they are so beaten down that they have no interest in anything but the next meal and their roof for that night.

3437. You said that all these people are always moving about?—A number of them; that is not a general statement, but it applies to a large number; and, of course, those who move about are the people who will accept the lowest wages, and, generally speaking, they govern the rate of the whole.

3438. These would be the people we would most want to get at?—Yes.

3439. And yet they would be the most difficult to deal with, because they are always or frequently changing their abodes?—Yes.

3440. Therefore it would be almost impossible to get a register of them?—It would be very difficult; you would have to utilise all your local agencies to secure a register of that description. Your difficulties would decrease, of course, when these people understood you were anxious to benefit them; they would lose their apathy and fear to some extent then, and self-interest would compel them to look you up instead of you having to look them up. At first your difficulties would be great.

Mr. Massie.

3441. You spoke just now of fixing something which would be enough to live upon, but surely a great many of these women, as we have heard from other evidence, rather attempt to supplement, perhaps, the wages of their husbands than to make a living?—That is true.

3442. What you would really mean would be a minimum price for the items, rather than a minimum wage for such persons?—A minimum price for the items would be what should be aimed at.

3443. That would be a very different thing from fixing enough to live upon, because they might not

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Mr. Massie—continued.

not do enough?—I was assuming that they would do as much as they do now.

3444. You are speaking now of women who work continuously, and not merely those who work to supplement their husbands' wages?—I am always afraid of the supplementary worker, because the wages of the supplementary worker always govern the wages of the people who do not work for that purpose, but who must work for bread.

3445. You spoke of this Board having proved on the whole a Reduction Board; are the prices

Mr. Massie—continued.

for the items now lower than they were in the seventies?—Yes, I would say by 40 per cent.

Mr. Brunner.

3446. Do the workers take less home than they used to do at the end of the week?—Yes, they take less home than they used to do, but you will understand that in the old times the wages were very high indeed.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Mr. F. W. FUGEMAN called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

3447. You are here to represent the Post Office, and to give us some information as to the methods adopted there to inspect the carrying out of the contracts for clothing, and that kind of thing; and I think you are one of the Inspectors for that purpose?—That is so.

3448. Will you explain what has been the attitude of the present Postmaster-General since he came into office?—With your permission, I would like to read a memorandum which I have prepared on the subject. The allotment of the Post Office contracts had to be made in January, 1906, when Mr. Sydney Buxton had recently taken office. Owing to extreme pressure of work at the time, and the General Election, he was unable to give the matter the full attention and consideration which he would have desired. In accordance with the usual practice, these contracts were entered into for a period of three years, to run from the 1st April, 1906, to the 31st March, 1909; so that although Mr. Buxton cannot regard the conditions of employment under these contracts as satisfactory, his hands are, to a large extent, tied until the expiration of that period. As soon as the conditions of employment under these contracts came prominently before Mr. Buxton's notice, he appointed an Inspector to investigate the working of Post Office contracts, with special regard to the wages question, and he is satisfied that this step has had a salutary effect in securing the observance of the Fair Wages Clause and the other clauses in the contracts designed for the protection of the workpeople. Some 8,000 people are wholly or partly employed on clothing contracts in connection with Post Office work. The Postmaster-General is supplied periodically with particulars of the earnings of the workpeople, and all cases of reductions in wages or piece-work rates are brought specially under his notice. Where it is proved that the aggregate earnings of the workers are affected by revisions in piece-work rates, it is the practice to insist on reversion to the rates fixed by the contractor at the commencement of the contract. Investigation is made immediately complaints are received from workpeople, Trade Unions or associations as to the evasions of the Fair Wages Clauses, and action is also taken whenever there is reason to think that contractors are infringing these clauses.

3449. May I ask you just there, whether it is your special duty to carry out this investigation?—That is so.

Chairman—continued.

3450. What is your experience as to the extent to which the regulations are violated, or attempted to be violated?—My experience goes to show that as far as practicable, the contractors endeavour to conform to the conditions of contract, but of course, owing to the competition in the trade, there is a tendency to cut the wages, especially for unskilled labour.

3451. How do you know what are the wages that are really paid?—I invariably take extracts from the wages books.

3452. What evidence have you that these wages books are accurate?—Each worker is also supplied with a book in which she enters the particulars of the work given out, and the rate at which it is paid for.

3453. Do you personally make inquiry of the workpeople?—Yes, I invariably go among the workpeople and examine their books, and see what they really earn, and I see also that the piece-work rates entered in the workers' books compare with the rates posted up in the workrooms.

3454. Do you talk to these workers in the absence of their employer?—Yes.

3455. It was suggested to us that they might not be so free to express their opinions if the employer was present?—I always ask the contractors or their representatives not to accompany me round the workrooms, so that I can get the information I want from the workers; if they follow me the tendency on the part of the workers is not to say anything.

3456. Do you think you are able effectively to check departures from the ordinary rate of wage?—I have not any doubt about it.

3457. Have you anything to show us with regard to the evidence which has been given as to some very low prices paid for certain Post Office garments?—It is true that some of the rates are low, but since Mr. Buxton has been Postmaster-General it has been my duty to see that these rates have not been reduced. As a matter of fact, prior to the present contracts—take the telegraph messengers' winter tunic—the workpeople were receiving 11s. 11d. per dozen, but since I was appointed Inspector I advised the contractors to look into the question of the wages of the finishers, especially—that is the unskilled labour. As a result they increased the rate to 12s. 4d. per dozen. It is not much of an increase, but still it does benefit the worker. With regard to the summer tunic, under the old contracts the contractors

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contractors paid 13s. 7d. and 15s. 3d. per dozen garments, while at the present time the price is 16s. 7d., so that there is an increase there also.

3458. There were instances of reductions given to us?—Unfortunately I have not particulars of all the rates that obtained prior to my appointment.

3459. There have been no reductions, you would say, since your appointment?—I should not like to say there have been no reductions, because two sets of contracts were running concurrently, the old contracts and the new; they had not finished up with the old contracts before they had to commence on the new.

3460. Would you say there had been no reduction in wages under the new contracts?—No. I could not go so far as to say there had been no reduction, because there are several reasons to account for reductions in the wages. There may be scarcity of work; the workers may wait about the factory for two or three hours, and that reduces the average rate per hour for the week.

3461. I am not talking of total earnings; I am speaking of piece-work payments mainly?—A man may revise his system in the factory, which enables him to reduce his piece-work rates. I was at a factory quite recently where they had introduced electrical power for driving the machines, and the contractor reduced his piece-work rates to the machinists accordingly.

3462. I have here some clauses which are generally inserted in the Post Office contracts; you can put these in for us, I presume?—Certainly.

3463. I notice that you forbid home-work?—That clause is inserted in all contracts for clothing and head-dresses, but it is not inserted in contracts for boots, because a portion of that work is done in the homes of the workers.

3464. You forbid any home-work in connection with the making of clothing?—That is so, and it is part of my duty to see that none of the work is done outside the factory. I have not come across a single instance where that clause has been contravened.

3465. And you strictly prohibit the transfer or sub-letting of work by one contractor to another?—Yes.

3466. Then you provide that the wages paid for all work performed under the contract shall be those generally accepted as current in each trade for a competent workman in the district where the work is carried out. How do you arrive at the current rate of payment?—There is no current rate of payment in the clothing trade; it is only in those trades where the workers combine and form Trade Unions where there really are current rates.

3467. Do you put this clause into the clothing contracts?—Yes.

3468. What is the current rate you refer to here?—With regard to the clothing, that would apply only to the cutters, and in the case of head-dress contracts to the body-makers of shakos and helmets.

3469. It says here. "The wages paid for all work shall be those generally accepted as current." Do I understand, as matter of fact, that in a great deal of the work you have no current rate?—That clause is inoperative in the case of unskilled and unorganised labour.

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Chairman—continued.

3470. Practically, unless you can have a Trade Union rate to guide you, you do not find it practicable to say what is the current rate?—That is so, but I should like to mention, in connection with that, that I take the particulars of the piece-work rates, and the wages paid by each contractor. I then make a comparative statement and put it before the Postmaster-General, which shows him clearly who are the best contractors and who are the unfavourable ones.

3471. We have had brought before us a schedule of rates which the London County Council has issued for the making of their clothing; what would you say with regard to that?—It is true that the London County Council issues a detailed schedule of rates to be paid under its contracts for clothing. But these contracts are very small in comparison with those issued by the Post Office, the War Office, and by some of the large railway companies. The workpeople are not, therefore, continuously employed on the work, but have to take a good portion of the cheaper class of work. The working of this system has been very carefully watched, and as a result Mr. Buxton is not convinced that it is the best means to adopt for improving the conditions of the workers.

3472. It was suggested to us that the fixing of these rates, what I might describe as good rates of payment, for the making of London County Council clothing had the effect of inducing manufacturers to give out a certain proportion of this work with another proportion of underpaid work which men or women would accept at very low rates because they got the higher rates for the County Council work. What would you say as to that?—I have heard the same remarks when I have been inspecting the factories, but I should not like to say it is so, and I should not like to contradict the statement.

3473. You have heard the statement made?—I have on several occasions heard that that is the practice—that the people are given some of the County Council work and a proportion of the cheaper class work.

3474. That would seem to suggest, would it not, that you do not do much good by raising prices for portions of the work only?—It would only touch something like the fringe of the trade.

3475. And it may be the means of enabling the price to be pressed down for other classes of work?—Yes, that is to say, if you have a schedule of rates for Government work you cannot make it apply to railway work, of which a large quantity is done. We could have no control over that; if he paid a good price for postmen's uniforms it would enable an unscrupulous contractor to still further lower the rates for railway clothing.

3476. Will you read the next sentence in your memorandum?—Mr. Buxton recognises the objection to the Government fixing wages on outside work; but under existing conditions, where there is no recognised rate, the Fair Wages Clause cannot be properly enforced.

3477. It is suggested here that he is going to try an experiment; will you explain that to us?—Mr. Buxton's idea is to get the Board of Trade, and, as a matter of fact, the Board of Trade Labour Department are now making inquiries of a large number of contractors for the supply of head-gear

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head-gear, and to take the wages paid by the best people and to fix a rate which Mr. Buxton will regard as being the rate current for the district.

3478. That is to say, he is getting the Board of Trade to make inquiries, to ascertain if there is any general rule for good payment?—Yes, that is what his intention is, to get the rates paid by the best people, and to regard these best rates as being the current rates for the district.

3479. Is that what you have tried to do before and failed to do?—No, this is Mr. Buxton's idea for improving the conditions of employment under the Post Office contracts. We have never done that before.

3480. But before, when you put the clause in that it had to be the current rate, what effort did you make to ascertain the current rate?—We know by experience that there is no current rate.

3481. How are the Board of Trade going to find what does not exist?—But my inspection is confined to contractors to the Post Office, whereas the Board of Trade will make their inquiries throughout the trade. There may be only half-a-dozen firms in London doing Post Office work, but there may be 20 or 30 in the trade on this class of work.

3482. But the Fair Wages Clause did not say anything about Government contracts only; it applied to the rate of wages current in the district. You made no effort to ascertain the rate of wages, except from Government Contractors?—That is so.

3483. You did not take a wider scope?—No.

3484. In connection with the head-gear, as you call it, are the people employed mainly men or women?—The majority of them are women.

3485. With no trade organisation?—Not for the women, but the body-makers of shakos and helmets have a Trade Union, and they have a piece rate which is paid by all the contractors to the Post Office.

3486. Has it been your idea that unless you can stipulate for a good rate of wages the best employers are rather debarred from competing for these contracts?—That is so; there is no doubt the work has gone away from the good contractors and has been given out to people who do not pay such good wages.

3487. They are enabled to get the contract because they cut the prices?—Yes.

3488. They cut the prices by cutting down the wages?—Yes, the wages are the only thing left in these contracts to cut. The Post Office supplies the cloth; the contractor buys it from the Post Office. He is not able to make anything on the cloth except that he may make a little profit by employing experienced cutters, so that his only field for profit is the wages of the workers.

3489. To what reasons do you attribute the fall in the rate of payment in these contracts?—There are three reasons which I think may be given as the cause of the fall in wages. There is, first, the large increase brought about by the late war in the number of firms who undertake the manufacture of uniform clothing.

3490. A great many firms went into that trade in connection with the war, and have continued in that trade since?—That is so, and the competition

Chairman—continued.

is much keener at the present time. Secondly, there is the abundance of female, some of it foreign labour, especially in London for this class of work.

3491. Has this increased?—It has increased considerably of late years; there is no difficulty in getting women for the unskilled portion of the work. They will come in at any price.

3492. Where do these women, so to speak, come from, or how is it that they are competing for this work now and did not do so before?—I think the tendency nowadays, especially with young girls, is to get into factories; they do not like domestic service, they prefer to go into the factories. It does not matter what wage they get, so long as they get some pocket-money; their parents are prepared to keep them, and they get their evenings to themselves. That is one of the reasons why there is such an abundance of female labour for factory work.

3493. What is the other reason?—The extension and development of the factory system of subdividing the processes of manufacture. A woman or a man very seldom takes a garment and makes it throughout; a woman may put in the sleeve only, and will be employed on nothing else but that.

3494. Why should that reduce the rate of wage?—She gets proficient in making a sleeve, but she can do nothing else; her work is unskilled, because she can only do one portion of the work, and then the contractor lowers the rate.

3495. At present, so far as you can see, the remedy which seems most practicable is to ascertain this current rate of wages?—Yes, to ascertain what is the current rate in the good firms, and to insist on that being paid under Government contracts.

3496. All your experience, or the greater part of it, is confined to factory work and not to home workers?—That is so.

3497. You do not inspect home workers at all?—No, I think the boot trade is the only exception in the case of Post Office contracts where a part of the work is done in the homes of the workers.

3498. Is there any other remark you would like to make?—With regard to the clauses in the contracts, I should like to say that Clause 12 is inserted in all contracts for tailoring and head-dresses.

3499. I thought if you would hand those in we would put them in the Appendix and so keep a record of them?—Very well.

Mr Fell.

3500. Did you say that all the contracts were made to run from the 1st April, 1906, to the 1st April, 1909?—Yes, all the tailoring contracts.

3501. Do they make them all at once? Are there not running contracts all the time? Did they all expire on the 31st March?—Yes, all the tailoring contracts terminated on the 31st March and the new ones commenced on the 1st April.

3502. There were none running through?—A contractor might have got an order on the old contract ending on the 31st March which would keep him going for three months after the new contract came into force.

3503. In

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3503. In these factories where these Post Office uniforms are made, are they working at other work as well?—Yes, it is all mixed up; some of the workers are doing Post Office work, some railway work, some War Office work, and some police uniforms and County Council clothing.

3504. You are only authorised to inspect and check Post Office clothing?—No, I do not confine my inquiries to the Post Office work; I take particulars of the wages they earn and the general conditions of their employment. The wages apply to their earnings on the work which they do, it does not matter whether it is Post Office or any other class of work.

3505. Would these wages books you inspected include other work besides the Post Office work?—Yes, there would be Metropolitan Police uniforms and municipal work included.

3506. You could not report to the Post Office that they were badly paid on Post Office work if they made low wages?—No, it is the wages which they receive generally, not for any particular class of work.

3507. They might have been making good wages on one set of uniforms and poor on another?—That is so, but my experience goes to show that with the exception of the London County Council and a few other municipal contracts the rates are about the same, that is to say, the contractor pays about the same for War Office work as for Post Office or railway work.

3508. That all applies to what I might call official uniforms?—Yes.

3509. Were they making civilian clothing as well?—Yes, the ready-made clothing was being made in some factories.

3510. By the same people?—Yes.

3511. And thus it is impossible for you to check?—It is not possible to check it, but I was able to ascertain what they earned on the work.

3512. From their wages books?—Yes, but there is really nothing to check, because there are no recognised piece-work rates for the work.

3513. Then you could not say that they were underpaid or overpaid on their piece-work with regard to the Post Office?—I use my own discretion; if a woman is getting about 3s. a week, I would naturally conclude that she is underpaid.

3514. But the bulk of her work may have been slop work?—Yes, it would not follow that it was all Post Office work; take some of the finishers, their average rate per hour per week varies from $\frac{1}{2}$ d. up to 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

3515. That you could only find from knowing how many of these particular garments they could make in the hour?—Yes; what I do is to ascertain how many hours they work in the week, and then to take the particulars of the wages, and work it out so as to show exactly what is the rate per hour. Of course I am speaking of unskilled labour.

3516. You could not classify them as "efficient" and "non-efficient"; some of them must be much faster workers than others?—Yes, some are much slower than others, and it is not possible to classify them. We have to take them as a body.

3517. Some could not have earned a living wage, they were so inefficient?—That is so.

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Mr. Fell—continued.

3518. They could only use the work as a supplementary matter?—I have known instances of girls not attempting to work hard because they only wanted to earn sufficient to find them in pocket-money. There is no incentive to them to earn good money, because they would have to take it home to their mothers.

3519. That is a very unsatisfactory condition of employment to consider?—Yes, that is the unsatisfactory class of competition.

3520. You must find a worker who is not wishing to go slowly and only to do a little?—Yes, I have often had them pointed out to me by the foremen in the work-rooms. If I find a girl earning very little money, I ask her why it is, she says: "I am satisfied with what I am getting"; and if I speak to the foreman, he tells me, "That is one of the girls living at home, and she does not want to earn more."

3521. But they work the same factory hours?—Yes, and they get the same piece-work rates for their work.

3522. Only they do very little?—They do very little.

3523. You gave us as one of the reasons why prices had fallen that women, by the sub-division of labour, become more efficient?—They become efficient in that particular operation.

3524. For instance, putting in a sleeve?—Directly they sub-divide the work, they sub-divide all the piece-work rates.

3525. But you might earn more at putting in sleeves at a low price than making the whole garment at a higher price, might you not, if you became very efficient at putting in sleeves?—Yes; but still the contractor can get any number of women and girls to put in the sleeves, where he can only get one to make the coat throughout; so that if he wants a coat made throughout he must pay a much higher price in proportion to the piece-work rates for the sub-divided operations.

3526. They can get abundance of this labour to do it by sub-divided piece-work?—Any quantity of it.

3527. Did you notice if many of these people were foreigners?—In London there is a fair proportion of foreigners—Jewesses.

3528. And men too?—Yes, a fair proportion.

3529. When you describe these people as being ready to take any price for the work, would they be foreigners or English?—I think it applies generally to the trade; I do not think the English women and girls would refuse to accept a lower rate, if they wanted to get the work.

3530. We were told by a Jewish gentleman that the Jews would not accept such low prices as the English took; they were so efficient as tailors?—I do not think that is so; I do not think it makes any difference. As I say, the competition is so keen in the trade that they will take practically any price.

3531. There is a large number of foreigners employed in making these Post Office garments?—No, I should not like to say a large number; there is a fair proportion, but not a large number. I doubt whether it is 50 per cent. in London.

3532. That would be half. Do you think it is one-third, or 33 per cent.?—There might be a third, or between a third and a half.

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3533. Do

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[Continued.]

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

3533. Do I gather that there was no inspection of Government contract work before you were appointed?—There was not.

3534. That was due to Mr Buxton's initiative?—That is so.

3535. Were the contract prices fixed in the spring of 1906 in all cases, or in most cases, lower than those which had previously prevailed?—I am unable to say with certainty, but I think the tendency was to introduce lower rates, because I believe the contracts which were allotted were lower in price.

3536. Would you say that the price the Government pays to these contractors is, on the whole, so low that it is impossible for the contractors to pay decent wages?—I am representing the Post Office, and I do not know whether I can give my personal opinion upon that point.

3537. I will not press it. Is there any reason why you should not inspect the home-work that is done for the Post Office—say in the boots?—No reason whatever.

3538. Why do you not do so?—Because in the boot trade they have a very strong Trade Union, and the Trade Union fixes the rate of payment to be given for home-work. When I go to the factories, I have a look at the home-work book, and I see that the out-workers are getting this rate for their work. There is a printed schedule showing what the rates should be, so that I am able to keep a check on the rates paid to the people.

3539. So that you think we need not trouble ourselves as to the home-work done under these Post Office contracts?—I think not, it is so very small, and the boot trade is the only one affected.

3540. I suppose you would say that the Post Office demand is much more steady and much less seasonal than in many other forms of industry?—That is so; we arrange most of our contracts with the deliveries spread over the 12 months, so as to secure continuous employment.

3541. You would say, broadly, that although the pay is as a rule fairly low, it is as a rule much more regular than in some other trades where the pay may be higher?—Yes.

Mr. Brunner.

3542. Is your experience all in London?—No, I go all over the country; I have quite recently come back from Limerick from inspecting a factory there.

3543. Post Office contracts are given broadcast over the United Kingdom?—Yes, that is so. I have a note here to show, with regard to the tailoring, that it is given out to eight factories in London and 11 in the Provinces, and about 6,000 workpeople are employed wholly or partly on the work.

3544. Including Ireland and Scotland?—Yes. As to head dresses, we give the work out to three factories in London and three in the Provinces, and 800 workpeople are employed. As to waterproof clothing, the work is given out to three factories in London and four in the Provinces; and with regard to boots, they are given out to six firms in Northamptonshire.

Mr. Robinson.

3545. As regards those workers who do not want to earn much money, your only proof of that fact is the statement of the foreman, I take it?—That is so in most cases.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

3546. I gather from your evidence that what is known as the Fair Wages Clause and the Current Wages Clause under Government contracts have quite failed to secure good wages for the worker?—Yes, where there is no organisation among the workers.

3547. Have you read Mr. Buckner's evidence before this Committee?—Yes.

3548. If you will refer to page 134, Question No. 2567, he was asked: "Can you account for the fact that whilst you have a presumed safeguard in Government work that current wages are to be paid, yet within a short period the price of khaki jackets goes from 2s. 7½d. to 1s. 5½d. By what means can 1s. 5½d. be regarded as the current wages within such a short time?" And his reply was: "That is entirely left to an Inspector"?—He is referring to War Office clothing there, not to the Post Office.

3549. If you go on further to Question 2569, he refers to the Inspector of the Post Office Department, and in fact he says something rather complimentary, of you, I presume?—Yes, it is very kind of him.

3550. I want to ask you, if it is left to you to define what are current wages, how do you approve of such a very large reduction in the wage in a very limited time as being the current rate of wages?—Since I have been appointed I have made a point of bringing to notice any reductions of the kind.

3551. That is a perfectly legitimate proceeding, but what I wish to ask you is, why do you, if I may so put it, approve of a reduction in wage as being the current rate? Upon what ground do you do it?—In the first place, as I have already pointed out, there is no current rate in the trade.

3552. In answer to my question, the representative of the employees says it is left entirely to the Inspector; you practically are the man who has the fixing of the wage as being the current rate?—Oh no, decidedly not; we do not fix the rate.

3553. You can say to Mr. Buxton: "These men are being paid at what I consider not the current rate." When a man cuts the price to the Post Office and pays his men lower rates than have been current before, it seems to me perfectly within the purview of your office to say to Mr. Buxton: "This man is not paying the current wages"?—Cases have occurred in which the contractor has lowered his rates, and we have insisted on his reverting to the original rates.

3554. Upon what ground?—We considered the rate under the old contract, or the rate which obtained when the contract commenced, was quite low enough.

3555. That it was the current rate of wages, in other words?—That it was the rate which obtained then.

3556. You made the contractor raise his wages because he was paying what, in your opinion, I take it, was below the current rate of wages; that

is

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Mr. FUGEMAN.

[Continued

Mr. *Stuart Samuel*—continued.

is the only ground upon which you could act?—That is so.

3557. Therefore I put it to you that there must have been in your mind a current rate of wage?—There were several matters to be considered; one contractor in particular fixed all his piece-work rates at the commencement of the contract, and when I inspected the factory the second time a few months afterwards, I found he had lowered a lot of these piece-work rates; I knew from the extracts which I had taken from the wages books that the workpeople were not getting very good wages, and I drew Mr. Buxton's special attention to it, and said, "These people are getting small wages, and the contractor has reduced the piece-work rates."

3558. I put it to you: is it necessary to bring the Board of Trade or any other body into the question when you have full power, you yourself personally, to prevent any reduction in the wages as not being the current rate? Ought you not to be the man to safeguard the wages of the workers?—Yes, but we cannot always do so; we cannot say what is the current rate without getting particulars.

3559. It appears to me that you could say what was the current rate if you felt so inclined. May I ask you another question: What were the considerations which weighed with the Post Office when you prohibited any home-work? Why did you prohibit it?—The object was to prevent sweating, as we should not have sufficient control over the workpeople.

3560. Why do you have sufficient control over the workpeople in the boot trade?—That happens to be the custom in the trade, and the quantity of work done by the trade for the Post Office is not sufficiently large for us to insist on an alteration of a practice which is general in the trade.

3561. Do I understand you to say that sweating is a custom in the boot trade?—No, I do not say so.

3562. May I put it to you that if home-work is undesirable in the clothing trade surely it is undesirable in the boot trade?—But we have only a limited number of boots made annually, and we could not insist on the trade altering a practice which has been followed for years.

3563. In the mind of the Post Office sweating in the boot trade must be as undesirable as in the clothing trade?—Yes, but, as I have already pointed out, the Trade Union in the boot trade governs the rate of pay to be paid to the out-workers, and we are able to check that when we visit the factories; we are able to see that these out-workers do get the current rate.

3564. There is a Trade Union in the boot trade, but there is not in the clothing trade?—That is so; there is the difficulty.

3565. May I ask your opinion on this? The evidence we have had with regard to the London County Council is that although the London County Council pays a good price for making a coat there is put with it the same coat by the same manufacturers at a lower rate of wage which the worker is glad to take owing to the better rate he gets on the County Council work, which means that the intention of the County Council is defeated. I put it to you

Mr. *Stuart Samuel*—continued.

that the Government might combine with the County Council and only employ manufacturers where their schedule obtained, where the Government work and the County Council work was the only work done, and where nothing was done under the rate fixed by the Government and the County Council. Would not that be an improvement in the position of the workers; I ask your personal opinion about that?—I do not think there would be sufficient work to keep the workers going in big factories under such conditions. They do not rely on Government work only to keep their factories going.

3566. Surely if the London County Council and the Government were to combine to have a joint schedule, they would be able to employ a sufficient number of contractors to ensure that their conditions were fulfilled? I should think there would be a rush for the work, would there not?—I do not think myself that there would be sufficient work.

3567. The Board of Trade, I understand, are to make inquiries and fix a minimum rate of payment in the clothing trade?—That is the intention in the cap and shako contracts.

3568. That is practically a sort of embryo Wages Board, is it not?—I suppose it would be; they are going to ascertain the wages paid by the best contractors, and Mr. Buxton is going to accept that as being the rate current for the district.

3569. In your evidence you have stated that foreign women, Jewesses, are largely employed in the tailoring trade?—In London.

3570. That is quite contrary to the whole of the evidence we have had. May I ask you in what factories you have seen them?—I think I said they formed between a third and a half of the whole people employed.

3571. Will you tell me where you have seen them?—Messrs. Myers & Co., Cambridge Road, Bethnal Green, and Messrs. Hebbert & Co., Bethnal Green Road. There are other firms, the names of which I will give to the Honourable Member if he desires them.

Mr. *G. P. Gooch*.

3572. You have said that in the boot trade there is a Trade Union which fixes pay, not only for the in-work, but also for the home-work?—Yes.

3573. When you say it fixes the pay, you also mean that the contractors recognise that pay and pay it?—Yes, the rates were fixed by a joint committee representing the boot operatives and the Government contractors.

3574. That is still going on?—Yes, they agreed on those rates I think about a year ago, and they are to run for two years without alteration.

Mr. *Massie*.

3575. Do the home workers ever belong to the Union? Have they any connection with the Union?—I think all the men do, but I do not think the women do.

Mr. *Brunner*.

3576. I wanted to ask whether the contracts which are give out in London and in the provinces differ

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Mr. FUGEMAN.

[Continued.]

Mr. Massie—continued.

differ in regard to price: in the first place, are the London contracts higher in price?—Yes, when the work is given out to country factories it is always done at a cheaper rate.

3577. And do the workers themselves get higher piece rates in London than in the provinces?—They get less in the provinces.

Mr. Parkes.

3578. May I ask whether in fixing contracts you go to a selected few? Are they selected firms or is it a matter of open competition between all firms when contracts are offered by the Post Office?—It is by competition open to the trade.

Chairman.

3579. You have a list have you not?—We have a list for certain trades. I have not the memorandum with me, but in the case of some stores the competition is open to the trade; in others, we invite a limited number of selected firms to compete, and in other instances there is no competition, it is given out to a firm.

3580. How is that done?—For the moment I forget why it is, but there are good reasons why there should be no competition in certain cases.

3581. By what process do you arrive at the fact that proper wages are paid by a particular firm?—It is my duty to find out; when a contract is placed, it is my duty to go to the factory and see that they are acting up to the conditions of the contract. If I have the least suspicion

Chairman—continued.

that a firm is not paying the rate which is current in the district, then I make inquiries to find out.

3582. You said just now that in some cases there were no standard rates?—In the clothing trade for instance there are no current rates.

3583. How do you do in a case like that?—All we can do in a case like that is to get particulars of the wages paid by all the contractors and make comparisons.

3584. But they are not standard rates?—No, but if we get six firms in London who pay about the same we get some idea as to what is the rate current in the trade.

3585. I understand you have declined to have your goods made by home workers?—Yes, uniform clothing, it has all to be done on the premises.

3586. Why is that?—To prevent sweating; we have not sufficient control over the outworkers in the clothing trade.

3587. You said just now there was one case of a contractor who paid a certain rate at the beginning of the contract, and then reduced the price later on; would not that be a form of sweating?—Yes, Mr. Buxton regarded it as so, and he compelled the man to revert to his old rates.

3588. You could not altogether prevent sweating in the factory any more than you could prevent sweating in the home?—No, I think not; my personal opinion is that there is already sweating going on in the factories.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Thursday, 30th April, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Brunner.

Mr. Fell.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

Mr. Arthur Henderson.

Mr. Massie.

Mr. Chiozza Money.

Mr. Parkes.

Mr. Robinson.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

MR STUART SAMUEL IN THE CHAIR.

Miss IDA HOLDEN called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

3589. You are connected with the Women's Labour League?—Yes.

3590. What position do you occupy there?—

Chairman—continued.

I am not in the Women's Labour League; I am only a home-worker.

3591. You are the home-worker who showed the

the

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Miss HOLDEN.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

the costume at the Bishopsgate Institute?—No, but I have made similar costumes to that shown at the Institute.

3592. You wish to make a statement to the Committee; will you do so?—I have made costumes similar to the costume that was shown at the Institute.

3593. What payment did you receive for making that costume?—1s. 3d., and some at 1s. 4d.

3594. Have you anything to pay out of that 1s. 3d.?—I have to buy cotton and pay the fare to the City and back.

3595. But you would not pay the fare for one costume, would you?—Not one alone; we have two or three at one time.

3596. Therefore that 2d. would be spread over several costumes, would it not?—Perhaps one or two.

3597. I think that a similar costume was shown at the Bishopsgate Institute as having been paid for at 1s. 1d.?—Machining only, and 2d. for the finishing.

3598. Do you complete the costume entirely for that payment?—For the 1s. 3d.

3599. Do you cut it out?—No, we do not cut it out.

3600. You do the finishing?—Just the making.

3601. You have to provide your own cotton, and you have to pay the woman who sews in the lining something?—Yes, if I employ one.

3602. How would you account for the fact that whilst you say you receive 1s. 3d. and 1s. 4d. for making this costume, Mr. Cohen stated that he was willing to pay a considerably higher rate than that, and that this was not the rate that was current in the trade. Have you made any attempt to get better payment?—In my position I cannot get better payment; I have to have work from the middle-woman or the middleman, and I have to take it at a cheaper rate.

3603. You are working for a middleman?—Yes.

3604. Do you know what he receives for that costume?—I cannot tell you what he receives for it.

3605. What induced you to go to the middleman?—Because in the larger places they will not give it out in small quantities to a small person.

3606. Therefore you are practically working for what is usually termed a sweater when such wages as those are paid. You do not know yourself what the middleman gets for these costumes?—No.

3607. Have you worked at any other place besides for this middleman?—One or two places similar.

3608. You have always worked for the middleman?—I have always worked for the middleman.

3609. Have you seen Mr. Cohen's evidence?—Yes.

3610. You have never received such payments as he speaks of?—No, and I do not know anybody else who has.

3611. Have you been to Mr. Cohen since the proceedings here, and asked him if he would employ you at the rate he stated?—No, I have not seen him at all.

3612. That does not argue that you know where to take your labour to the best market, does it,

Chairman—continued.

considering that Mr. Cohen has said he was quite willing to pay the worker a much higher fee, and you have not been there?—I have not been there.

3613. Do you remember what it was that Mr. Cohen said he was willing to pay for the same costume?—Something like 3s. 6d. I think.

Mr. Parkes.

3614. How long does it take you to make that garment?—If you get thoroughly into it it will take about 3 hours or 3½ hours, but over the first one I will sometimes take nearly all day.

3615. Does that mean you could make two or three a day?—If you get thoroughly into them not any more, if that.

3616. Have you any idea what the garment is worth for selling?—They are sold for 12s. 11d. and 16s. 11d., I know.

3617. You have no idea how much the material costs or anything of that kind, I suppose?—Not to the wholesale makers.

3618. Cannot you do without the middleman in your business?—No, because I cannot do the quantity; you see I am obliged to work at home, as I have an invalid mother.

3619. You cannot go to the warehouse or shop and take out the work yourself?—They will not give it to me.

3620. And you have no idea what the middleman gets?—No.

3621. Even at that work you can make fairly good wages in the week, I suppose?—If we have plenty of it, but we have such a lot of slack time.

3622. If you had continuous work, how much could you earn in a week at that?—I can earn 13s. to 14s. That is a good week you see. I do a little private work at home as well when I get it.

3623. Did you want to correct any statement in coming here this morning?—No, I do not think so.

Mr. G. P. Gooch

3624. Would it be possible for you to combine with other home-workers, and together get enough work from the factory to make it worth their while to do without the middleman?—That would make it practically the same as the middleman.

3625. Surely not; supposing half-a-dozen of you went together, or one of you went for five or six others, you would then be able to take out a good deal of work, and surely you would thereby save the middleman?—Yes.

3626. Could not you do that?—Yes, if you could get them, you could.

3627. Have you ever tried?—No, I have not; you see you want influence and expenditure to do things like that.

3628. On this paper here which is circulated to us, it says that you cannot get work from the factory directly, because they do not give it out in sufficiently small quantities. I should have thought you could have got over that difficulty by a number of you combining together and taking it out in a large quantity, and then dividing the work between you. Why do you not try that?—If you could all agree.

3629. Why cannot you ask some of your
— colleagues

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Miss HOLDEN.

[Continued.]

Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

colleagues to try?—I do not know enough of them.

Mr. Arthur Henderson.

3630. You have told the Committee that you thought you could make at these garments 13s. or 14s a week if you were fully employed?—Yes.

3631. Could you give us any idea of the number of hours you would require to work in the week to make that 13s. or 14s. ?—In the week altogether or each day?

Mr. Arthur Henderson—continued.

3632. Put it as you like as long as we reach the 13s. or 14s. in the aggregate?—Sometimes I start at 7 o'clock in the morning and work right up to 11 or half-past 11 at night.

3633. For six days?—For five days, and then half of Saturday.

3634. What would you work on the Saturday?—About four or five hours.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Wednesday, 6th May, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.

Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.
Sir Thomas Whittaker.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. ERNEST AVES called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

3635. We understand that you have been out to Australia to look into the operation of the various laws there affecting wages and conditions, and we have had an advance copy confidentially supplied to us of your Report, which is shortly to be published. We do not, therefore, want to get your Report on to our Minutes, but just a few points about it I will ask you, which I think it desirable we should get on record. You deal with the Colonies separately. Commencing with Victoria, will you kindly tell us what is the difference between a Special Board and a Wages Board?—There is no difference.

3636. You refer to a "Special Board" in your Report?—I really have used both terms. My own feeling is that "Special Board," which is the term used in the Act, is the preferable term, because it suggests a wider reference, but they are identical.

3637. Will you tell us what this Special Board is—as to its powers; is it an Arbitration Board, or is it a Board fixing wages?—It is an Arbitration Board only through the possible intervention of the Chairman. Primarily, it is a body established

Chairman—continued.

to fix wages. Its legal powers are to fix a minimum, to lay down conditions with regard to the payment of overtime, to fix the number of improvers to adults, and to fix the wages of improvers and apprentices.

3638. Does it do this in the case of specified trades or does it do it only when it is appealed to on behalf of any trade?—No, it does it on behalf of specified trades, quite apart from any possible appeal.

3639. Who pays the representatives of the employees?—The State.

3640. There is an allowance of 10s. per sitting, I think?—Yes, 10s. or 5s.; but it is quite small.

3641. It is paid by the State?—Yes.

Mr. Fell.

3642. Per member?—Yes.

Chairman.

3643. And the Government of Victoria also provides the rooms?—Practically they meet all expenses, which are small.

3644. When a decision is given, I understand that

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Mr. AVES.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

that if it is accepted then it has the force of law?—It has the force of law. A date is recommended or fixed by the Board when the determination is sent in to the Minister, who is the Minister of Labour. Assuming that the determination is gazetted, that is the date at which the determination has the effect of law.

3645. There is a provision, is there not, under which, if serious objection is taken to the decision, the Minister of Labour can be approached?—That is so.

3646. What occurs then?—It would depend upon the nature of the objections raised.

3647. He can suspend the decision, can he not?—He can suspend the decision on his own initiative for six months; that is to say, he can refer it back for reconsideration, pointing out anything in the determination that seems to him of the nature of a defect as involving unfairness or an anomaly, and supposing he himself does not wish to take this step, representations can be made to him by any body which considers itself prejudiced by the determination. In order to secure such representations as I say in my Report, in practice he makes the determination public in the Press before it is gazetted; everybody has a chance of reading it. If any other trade or any group of people in the trade concerned feel there is something in the determination that will do them great harm, that would involve either something in the nature of an anomaly or a great unfairness to some other trade or their own section of the trade concerned, they have the right of appeal; but it does not follow that on that representation any action would be taken. As I also mention in the Report, although this power of the Minister to suspend or refer back the determination was more frequently used in the early days, it is less frequently used now, and the power, although important in principle, is much less important in practice now, because of the powers of the Court of Industrial Appeal.

3648. Coming to that point, if any of the parties are dissatisfied with the decision, they can appeal to the Court of Appeal?—Yes.

3649. Can anyone else outside appeal against that decision, or is the appeal limited to the actual employees and employers?—You mean any member of the third party, the public?

3650. Yes?—I believe not.

3651. They only have the right to call the attention of the Minister of Labour to the question?—Yes.

3652. But they have no power to ask for an appeal to a higher Court?—I think I am right in that; certainly the power has not been exercised, and I do not think they have it.

3653. When a decision has been given and has got the force of law, who can institute proceedings for a breach?—The Department, on the sanction of the Minister.

3654. That is to say, an employee or an employer cannot, without the sanction of the Department?—Yes, he can take his own independent action.

3655. Anyone can?—Anyone.

3656. It is not necessary to obtain the sanction of the Minister?—No. It must be understood, however, that employers have practically no

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Chairman—continued.

standing in the Courts as complainants. Thus, while no penalty attaches to an employee for receiving less than the legal rate of wages, proceedings for paying less can be taken against the employer and arrears claimed up to 12 months.

3657. As you are aware, we are inquiring into the conditions of home-work, and our recommendations will have to be limited to home-workers and trades in which home-work is prevalent; therefore, much of your Report only indirectly bears upon our Inquiry?—Yes.

3658. I gather from your Report that home-workers are a comparatively small element in Victoria?—That is so.

3659. With regard to the registration of workers, it is required, I understand, is it not, that both employers and the workpeople should register?—Yes.

3660. That is, it is not left to the employer to register his workpeople, but the workpeople themselves must register?—Yes, that is so in the clothing trade group—the underclothing and shirt-making, and so forth, but it does not mean that an out-worker, supposing there were such, in saddlery, would have to register.

3661. Just in these particular trades?—Yes.

3662. And the law only applies to them?—That is so.

3663. Is there any penalty on the workman or workwoman for not registering?—The Act gives power to impose a penalty up to 10s., but the power has, I think, not been exercised.

3664. How is the registration on the part of the workman or workwoman enforced?—I think it can hardly be said to be enforced; it is done to a very great extent, supposing the step is not taken voluntarily, on the initiative or suggestion of Inspectors, and it has to be remembered that in a place like Melbourne, where practically all the out-workers live, there is a most intimate knowledge possessed by the Department of the people concerned. The Reports, for instance, show in connection with the dressmakers, when that determination came into force, I think in 1904, that dressmakers working in their own homes were seen by lady Inspectors, and their duty to register was brought home to them; but there is hardly compulsion.

3665. Does the Board fix the wages of these home-workers?—Yes.

3666. Does it fix piece rates?—Specifically in some cases, as in the clothing trade, tailoring. When I spoke of the clothing trade group a moment ago I was including in it all trades connected with the making of clothing of any description; when I spoke of the clothing trade just now, I was referring specially to the tailoring trade. There is a piece-work scale laid down in the tailoring trade, and for out-workers among shirt-workers, but no piece-work scale is laid down in the underclothing or dressmaking or millinery.

3667. How do they fix the payment in those trades for the home-workers only?—They fix it by an instruction; it being recognised, of course, that home-work must be piece-work, there is an instruction which forms part of the determination that piece-work scales must be so arranged or so based that they must represent the minimum

time-rate

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Mr. Aves.

[Continued]

Chairman—continued.

time-rate per hour laid down in the determination. Might I ask a question?

3668. By all means?—With the proof that has been sent round, I suppose the Appendix has not been included?

3669. No?—I am very sorry for that, as there are specimen determinations there which cover the very point you have just mentioned.

3670. How do they ascertain what rate per hour the piece-rate is equivalent to?—That is not an easy question to answer, but the decision is arrived at largely on the judgment of the Inspectors, the Inspectors being in some cases experts in the trades concerned, and, of course, having among the workers those whom they know and whom they can trust. Might I illustrate what I think would frequently take place? When I was in Melbourne I went to a small workroom with a visitor. A woman was working on certain garments at a certain price; it does not matter what the price was. The visitor raised the question as to whether the price at which she was working represented 4d. an hour. The woman said: "Hardly. I should only take this work in to fill in time." The visitor said: "Well, I wish you would just consider; just work one of those and tell me how it compares with the legal time." Necessarily individual workers have the right, supposing they found themselves being sent work at a piece rate which did not equal the legal minimum time rate, to complain; so that when you ask me how it is settled in practice, ultimately it depends upon the acceptance or refusal of the work by the individual concerned.

3671. And could only be raised really by a complaint?—That is so.

3672. Which you would recognise would be a matter of very considerable difficulty in this country, where the home-worker is not in a position to raise these complaints?—Very great.

3673. But there is no other method of settling the rate?—No.

3674. And practically they do not fix the rates for home-work. At the bottom of page 47 of your Report you will find it?—In those trades, such as millinery and dressmaking and underclothing in which no piece-work scale is laid down, but in which there is a certain amount of home-work, the Boards attempted to draw up a piece-work scale, but gave up the attempt as hopeless, and in the determination of the Dressmakers' Board, for instance, under the clause dealing with piece-work rates, they lay down the position as follows: "Any employer may fix and pay piece-work rates for wholly or partly preparing or manufacturing articles of women's, girls', and childrens' outer clothing or wearing apparel, provided that such employer shall base such piece-work prices or rates on the earnings of an average worker working under like conditions, and such piece-work prices or rates shall be fixed so that an average worker can earn not less than 4d. per hour, being the rate fixed."

3675. Throughout your Report there is the suggestion running that it is possible to fix these rates—not the particular ones I have now been referring to, but generally—of payment successfully if there is no competition coming in from out-

Chairman—continued.

side the State or area where the rate is fixed for?—Yes.

3676. Was your experience, or did you gather from your inquiries there, that it was recognised that outside competition might be a considerable difficulty?—My general impression is—but there are certain exceptions—that the success of these determinations is contingent upon Protection. The exceptions, however, are illustrated in certain trades in which it is possible by a rearrangement of the work, by the introduction of mechanical appliances, greatly to decrease the cost of production, and of course there is always this point to be borne in mind, which I hope I have not forgotten in my Report, that excessively low wages are not the cheapest wage, so that it does not follow that because more money is paid in the shape of wages, therefore in all cases the cost of production is increased. But, in reply to your general question as to what the position is, my general answer is that the success of these determinations is contingent upon Protection.

3677. But you have in your Report in another portion, which we will come to, indicated that in trades where the payment has been increased, the cost of production has not been increased?—That is so, which are trades of the kind that I have just attempted to describe.

3678. The tendency being, I presume, to stimulate improvement by economies in other directions?—That is so.

3679. When a rate is fixed as the minimum rate, does that tend to become the maximum rate or is it recognised that that is a low rate, and that higher payments are made?—The general tendency is for the minimum to become the maximum, but there are many exceptions. I think there are more exceptions than are generally realised, and at the present moment, for instance, in many trades, the proportion of those who are earning above the minimum is very considerable.

3680. You recognise in your Report, of course, that some 15 years or so ago or more the whole of Australasia passed through a time of severe depression, with the result that wages and everything fell?—Yes.

3681. Consequently, the improvement which has been manifest there since then has been largely a recovery from a time of extraordinary and special depression?—That is so.

3682. Am I correct in gathering that your view is that the working and general acceptance of the decisions of Wages Board and Arbitration Boards has been very much facilitated by the fact that results from that, that they have been decisions for higher wages as a rule?—That is so.

3683. And you are not quite clear as to what might be the general acceptance of these decisions if a time came, as possibly it may come, when the decisions will have to go the other way?—That is so; in no case practically throughout the whole of Australasia has that difficulty—that time of testing—arrived yet, the only illustration in which to any considerable extent there has been a decline in wages legally fixed having been in the Western Australian goldfields, which are subject, however, to special conditions.

3684. With regard to home-workers, who are of course mainly women, is it the fact that throughout Australia

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Australia, speaking broadly, you may say there is a scarcity of female labour?—Undoubtedly.

3685. Therefore the conditions are very different in that respect from what is the case here?—That is so. I should say that there is a scarcity of female labour, but there is more emphatically a scarcity of competent female labour.

3686. With regard to enforcing those decisions, and coming to the case which you illustrated where the visitor asked the worker how much she could earn per hour, if you have to rely upon the information of the worker and a complaint from the worker, it is obvious, is it not, that if the worker and the employer are together agreed to accept a low rate, if there is collusion, it is almost impossible to avoid evasion of the law?—One of my sentences in the Report is, I believe: "If there is collusion, the Department is helpless."

3687. Do you think collusion and such evasion would be easy? Would it be discovered?—I think that in many cases it would be discovered, but, as I also point out, the present is not a time at which the risks of collusion are really being seriously incurred. There is such an abounding prosperity, and employment is so abundant that there is no particular risk at the present moment of either evasion or collusion.

3688. I find on page 55, referring to the effect upon prices, in the last two sentences you say: "The Special Boards themselves may or may not have sent wages up to the extent often assumed or even at all. The fact remains that in several trades in which wages have tended upwards, there is much testimony to the fact that neither cost nor price have been similarly affected, and in some instances it has been admitted that they have tended in the opposite direction"?—Yes.

3689. Clearly, where that would be so, these decisions could be maintained irrespective of outside competition?—That is so.

3690. What is the general feeling as to the effect that the operation of these Boards would have upon Trade Unions? Does it strengthen them? Do they seem to take the place of the Trade Union and remove one of the reasons for work-people joining a Trade Union?—I think the general tendency of such legislation is in that direction, but naturally the relation of Wages Board determinations to the Trade Unions varies very much as between trade and trade—as between, let us say, the woodworkers and the shirt-makers, and I may point out that the Special Boards cover trades which we, in this country, and they in Australia would regard as the organised trades as well as those which are unorganised or disorganised; so that when one asks what the effect upon Trade Unions is, one has to answer the question in relation to this or that group of trades.

3691. Is there organisation among the home-workers in Victoria?—No, none.

3692. We have had this point put before us here—that one of the difficulties with regard to home-workers is that it is almost impossible to organise them into Trade Unions?—Yes.

3693. The point that was on my mind was, if Boards do not take the place of Trade Unions or make Trade Unions more difficult to form, would it have the effect of making it even still more difficult here to get organisation amongst the home-

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workers?—One very important part that the Trade Unions do play in Melbourne is to assist in the enforcement of determinations. They constantly report to the Department that in such and such an instance so-and-so is being paid below the legal rate. Now I think myself, as I say in the Report, that practically the legal rates are observed among women, but if conditions were such that there was constantly evasion among that class, the motive for organisation among that class would naturally become stronger. Now in this country the risks, I think, of evasion and collusion would be certainly vastly greater than they are in Melbourne at the present time, and therefore, from that point of view, even although the class may be very hard to organise, the motive for organisation would be stronger here than in Victoria.

3694. On page 58 you point out that the effect of putting the rates of payment up has been a tendency to eliminate the less efficient workers, the slower and the old?—Yes.

3695. Would that apply in the case of payment by piece rates?—Not to anything like the same extent.

3696. Therefore, may we take it that it would not be likely to operate in connection with home-work, where the rates must be piece rates?—Not to anything like the same extent.

3697. You are really referring to the effect of time rates?—Especially, yes.

3698. When you indicate to us that the effect of raising the rates of payment of wages is practically to increase the number of unemployables, that means time rates, and not piece rates?—Yes. I think on page 60 the reference is specially to the boot and shoe trade. In that particular trade, of course, it does tend to affect piece-workers to this extent, that in many factories piece-workers are not employed. A time-rate and the organisation of the workshop on a time-rate basis is found to be more efficient, more economical, and therefore piece-work finds no place. In that case, therefore, the piece-worker also might be prejudiced.

3699. On page 67, with regard to the home-workers, you refer to what may be described as detached and independent home-workers?—Yes.

3700. I suppose by that you mean workers who are practically traders themselves; that is, they make the thing and sell it when made; they do not take work out, and are not paid for a particular amount of work?—That is so.

3701. But they produce the article, and then sell it?—Yes.

3702. They work at home?—Yes.

3703. What effect would the development of that be likely to have on ordinary home-workers as we experience them here? Would that method lend itself to evasion of any regulations that might be made?—It might to a very considerable extent. On the English analogy, one of the best illustrations would be the furniture trade, where you have the "one man in workshop" suddenly starting up. The analogy in Australia, in Victoria, does not hold, because in that particular trade, where the Chinese intervene, a one-man workshop is a factory under the Act and although there is in the general opinion a great deal of evasion on the part of the Chinese, you have there an instance of the multiplication through

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the Act of those one-man places—all practically detached workers. The importance of that question, in my own mind, was due to this: that if rates were laid down which it was hard for certain members of any particular trade to earn, it seemed to me that their natural resource would be to fall back upon the independent use of their own special skill. It was with that risk or possibility in my mind that I set the question going, and, as I say in my Report, with very little result.

3704. But, of course, the difficulty would be that they would have to provide their own materials?—Yes.

3705. And these people are poor?—Yes.

3706. And also they have not the same means of ascertaining what kind of thing is desired and required?—That is so; they are handicapped in many ways.

3707. At page 69 you say something about the sweater and point out quite fairly that, although a man may be paying a low rate, it does not follow that he is a sweater in the offensive sense of the term, that he is himself making a large profit out of the workpeople?—Yes.

3708. He may have his own prices very much cut down by competition?—Quite so.

3709. You suggest there, I think, that one of the advantages that might result, or would result, from the fixing of a definite rate of payment is that he could not force down rates?—Yes.

3710. And he might be quite willing that he should not be able to force them down?—Quite so.

3711. He is only obliged to force them down because others do?—Quite so.

3712. It would level up the rates?—That is so.

3713. You also indicate on page 72 that the fixing of higher rates might increase the number of improvers and apprentices, and tend to drive out the adult worker?—Yes.

3714. That would not be so with piece-work rates, would it?—No.

3715. And, therefore, would not be so in the case of home-workers; it does not matter to the employer who does the work, whether they are young or old, or whether they are a long time over it or a short time; he pays by result, so to speak?—If piece-work rates are paid throughout.

3716. That difficulty of encouraging improvers and apprentices at the expense of adult workers would not arise in connection with home-work?—Except indirectly, that if a larger proportion of juvenile labour were employed in the factory, it might diminish the amount available for distribution amongst those who were piece-workers and, therefore, home-workers.

3717. Then you refer to the device that has been adopted out there, and which has been voluntarily tried in this country of labelling goods?—Yes.

3718. I rather gather that that has been a failure there?—Yes, it has been attempted in connection with the furniture trade, especially to check the Chinese competition.

3719. Would you tell us how it is that it failed?—Furniture stocked by any dealer under this Act must be labelled with the name and address of the maker. If that name and address are

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those of some easily-reached maker, who is known possibly almost as well to the customer as to the dealer, the customer would be tempted to go to the actual maker and, if possible, save the intermediate profit. The risk of that diversion to the maker is not so great in connection with the Chinese, and therefore the Chinese are to a certain extent benefited by this actual regulation, and, as I say in my Report, the importer naturally is not affected by it at all. The result is that many dealers prefer to stock either imported or Chinese-made material to the labelled home-made European article.

3720. On page 74 you indicate that the warehouseman is somewhat responsible for low rates of payment?—Yes. I wish to put him in his proper place. He takes his place as an important section of the trade concerned, which plays its part in the fixing of wages.

3721. Yet it is difficult to reach him by law, is it not?—Very difficult.

3722. That is, I understand, because he is not the employer?—That is so.

3723. He buys the article?—That is so.

3724. And it is suggested, is it not, that if he buys an article, or gives an order for an article, at a price which involves that those who make it cannot get the regulation wage, he should be guilty quite as much as the employer of practically paying an illegal rate?—That is the suggestion. You said: "If those who make are not paid the regulation wage"; I do not know whether you meant to insert the words "piece wage," because the case to which I specially referred turns entirely on the distinction between time rates and piece rates. Still, perhaps your question might be answered generally in the affirmative. The suggestion is by some that he should be made liable for the payment of legal rates to those who are engaged on the work which represents his contract.

3725. That means that the employer who makes these goods, and therefore pays the wages, provides the material, provides the establishment and everything else, should not be the only person liable, and that the person to whom he sells those goods should be liable also?—That is the suggestion of a certain number of people, but, as I say, the High Court of Australia has decided the other way.

3726. I was going to say that this is carrying it a long way?—A very long way.

3727. It is putting responsibility upon people who have very great difficulty in ascertaining what are the actual conditions?—That is so; as a matter of fact, the Report says that the Judgment of the Court appears to be conclusive. I agree with you that the attempt to carry it beyond the actual manufacturer, who controls the organisation of his workshop, and says who shall do the work, how it shall be done, and how they shall be paid, must, it seems to me, be a failure.

3728. On page 76 you say that the decisions of these Boards led to a good many dismissals in the dressmaking trade in 1904-5?—Yes.

3729. Those would be decisions as to wages?—Yes.

3730. Not piece-work rates?—Mainly a time rate.

3731. There

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3731. There would be very little reason for dismissing a piece-rate worker because the rate had been raised, would there?—No, excepting that the basis of calculation would be affected by the determination.

3732. That the piece-worker was rather slower would not affect the employer; she would get the same payment for the article. I am assuming a case where the employer had been satisfied to employ that piece-worker hitherto; the raising of the piece-work rate would not of itself provide any reason for dismissing that hand as compared with any other, would it?—It might in the case of anyone who was employed in a workshop. Supposing prior to the determination the girl is employed on piece-work rates, which represent, let us say, 2½d. or 3d. an hour, it may answer the purposes of the employer to let her occupy a certain table and chair, and a certain part of his room, if he does not have to pay more than that rate, but if he has to pay on a basis which represents 4d., which is the legal rate in this case, it may no longer answer his purpose. In that way, therefore, it might conceivably lead to the displacement of piece-workers, as well as time-rate workers. Might I say that I alluded to the same point really in connection with the boot and shoe trade a few moments ago. The position is analogous: many manufacturers in the boot trade will not have piece-workers in their factories, because the organisation of the workshop does not lend itself to the employment of that class.

3733. In your Report on South Australia you referred to the visit of a deputation from a Select Committee of the Legislative Council (it is on page 79) to Melbourne, to inquire into the working of these Wages Boards in Melbourne. Their Report seems to be a very unfavourable one?—Well, it is a very strange mixture, really, of that which is favourable and unfavourable. At the first blush it seems almost entirely unfavourable, and not to lead logically to the recommendation of Wages Boards for South Australia, but if one reads it more carefully, there is a good deal that means approval in it.

3734. It says that a large number of operatives have been thrown out of employment?—Yes.

3735. That a number of factories have been closed?—Yes.

3736. That the tendency in regard to wages is that the minimum becomes the maximum?—Yes.

3737. That task-work has been introduced into factories, and, consequently, that the employees have to work harder?—Yes.

3738. That the law is evaded in a number of trades?—Quite so.

3739. But, on the other hand, it says that sweating in the general clothing trade has disappeared?—Yes.

3740. That women operatives have benefited considerably. It seems a very mixed Report?—It is.

3741. What was the outcome of their deliberations?—They recommended the adoption of two Boards at that time in South Australia.

3742. You refer in connection with that to the

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difficulty of home-workers competing with factory workers?—Yes.

3743. Will you just state your ground for that, please?—The main source of increased difficulty is the utilisation of power and better mechanical appliances in the factory than are possible in the home; and, of course, every step in the direction of more minute sub-division of work tends to militate against the position of the home-worker, but the point I had specially in my mind was the greater use of power.

3744. You give some prices here which seem to show that even in Australia prices may be cut down to a very low figure, such as the price of making trousers?—You mean the total cost?

3745. Yes?—That is so.

3746. We have not had anything much lower brought under our notice here than a pair of trousers, material and everything, for 1s. 6d.?—Quite so. In the Appendix I give the details of that, from which it will be seen that, although the total cost is remarkably low, the rates of wages paid to those employed on those garments are not remarkably low.

3747. They were made in factories?—In factories, on a large scale.

3748. Consequently, any figures published showing that trousers were made at these very low rates do not necessarily prove that the persons making them are earning a very low rate of wages?—They do not.

3749. We might be misled by that?—Yes, cheapness is not the final gauge.

3750. Coming to New Zealand, on page 86, you draw our attention again to the fact that two very important conditions prevail there as well as in Australia; that is, first of all, that it has been a time of prosperity and recovery from a time of great depression, and also that there is a general scarcity of labour, both male and female?—Yes.

3751. There they have a minimum wage for young people, boys and girls?—Yes.

3752. How did you find that worked? What was the feeling about it?—The general feeling is one of approval. The Factory Act was constantly praised to me by employers who did not adopt the same tone with regard to the Arbitration Act, and their praise of the Factory Act would include therefore acceptance and approval of these particular clauses fixing the minimum wage.

3753. Is it those particular clauses that have had the effect of rendering unnecessary appeals for awards for women's labour?—To a very great extent.

3754. How is that? Does it secure for them a sufficient wage?—It approximates to a fair wage for women in New Zealand; it comes to 20s. a week. The Victorian women's legal rate very rarely exceeds that, and in no case in the clothing trade. Quite recently, in the boot trade, it has been raised to a guinea. As a matter of fact, in the boot trade in New Zealand considerably more than that minimum is being paid certainly by some manufacturers, but in that particular trade, as I mention in the Report there is absolutely no reference to women in connection with the Arbitration Court award.

3755. I do not see how the 20s. is necessarily arrived at. I understand that the law is that it should

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should be 5s. per week for boys and girls under 16 ?
—Yes, and it increases annually.

3756. By 3s. up to 20s. ?—That is so.

3757. Supposing a boy went in just under 16 years of age, he would get 5s. ?—Yes.

3758. And then his rate would increase after that by 3s. a week ; it would increase for three years at 3s. up to 12s., and 12s. and 5s. would be 17s. ?—Yes, 21 is what I should have said.

3759. Twenty is the figure on page 88. Of course, if a boy or girl started at 14, their wage would be higher by the time they were 20 years of age ?—Quite so. The point that is constantly mentioned is that children are left longer at school.

3760. Do you think the tendency of this would be to send the children to work earlier ?—No, the tendency is to send them to work later.

3761. That would seem to secure them a lower minimum wage. I understand the 3s. increase annually terminates at 20, and the starting wage is the same, so that the earlier they start the more years they will have to get the 3s. addition ; or does the 5s. a week continue up to 16 years of age ?
—My impression is—in fact, I am practically certain—that at 16 they get 8s.

Mr. Arthur Dewar.

3762. Whenever they begin ?—No, not whenever they begin, but I meant if they begin when they were 15½.

Chairman.

3763. They get 5s. a week up to 16 years of age ?—I believe so.

3764. So that it is not 5s. a week the first year and 3s. increase afterwards whenever they start ?
—No.

Mr. Chiozza Money.

3765. That brings it to £1 when they are 20 ?—Yes.

Chairman.

3766. In New Zealand, I understand, you have had no awards in the wages for women, except in the tailoring trade ?—That is so.

3767. And home-work is an extremely small element in New Zealand ?—Yes.

3768. In New Zealand they have not had the test, I gather, of any reduction of wages, or what you might call any unpopular decisions yet ?—They have had unpopular decisions in the sense of refusals of advances, but practically none of the other description in the sense of reduction.

3769. The applications for the decisions of the Board have almost invariably been made by the workpeople ?—Practically always.

3770. You have had no experience there as to what would be the result if the conditions became altered and employers repeatedly asked for reductions ?—No, and, of course, in Victoria in the same way all statements that are brought before the Boards have been formulated by the employees.

3771. On page 101 you give a little indication of the feeling of Trade Unionists towards these Arbitration Boards in New Zealand. Would you just tell us roughly what you gathered was the feeling ?—Towards the Court ?

3772. Yes, towards the arbitration ?—It is very difficult to give a single answer, because opinion

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differs so very much, but, speaking generally, the more highly organised trades view the Court less favourably than those trades in which organisation is more difficult ; that is to say the less organised trades have been more assisted by the Court than the more highly organised trades, and they feel that. At the present moment, for instance, when, as I say in the Report, it is felt by many that the point has been reached when the Court will not grant any further advances, the feeling of dissatisfaction with the Court is apt to be stronger among the more highly organised trades than amongst the others, because they feel that they have another weapon which would be at their disposal.

3773. That is to say, a strong Union is likely to feel that it can defend its own people and hold its ground without the Court ?—That is so.

3774. But the Court is an advantage to the weak disorganised trades ?—Yes.

3775. And as we are dealing with home-workers, who are a weak and disorganised section of the community, your experience would indicate that anything of this kind would be likely to be beneficial to them. Am I putting it correctly ?—Well, I would not like simply to assent to that question. I would say more beneficial than to the others.

3776. I want to elicit your opinion ?—I would say more beneficial to them than to the others. Of course, in New Zealand when the Arbitration Act began to work, practically in all cases conditions were such that there was room for advances, so that the organised trades as well as the unorganised gained.

3777. I suppose we may say that in the home-work trades of this country, where payment generally yields but a small weekly return, there would be scope for a similar movement, not so great, perhaps, but an upward movement of the kind that they have had in New Zealand. It could not very well lower the rates of payment in the home industries in this country ?—No. I should like to believe there was that room, but I do feel myself that one has to answer a question of that kind with such very close knowledge of the conditions of the particular trade affected that I should not like to assent generally.

3778. On the top of page 113, you speak of the effect of the increase in payment being to substitute women for men ?—Yes.

3779. That would be time payment, I imagine, again ?—Quite so.

3780. On the other ground that you put before us, that an employer might find it more advantageous, even although he is only paying the same piece rates, to employ a more efficient worker because more would be done in the time, that would protect a male worker who was more efficient against this competition ?—That is so.

3781. It is only the question of time payment you are referring to there ?—Except in the way I mentioned a moment ago, where a piece-worker might be prejudiced.

3782. I was supposing that the man was the more efficient worker ?—Quite so.

3783. Generally, bearing in mind that we are dealing with home-workers and the trades in which

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which home-work is prevalent, am I right in gathering that your view is generally doubtful, if not unfavourable, as to making the decisions as to the payment binding?—Legally binding.

3784. Or do you mean, when you refer to them being voluntary, that you would make it voluntary for the trades to come under the decision, and leave it for them to apply to these Boards for decisions?—If all members of the trade wished to come in, it would become a matter of comparative unimportance, but my feeling is that without that assent, then as far as I can see my way it would not be wise to make these recommendations of any Boards that might be formed legally binding.

3785. That being your view, might I ask you—have you arrived at any opinion as to any other method by which the condition of these home-workers might be improved by legislation?—At the end of my Report, I refer to certain advantages that can be secured by the formation of a Board which has a knowledge of trade conditions, and which has the right and power therefore to formulate recommendations, and one great advantage that I have in my own mind is that in certain cases by the publicity that might be secured by official recognition and dissemination of these recommendations, good might be done.

3786. But you would realise the difficulty of the class of people with whom we have to deal; their very poverty-stricken condition, and their conditions, which, so to speak, compel them to accept this low rate of payment, must render it very difficult for them to make any public protest or to take any action of their own as against their employers?—Yes. Of course I would not leave the matter simply there, but I think myself that one has to rely a good deal really upon knowledge with regard to these recommended conditions percolating down among the classes affected, and one form of publicity that might, I imagine, be secured would be that in all centres of employment it might be officially prescribed that the recommendations in question should be exposed. I do not feel that I am sufficiently an expert in Home Office administration, but my feeling is that a much greater body of detailed returns might reasonably be secured officially from employers with regard to the rates which they pay, and also in promulgating the rates recommended. I do not see myself why something should not be done even officially in the direction of informing members of those trades in which rates are not uniform, and only in sections of which what one might call fair rates are being paid, as to the extent to which these fair rates prevail. Roughly speaking, as things are, I would put more faith in appealing to men's better natures than I would in attempting to coerce them into the payment of certain legally fixed rates. Of course, that again does not sum up the whole position, because my own feeling is that there are so many other grave complexities, and I do not even know, in connection with certain trades, whether it would be economically possible throughout a trade for rates that might be laid down to be paid, and the legal superstructure that it seems to me would have to follow any attempt at present to fix a legal wage seems to me to be so formidable that there again I am driven back from the acceptance of the view

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that it is possible to fix a legal rate. There is also of course, in connection with some trades, the block of Protection; the block that is to say, not only of keen competition—it may be in some places even hopelessly keen—within our own borders, but there is also the possibility of outside competition, that is to say, competition from other countries where conditions may be entirely different.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

3787. I understand that you have been requested by the Home Office to go out to Australia to investigate the condition of work there, and report. In looking through your Report, I fail to find any very distinct expression of your own opinion as to whether the operations of the Boards have been successful, or whether you would recommend their introduction into this country. You state on page 22, if I may refer you to your Report, that it has been largely owing to the support of Sir Alexander Peacock that the Boards have been able to weather the storm of adverse criticism by which they have been from time to time assailed. I do not see any reference in your Report to the adverse criticism. Would you kindly tell the Committee what are the objections urged against the Special Boards?—I think the greatest difficulty of all, the greatest defect of all, is connected with the position of those who are unable to earn the legal rates, but, as I think I say in my Report, at the present time in general the Boards are accepted there, so that when you ask me what objections there are to the Special Boards, so far as Victoria is concerned, although the employers as a class would rather be without them in most trades, at the present moment they are accepted. They would rather have them than what they regard as the possible alternative, namely an Arbitration Act or something else, or strikes. You ask me for a reference, but as a matter of fact I think quite early there is a reference with regard to the employers. No, I refer especially to the attitude of employees, on page 9. Of course with regard to them, their main objections are connected with the Appeal Court, with the withdrawal of the power to fix the number of apprentices, and with the clause that has since been repealed which made it an obligation to fix rates on the basis of scales paid by reputable employers.

3788. That is hardly what you would describe as a storm of adverse criticism though, is it?—The storm of adverse criticism to which I was referring, was the criticism of 1902 and 1903, at about the time the Irvine Bill was brought in when the Legislative Council was considering the renewal Act, and when the Boards almost came to an end.

3789. May I refer you to page 25, in the middle of which page you say that the Court of Industrial Appeal reduced the wages amongst bread workers from 54s. to 50s., in 1907, but that was ineffectual, because of a strike. There was a strike against the reduction of the wage by the Board?—No, the Board had advanced the wage for journeymen bakers from 50s. to 54s. The master bakers appealed to the Court, and the Court put back the rate from 54s. to 50s., and the men struck against

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against that revision by the Court of Industrial Appeal.

3790. Is there any legislation in Victoria against strikes?—No; in the amending Act of 1907 there is power given to the Minister to suspend the determination in case of a strike, but when I was there there was no law whatever against strikes.

3791. As a matter of fact, is a determination binding upon the employer, but not binding upon the employed?—That is so.

3792. And therefore a strike is possible on the part of the employed in the case of a reduction of wage?—That is so. As I say, at the present moment, since the amending Act of 1907 was passed, if that took place, the Minister would at his discretion have the power to suspend the determination.

3793. The Chairman has already referred to the remark on page 73, in which you make reference to the fact that there was an accompanying lack of employment as soon as wages were raised. You say that wages were raised, and then go on at the top of page 73 to say: "There is, in any case, little cause for surprise at the outcry that arose in consequence of the accompanying lack of employment"?—Yes.

3794. Does that mean that when the wages were raised, the industrially maimed, or what you call the slow worker, was discharged, or do you refer to the capable worker?—That refers, of course, especially to the boot and shoe trade. There was a very thorough weeding out, and naturally those who would be dismissed would be, for the most part, those who were the less efficient.

3795. In your opinion, in Australia, is the result of a rise in the rate of wage accompanied by discharge from work of competent workmen?—No, at the present time, certainly not.

3796. Therefore, the outcry as to the lack of employment was on the part of the slow workers?—As I say, most of those who would be dismissed would naturally be the less efficient. We have to remember that the sentence quoted refers to 1898 and 1899, when trade was rather bad; it was just slowly recovering from the preceding collapse, whereas now trade, of course, is very brisk.

3797. The slow worker is already receiving less than the current rate of payment. How would a rise of wages affect the slow worker, who is already receiving less than the legal minimum?—If the slow worker is receiving less than the legal minimum, it might not affect him at all, but the real difficulty arises with those who are about average, or just below average; they are the real difficulty in connection with this question, and the man who is below average, but not sufficiently below to qualify for the permit to work at lower than the legal rate, is the class of man who, when rates are sent up, has his tenure of employment weakened.

3798. Have the Special Boards had the result of abolishing sweating? Does any sweating now exist?—Of course, that word "sweating" is somewhat ambiguous, but in the sense of meaning a rate of wage upon which any considerable section of a trade is based, I should say

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there was no sweating in Victoria. On the other hand, if you asked me that general question: "Is there no sweating in Victoria?" and I said: "No, I think not," if, by so saying, I should be understood to mean that there is not one single unhappy woman in the whole of the state who is being paid an unfairly low wage, I do not wish to commit myself to that opinion.

3799. Speaking generally, the action of the Boards has been successful in abolishing sweating?—Speaking generally, the action of the Boards has coincided with conditions which in certain cases have helped such action, and by that combination of influences sweating has been abolished.

3800. Really, it does not matter what legislation there is, so long as the demand for labour is greater than the supply, does it?—It does not; not a bit.

3801. Supposing there was a very large increase of immigration of white labour into Australia, would it be possible to maintain wages?—I doubt it. You say: "If there was a large immigration"; and I say: "If there was a large immigration of those who directly entered into competition, I doubt whether it would be possible to maintain wages."

3802. How do you account for the decline in the use of machinery to which you allude in your Report, at the bottom of page 72? You say that machinery and plant in use in the cabinet and billiard table factories has declined in value from £21,652 in 1900 to £18,000 in 1905?—It is a little difficult to explain. In those trades in New South Wales and in South Australia, I know competition is rather keen, and, as I say in the Report, there is not very much enterprise in those trades. The Chinese themselves have not any well-equipped factories, although some of their factories are of fair size, and the European employers are not putting capital in. There are only three really large and completely equipped furniture factories in the whole of Australia; one of those is in Melbourne, one in South Australia, and one in Sydney.

3803. Can you inform us what the practice is in Australia with regard to submitting novelties to the Special Boards? An objection has been raised to Wages Boards here that employers would not like their novelties to be submitted to the gaze of rival manufacturers. Does the same condition arise in Australia, and how do they overcome it?—I have never heard the point mentioned, but I imagine that in those cases where it would be a serious difficulty, no piece-work scale would be attempted.

3804. May I now refer you to page 74, in which you refer to the warehouseman as being somewhat of a flaw; and you then go on to speak of the employer paying less than the legal rate. In your remarks to the Chairman, you also referred to the employer paying less than the legal rate. How can the employer pay less than the legal rate, if it is a statutory rate?—The point was that the warehouseman who is not an employer under the Act, might fix a price for work as to which he enters into a contract, which he gives out at less than the legal rate, that is to say, at less than the legal piece-work rates, but it does not follow, therefore, that less
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than the legal rates will be paid for the actual execution of that work.

3805. But if the warehouseman gives it out to a sub-contractor, that sub-contractor must employ the workers who make the article?—Yes.

3806. Is not he bound to pay the legal rate?—He is bound; it is only the warehouseman who gives the order who is not bound.

3807. So long as the worker gets the legal statutory minimum, how can it be a flaw in the Act, and tending to the re-introduction of sweating?—Pardon me, Sir, I do not say that it is a flaw in the Act. I quote the opinion, and say it is held by a section of the employers there that it is a flaw in the Act and a source of possible danger in the future, but my own statement is that it seems to me that it is not a flaw.

3808. As a matter of fact, even when the warehouseman gives out the order, the worker still receives the statutory minimum rate?—That is so, presumably; if the employer does not pay the statutory minimum, he is legally liable.

3809. On the next page, whilst considering this question, you say: "The reports bear witness that improvement in one direction was only secured by increased suffering in another"?—Yes.

3810. What do you allude to there?—To the loss of employment amongst a section of the home-workers.

3811. I notice that you insist on the lack of employment, and your conclusion is somewhat important, that the operation of the Boards in Australia results in people being thrown out of work?—A section of them, yes.

3812. In view of the fact that there are so few workers, and that the demand is so great, surely they must be taken into employment again shortly?—Quite so. There again, I am referring to what happened from 1897 to 1899. I am not referring to what is happening to any considerable extent at the present time. It is as you say; a certain number of those who lost their employment did find their way into the factories, but the fact remains that in that particular trade the transition was expedited by the determination, and a certain number of home-workers did lose their employment.

3813. Has there been any attempt in Australia to fix the minimum earning for the week in the case of a piece-worker?—Not to my knowledge.

3814. I mean to fix how much should be earned as a minimum for the week; eliminating the casual worker and those who work for pocket money, there has been no attempt in the direction of fixing the minimum payment for a week's work?—None whatever.

3815. At page 80 you refer to a man whom you saw in South Australia who was from Whitechapel, and had been in Australia for 25 years; he said he was glad that he had come for everything but the work, but this in a 25 years' retrospect he did not consider less pressing than the 11 or 12 hours of East London days. That is a little obscure; would you kindly say what you understood by "everything but the work"?—I found him at his machine and he was working very hard. Of course, he was an older man than he had been 25 years before, and might not be so fit for work.

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I only quote what he said, and he clearly thought he had to work at a greater degree of intensity to earn his money in Australia with his shorter working day than he had to work in Whitechapel 25 years ago.

3816. He had to work harder in Australia than he had in Whitechapel?—That is what he thought. May I say that doubtless there was the other point that he was working at a machine, whereas in Whitechapel he would be working on the board. It was 25 years ago that he was dealing with.

3817. Your remedy for the sweating in this country, I take it from your answer to the Chairman, is an appeal to men's better nature, but we have been appealing to men's better nature for a good many years with the result that this Committee is now sitting. Would you give me your opinion as to whether it would be an advantage to introduce Wages Boards in this country in view of the experience you have had from seeing them at work in Australia?—Wages Boards with power to fix legal rates of wages, so far as I can see, would break down in this country, and therefore I do not feel able to recommend their formation. But, as I say here, Special Boards or Wages Boards formed and officially recognised, with powers of promulgating their recommendations and with certain other powers exercised by the Department of collection of records and information as to rates paid, it seems to me would be really advantageous in certain trades. Further than that under present conditions I do not find myself on my experience in Australasia able to go.

Mr. Chiozza Money.

3818. We have had your Report in our hands, but we have not the Appendices, as you know; would you kindly tell me on that whether it is your intention to publish the reports or extracts from the reports of the official Inspectors of Victoria in recent years?—No, not in any general way; it would be quite possible to include excerpts from those reports, but I think that a general reproduction of the contents of those reports would not be very helpful.

3819. Of course, you have seen them all?—Yes.

3820. And generally you are aware that the reports are exceedingly favourable to the system?—That is so.

3821. Do I understand that you take the position that the Inspectors are somewhat partial in their remarks on the system which they administer?—I think there is a necessary partiality—not an unfair partiality—but there is the official bias undoubtedly.

3822. On points of fact, when they say that wages have risen or that a determination has been observed or that the minimum wage has not become the maximum, or statements of fact of that kind, do you consider really that they are not to be relied upon as evidence?—Might I ask you to repeat the three points you have mentioned there?

3823. First, the rise in wages; second, the statement frequently observed in these reports that the minimum does not become the maximum, and that the average wage paid is higher than the determination;

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determination; and, third, that the number of men displaced has not been great, or scarcely observable?—With regard to the first statement, I think the reports are quite reliable on the question of wages; with regard to the next two points, I think they are, taken by themselves, not adequate.

3824. I ask these questions because I notice on page 28 of your Report you criticise the Inspectors?—I both praise and criticise, I hope.

3825. I rather think you call their statistics inadequate?—I say that certain statements which are inserted year by year are misleading, as tending to lead the reader to think they are connected necessarily and solely with the determinations.

3826. On pages 122 and 123 of your Report you rather indicate that such rises as have occurred have taken place almost as much in trades without Special Boards as in trades which have Special Boards. Is that your opinion?—That is my opinion, but of course practically the whole of the wage records of those reports to which you refer are contained in the Report. I regret to say that in printing they have put them into the most terrible order, which will be revised in the final form, but practically the whole of the wage material is here excepting the averages for all employees in the various trades; that is not given. I got it all out, but I did not include it, because it is a figure that includes males and females of all ages, and therefore it seemed to me not to be of very great value.

3827. For instance, in the 1904 Report, one of the Inspectors, speaking of the Millet Broom Board, says, "The average wage in 1900 was £1 7s. 11d., and last year it was £1 14s. These figures give an average increase of 6s. 1d. per week for each employee in the trade." That is one of the statements you criticise on the ground that it is inadequate?—That particular statement may be correct.

3828. It would take too long to quote them, but I have almost every trade here; it shows that the wages have risen so much in a trade and indicates that it is due to the Board?—Quite so.

3829. Your opinion is that it is not due to the Board?—My opinion is that in many cases in a very marked way increases in wages have been due to Boards, but those striking instances of increases, I think I may say, in every case are in men's trades and not in women's. Those facts are in the Report, and not only in the Report, but shown in a way that has not been shown before, that is to say, the wages paid in those years which are subject to the Board's determinations have been printed in italics, so that by a glance one can see really what (if any) the effect of the operation of the Boards is.

3830. Is it not the case that these Boards have been established in such trades as most needed them? Has not the procedure been to begin with trades where intervention was called for and to climb upwards, so to speak, from that point?—Speaking generally, that is true.

3831. If that is true, is it not remarkable that in those trades which most needed better wages the rise in wages on your own showing is greater

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than in the trades which have not Special Boards, and which did not therefore call for intervention?—The advance in Victoria has been general, and, although among men's trades the advance has been greater in the Board trades than among the non-Board trades, the difference is not very great.

3832. I am afraid I did not put my question clearly. My point is that the Boards are appointed obviously in those trades which most need them?—Yes.

3833. Those that have no Boards on the face of it, *a priori*, do not need intervention?—Yes.

3834. Therefore if the rise has been actually greater in these worse trades than in the better trades, where, presumably, there is good organisation, is it not right to attribute that to the effect of the Wages Boards?—Of course that statement does not entirely cover the case. A considerable number of the non-Board trades cannot be described as organised or strong trades at all, and this is equally the case in the case of women's trades. If you look at the table on page 31, the waterproof clothing trade for instance, which has just been made a Board trade, has been slowly but steadily improving in its conditions during the last 10 years.

3835. But, generally, were not these Boards started because of the bad conditions in certain trades? Is it not the fact that the worst trades have been included under the Boards, and that the best trades have not been included roughly? Is not that the broad fact? This point is very important, as you recognise?—Quite. Roughly speaking, that has been the aim, but if one looks through the list one finds that in practice it cannot be said to have been observed with any degree of strictness; for instance, as far back as 1901 Boards were formed amongst stonecutters and woodworkers, and as to printers, for instance, a Board was formed there not because wages were extremely low, but because the printers wanted to exercise the powers that were then conferred under the Boards of restricting the number of apprentices. I think, however, speaking generally, that what you say was certainly the aim of the Legislature.

3836. That would have some bearing on the consideration of the respective rises in wages?—Yes, that is quite true.

3837. Might I ask you once more if you will consider the advisability of the publication of extracts from these parts of the Inspectors' reports of recent years which refer to these Wages Boards as an appendix to your Report?—Certainly, if I may be allowed not to commit myself in any way. What I feel is that if a very large mass of that were cut out and printed it would give a wrong impression. Part of the Appendix here is what I have called Experience, and these are extracts from evidence that I have collected myself mostly in various ways; but if you do not mind leaving it in that way I will very gladly consider the question.

3838. I am not quite clear, I am afraid, on this point from your Report. Are you able to say what is the employer's general opinion?—The employer's general opinion in Victoria is: "We face the fact that some legal regulation is inevitable, that it is impossible for us to expect to have an entirely free hand in settling these questions of wages

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wages and conditions as between ourselves and our employees; and we prefer the Wages Boards to any other expedient of which we have knowledge." That would be the general opinion, but a very considerable minority, especially in the clothing trade groups, would say they believe in the Wages Boards as being good in themselves—as being beneficial arrangements.

3839. And then the employees. Will you tell us in the same general way what is their view?—The general feeling there among the members of the weaker trades is very favourable to the Boards. It is much less favourable amongst the stronger trades, and it is not so favourable now as it was before the establishment of the Court of Industrial Appeal. On the whole, however, there is no doubt about it, and I think I have made it clear, that there is a general acceptance in Victoria of the Board system—there was when I was there, but, as I say, opinion changes, or is apt to change somewhat rapidly, and the bakers' strike last year has certainly brought about a considerable revulsion of feeling.

3840. Would it be fair to say that the Wages Board system is as much now an accepted part of the law of Victoria as the Workmen's Compensation Acts are accepted in this country—as something irrevocable?—No, I do not think so, because there is always present in the mind even of those who accept them, the fact that they have not really been adequately tested as yet. Even those who accept them say: "We think they work very well, and they level up things, and all the rest of it," but they know that the testing time has not come yet.

3841. With regard to your general view as expressed in the last paragraph, page 123, of your Report, and which you have also expressed here, as I understand, it is that you would rather have the establishment of Boards if there were not compulsion as to their decisions?—Yes.

3842. That is to say, you would rely upon their, so to speak, publishing certain fair rates, advertising certain fair rates, and making it known that they were the fair rates that should be paid?—At the moment that is what I would advocate.

3843. Would you be glad if that course were to be effective?—Assuredly.

3844. If it were effective would it not have entirely the same economic effect as if they were compulsory?—No, because I think it would work out differently—I mean by that that if it were entirely effective it would mean that conditions were such that they were able to adapt themselves to acceptance of this new body of recommendations that might be promulgated. Everyone, I imagine, would be only too thankful if that were possible, but my fear is that that is not what would happen, and that in a very great number of cases they would possibly not be observed. In some cases they would not be observed simply because they could not be; in other cases they would not be observed because employers possibly were heartless and voluntarily would not conform. As I have said this morning, as a first step, I only find myself able to recommend the formation of Boards that would be deprived of the powers of legal fixation of wages. Accompanying the establishment of these Boards, I hope that a body of

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information would be gradually obtained that might decrease the necessity of but point the way to more stringent steps in certain cases at some later date. At the present moment the difficulties of fixation and enforcement are so enormous, and the risks of harm are so great, that I do not see my way to believing in them for this country—I wish I could.

3845. But you recognise that wages is the only sphere of labour matter which has been so far untouched by the law?—I know.

3846. And that in every other matter, cleanliness, hygiene, and workmen's compensation, it has been found absolutely ineffective to appeal to good nature except in a minority of cases—the Factory Laws, for example?—The problems are not quite on all fours. In connection with the Factory Laws, for instance, one establishes certain conditions which are fixed. The elements of the problem here are always tending to change, and of course the actual difficulties of the task of administration and enforcement are, I think, enormously greater. Then there is also a point which has not been mentioned, but of which I am fully conscious, as I have no doubt you are yourself, that the risks of passing laws which are bound to break down in so many cases are serious.—I mean it is not desirable for the public welfare that they should have lessons in laws that do not work; and there is also another point which I have not mentioned, that there is great danger in raising exaggerated expectations as to what can be accomplished by laws.

3847. With your knowledge, which is fully as great as mine, if not greater, of industrial history, you know that in every connection, in factory law, in hygiene, and in every particular, it has been found that laws have been evaded, and it has been found necessary to strengthen them; the whole of the Factory Laws are for the purpose of strengthening the law against employers. If your argument were accepted we should have no Factory laws, as they would be evaded, and as they are now evaded while we are speaking?—I know that what you say is perfectly true, but all I can say is that on my experience in Australia, and on my knowledge of what the problem would involve, I cannot see my way to believing in the advisability of attempting legally to fix wages in this country.

3848. With regard to page 89 of your Report, there is that important New Zealand provision aiming at the middleman or middlewoman, and you quote the Official Manual, "Sweating" has almost disappeared in New Zealand by the prohibition of sub-contracting in the issue of textiles to be made up into garments." Is it not the fact that it is absolutely claimed by that same manual that that is the direct result of the law? You give a very small quotation, and I have not got it here, but I have the Manual at home, and I know that it is directly attributed to that law, namely, that home-work is not to be given out except to the person who is to do it. You do not agree with that claim?—No, I should not; if it were claimed, I should say it was only a contributory cause, but I do not remember that the Manual did claim it as the sole cause.

3849. Is it not the fact that this effect followed close

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close upon the heels of the legislation? Is it not the fact that with the forbidding of the middleman the middleman did disappear?—I believe that is so to a very great extent. Of course, it is so much easier to do things of that kind in New Zealand than it is almost anywhere else; still, I daresay it was so.

Mr. Massie.

3850. I think you said that the success of the Determinations depends upon Protection, of course, against imported commodities?—Yes. There is a considerable amount of inter-State competition too, of course. In the past there was a good deal of fear expressed as to what would be the effect on the State trade of the stronger relative position in which the other States would be placed, so that that kind of inter-State competition also comes in, although, as I say here, there is a tendency for legislation of this kind to approximate over the whole of Australia. That particular point is now not so important.

3851. Would not the success of the Determinations depend also on protection against imported labour, even white labour, and even English labour perhaps?—Yes, that is so. Of course, it is from one point of view, from the point of view of Australia, one of the weak parts of this tendency to make industrial conditions rigid there, and I think myself that is a real danger—the tendency to make immigration more difficult. Australia is, however, waking up to the fact that it has got to have more people, and although there is a great under-current of opposition to immigration, there is no doubt about it that officially and on top it is recognised that something has got to be done. I think that is an underlying difficulty of the situation, and I allude to it really at the bottom of page 8:—the temptation may be yielded to, or the unseen risk indirectly incurred, of upholding a policy that may limit unduly, and in view of the future even dangerously, the field of expansion and enterprise.

3852. If much more labour were imported it might increase the difficulty of making these determinations succeed, and so get approximately into the same condition we have in England, where there is no scarcity of labour. I was going to ask in reference to page 74, and judging also from some of your remarks this morning, that employers, and by that phrase I mean contractors, complain that profits get cut down too closely by two factors, the wages that they are obliged to pay and the low prices that the warehousemen pay them?—Yes.

3853. So I suppose they suggest that the responsibility should be shared by the warehousemen to some extent?—That is so.

3854. I suppose the result of that might be that the warehousemen's prices paid to them should be fixed in order that they might make a fair profit?—The contention is that in entering into their contract they should be bound by the determinations.

3855. That the warehousemen should be bound?—Yes, that is the contention; it is only the contention of some, but it is a feeling very strongly held. It was held by a manufacturer in Melbourne, quite a leading man there, and it was because of

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that that I gave it prominence here. My own feeling is that his contention is an impossible one.

3856. It might end that the prices that the warehousemen charge the public should be fixed, so that they might exorcise the demon of cheapness?—Quite so.

3857. In reference to the scarcity of competent female labour, you said there was not only a scarcity of female labour, but especially a scarcity of competent female labour?—Yes.

3858. Do I gather from you that a great deal of incompetent female labour is employed?—No, I did not mean that there was an abundance of any kind of labour, but the whole question of apprenticeship and industrial training has been rather neglected, I think, in Victoria.

3859. When that "Report" on page 80 says that women operatives have largely benefited, would that be both competent and incompetent, or mainly the competent female labour, do you think? The words are not yours, but a quotation?—It would refer to those employed, whatever degree of competence they might have. They do not discriminate in the Report.

3860. The incompetent female labour would have a lower minimum wage of their own?—That is the theory of the Act.

3861. That would not get down so far as sweating?—No. What do you mean by that?

3862. The lower minimum would not be what we should call a sweating wage?—In practice these permits, as they are called, are not granted to women; there is a very small number, but hardly any—I think '04 of the total number.

3863. That would not help to keep the prices down of the articles that were sold?—No.

Mr. Brunner.

3864. With regard to the Special Boards, how do they start in a trade?—They start generally on application from one side or the other, and generally on application from the employees. Occasionally the employers have taken the initiative, but only very rarely; more often the employers have been in accord with the employees when that step has been taken. Occasionally the Department itself has, without any special request being made to it, on its own initiative led to the establishment of a Board. The next step is that a case for the establishment of a Board has to be made out, and the establishment has to be sanctioned by, at the present time, both Houses of Parliament.

3865. The establishment of each Board has to be sanctioned by Parliament?—By a resolution. The Minister of the Department in charge has to make out his case.

3866. Of how many members as a rule do they consist?—Not fewer than two and not more than five on each side, that is to say the Board including the Chairman cannot be composed of fewer than five persons, or more than eleven.

3867. Who elects them?—The Minister has the power to appoint, but in practice the two parties concerned are often consulted, and they then, in effect, make their own nominations.

3868. As a matter of fact, there is no election to the Board; it is nomination by the Minister?—It may be that, and if no objection is made, the nomination

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nomination would hold good, but there may be an election if an objection is raised by either side. In a certain number of cases, there have been actually contested elections; I refer to a case in the agricultural implement trade, in which the employees were nominated by the Minister. The Trade Union in that trade objected, they held a meeting, and put forward their own nominees; there was an election, and their own men were put in by very large majorities.

3869. Is that a legal election?—Yes; they take their places, and on selection in that way they are appointed formally by the Governor, and the Board is constituted in that way.

3870. In that case, then, there must be a register of electors?—That is so.

3871. Who draws up this register of electors?—Every employer is registered; it is part of his legal obligation, and it is also his obligation to send in lists of those who are in his employment in the various trades, and in that way the register is formed.

3872. That is kept by the Factory Department?—By the Department.

3873. Are these matters pretty general through the various States, or do they differ in South Australia and New Zealand?—On this particular point you have just mentioned?

3874. The election of the Boards?—South Australia is the only other State, and there it is exactly the same. I remember being told there that, although there was no legal obligation to refer to the parties concerned, as a matter of practice, and in order to ensure acceptable nominees, it was done habitually. Roughly speaking, the Victorian practice holds good.

3875. I should like to ask a few questions on the wording of the Report. You refer on page 12 to the Trades Hall Council: Will you tell us what that is, and how it is constituted?—The Trades Hall Council is composed of representatives of the various Trade Unions which are affiliated to that Council. It is a Trade Union matter.

3876. It has no legal status?—No.

3877. With regard to the tables, you have told us the meaning of the italics, but I had to find it out for myself?—It is mentioned in the text.

3878. Perhaps the other members would like to know; I did not find it in the text?—It is at the bottom of page 28.

3879. With regard to the licences issued to the old, infirm, and slow, on October 2nd, 1907, 483 were in force?—Yes.

3880. Were these licences granted to home-workers, or only to the factory workers?—To anybody.

3881. Can you say from your knowledge whether many of the 154 of the licences granted to the clothing trade workers were home-workers?—I cannot say, but I believe the great majority were factory workers.

3882. Then again, with regard to the sub-contracting in New Zealand on page 89, how is that enforced?—It would be enforced by the Department, and the Department would know; they know everything in New Zealand, the places are so small that everything is known; if this were done for instance, it would be known and action would be taken.

Mr. Brunner—continued.

3883. Have they had many instances of the infringement of the provisions for sub-contracting?—I have no figures at my command, but I believe that infringement is very rare.

3884. You would say, then, that it is successful merely because the trades of New Zealand are on a small scale?—Practically, yes.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

3885. Do the Boards find any great difficulty in keeping up with the great number of new patterns and methods, say in the clothing trade?—As I said to the Chairman, that point was not mentioned to me, but I think if in a trade it was a serious difficulty, any attempt to draw up a piece-work scale would not be made.

3886. But in the clothing trade the determinations are very elaborate?—They are.

3887. And sometimes there must be very numerous changes taking place in a very short time, say in patterns, is not that so?—I do not know whether it is the case in the clothing trade, in tailoring or not; I should have thought not. In dress-making of course it would be, but in dress-making they have no piece-work scale.

3888. I understand that there is no such system as the American system of licensing the premises in which home-work is done?—No, excepting in the sense of registration.

3889. That is not considered necessary?—No.

3890. Because no doubt the premises are in good sanitary condition?—Speaking generally, yes.

3891. And you yourself do not consider that licensing the premises would be any contribution to our own problem at home?—I would not say that I think it would be no contribution, but it is very mixed up of course with the whole question of sanitary administration, to which I do personally attach immense importance.

3892. Did you hear anything of child-labour in the home-work, that is to say, children assisting their mothers?—Absolutely nothing.

3893. That means to say, that you feel fairly sure that there is no such thing?—I do.

3894. I gathered, coming to our own country, that you yourself have no proposal for coercing the bad employers, which is really the heart of our Inquiry?—Supposing in a trade which lent itself to a wage statement, a possible Board in this country drew up a recommendation, supposing that statement was promulgated, supposing it was made part of the duties of the Department to obtain reports from all members of that trade, giving statements as to the rates of wages they paid, and supposing out of the 100, let us say, which came in, five or 10 appeared to show flagrant neglect of what you might call the industrial responsibilities of the employer, I can imagine an office in the Department which would have, as its business, very carefully to scrutinise these returns, and to advise this or that step which would be taken in special cases. On inquiry it might be found that the apparent neglect of an industrial duty was not a real one—there might be some excuse—the conditions of the trade and other forms of payment, profit-sharing or whatever it might be, might be the explanation, but in other cases there might apparently be what you might call

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Mr. G. P. Gooch—continued.

call the acceptance of a grave anti-social practice. As far as I have got, and it is not very far, it seems to me that possibly in those cases the Department might, by a policy of harrying, bring considerable pressure to bear, if only as a beginning, by enforcing in these cases more frequent returns, and also possibly if there were the least excuse for it more stringent inspection. I think in those ways something possibly might be done. I did not want to elaborate the question to-day, and, as I say, the proposal does not go very far; but in any case the revelation of the 5 or 10 per cent., and their persistence, might gradually form a body of information upon which if necessary other and more stringent steps might be taken at some later time.

Mr. Fell.

3895. Generally speaking, out there in Australasia you would say that the decisions of these Wages Boards are not enforceable; they are permissive?—Oh, no, they are enforceable.

3896. But in practice you say it becomes permissive?—No, pardon me; what I have said is that under existing conditions, and under the conditions that have prevailed in Victoria since their establishment, they have been enforced, and generally they are recognised at the present time.

3897. But you have said they do not obey them?—Oh no, on the contrary, what I have said, is that in general they are observed.

3898. In general, but you quoted cases in which you said they were not?—Yes.

3899. And then I arrive at the conclusion that in fact they are permissive rather than binding?—No; at the present time, if any cases of evasion were known, action would be taken by the Department, and it would be legally enforced. The point is this, or one of the important points is this, that up to the present time the conditions have been such, that it has been possible to obey them, and they have been obeyed. Also following, as a consequence of that prosperity, those who have wanted to evade have been a small minority; but I am very sorry if I have given the impression at all that up to the present time they have not been legally enforced—they have been—they are enforced.

3900. I did not say that you stated that, but what I gathered was that while prices are rising, and trade is good, these decisions would be enforceable; but that if prices were falling, and the wages were being reduced by the Board, it would not be possible to enforce them?—What I have said upon that point, is that their time of actual testing would come under those conditions, and that that time has not arrived yet. Many hold that when that time does arrive, the determinations will simply fall to bits; the whole thing will crumble, or, as I say in the Report, will die a kind of economic death; whereas others hold the opinion that by that time the custom of obeying the Wages Determinations will have become so strong, that in any case even if they are not observed to the same extent as at the present time, they will tend to arrest the time of decline. Many, even those who believe in the Boards most strongly, hold that the time of greatest use for the Boards

Mr. Fell—continued.

has not yet arrived, but will arrive at the time when declining prosperity occurs.

3901. Then it is, comparatively speaking, an experiment?—It is an experiment undoubtedly.

3902. And you cannot form any definite conclusions yet?—Final conclusions—no.

3903. You said that the success of the determination depended upon Protection prevailing in Australia?—Yes.

3904. You referred to the Protection as partly being Customs duties, and do you refer also to the distance Australia is off Europe—the cost of the passage out?—Yes, the natural protection. I allude to all forms of protection which Victoria enjoys.

3905. That is, their great protection against what we call the alien immigration here, is their distance from the sources from which this immigration comes?—Yes.

3906. You had that in your mind?—I had both in my mind really. What is the special passage in my Report you are referring to?

3907. I was not referring to your Report really, but to a phrase used by yourself which I attempted to take down?—I have no doubt that that particular phrase referred especially to a tariff, but of course the other is an essential part of the protection that Australia does secure, that is to say, its natural protection arising from distance.

3908. I wondered whether you had that in view as well?—Yes, and it is very important.

3909. You mentioned the case of one foreigner, a Jewish tailor: did you find many aliens, or foreigners?—There are in Australia a considerable number.

3910. Are they in the clothing trade chiefly?—I did not mean that; I should say not chiefly. There is a considerable number of Italian operatives in the mines, for instance, and there are many German colonists in South Australia; in Sydney there is a very considerable number of Jews, and many of the employers in that trade there are Jews.

3911. You said that in good times there was practically no sweating, but that in bad times there would be what would be called "sweating." Have I got that correctly?—In bad times the danger of sweating would become acute, and might be incurred. I would not like to say there would be sweating.

3912. I think you said you considered after mature deliberation that Wages Boards in this country would break down, and that you could not recommend them?—That is so.

3913. And another thing you said was that the Wages Boards out there cannot fix the prices for a great many articles?—Yes.

3914. You think that is so?—It is so; they deliberately gave up the attempt to fix a piecework scale. It is stated with regard to millinery, dress-making, waterproof clothing, and under-clothing, that it was impossible to draw up a piecework scale.

3915. Do you think they tried?—They tried certainly, in the case of under-clothing, and I believe they tried in every case.

3916. And they found it was impossible?—It is definitely stated in connection with under-clothing, and I suppose in dress-making the attempt

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[Continued.]

Mr. Fell—continued.

attempt would be known from the beginning to be almost hopeless.

3917. With regard to the Inspectors whose reports you have referred to, these Inspectors of course were appointed with this object?—They were appointed under the Act, not simply to enforce the Wages Boards' determinations, but appointed to administer the Factories and Shops Act.

Mr. Fell—continued.

3918. And they would of course believe in their own work?—Yes, they do.

3919. And their reports would be slightly coloured possibly in consequence of the good work they were doing?—Yes. I think it is a very honest Department, but what I have said is that there is an almost inevitable official bias.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Wednesday, 13th May, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Boland.
Mr. Brunner.
Sir William Bull.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Hugh Law.

Mr. Massie.
Mr. Chiozza Money.
Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Trevelyan.
Sir Thomas Whittaker.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER IN THE CHAIR.

The Right Hon. Sir CHARLES DILKE, a Member of the House; Examined.

Chairman.

3920. We are very much obliged to you for coming here to represent, as I understand you do, the promoters of the Bill, and perhaps it would be most convenient if you would, in your own way, give us a brief statement as to the origin of the Bill?—The first suggestion as to both the Victorian Bill in Australia and this Bill came, I think, from the opening of a chapter from Mill's principal book on economy, published in the Forties. The chapter was headed, "On popular remedies for low wage." There he combats certain popular remedies for low wages, and Mr. Sidney Webb, in his "History of Trade Unionism," has, I think, shown where Mill had found the idea of Wages Boards. It first assumed importance, I think, from the arguments directed against it as a complete remedy in all cases by Mill, but with a possible exception stated with regard to home work, which attracted the attention of many of Mill's disciples, and which was afterwards the subject of discussions in which Mill himself took part.

3921. The proposal was for what were then

Chairman—continued.

called "Boards of Trade to Settle Wages"?—In most cases they were to be settled by what was called—whatever it may mean—"Authoritative Pronouncement," but in some cases with legal compulsion.

3922. Was submission of the point to them voluntary or compulsory?—It is, of course, difficult now to commit any person to any particular proposal. Mill's argument was directed to showing reasons, based on the Ricardo law, which as a general principle he accepted at that time in his life, though afterwards he rejected what was called "the iron law of wages," but with an exception in his mind first developed, I think, by him as regards home work, on the ground that he saw in home work a tendency to reduce all wage. Of course, the whole argument was connected with what then were assumed to be facts, but which are now known not to have been facts; so that it is impossible to do more than trace the historic origin of the Bill and of the Victorian law to that chapter. But Mill laid down in that chapter entitled

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entitled "On popular remedies for low wage," the doctrine which is now to be found in the Report of Mr. Aves, that cheapness of goods is not desirable when the cause is that labour is ill remunerated. You cannot put it more clearly, I think. What was proposed and argued then, was, that there should be Wages Boards representing employers and employed, and that it might be worth consideration whether, in exceptional cases, they should be armed with legal powers.

3923. Can you tell us what form the Bill originally took in this country?—In 1887, Mr. Deakin was over here, and the subject was in his mind, and he and I had conversations with regard to it; and, although his proposals were not formulated in Victoria till a good deal later, and although my Bill was not drawn here till much later, I think we had already discussed the lines on which both the Victorian Bill and my Bill were drawn. The original proposal in Victoria may have come from Mr. Syme, and I think that Mr. Deakin mentioned Mr. Syme, a well-known journalist and politician, as having discussed the question with him; but the Bill in its original form was drawn by Mr. Deakin. He sent me in 1893 his Report to the Victorian Commission, where it was developed; and I find that I made suggestions based on the Victorian proposals—proposals which were the subject of evidence before a Commission, and, indeed, before two Commissions in Victoria. I spoke of it at Brussels in 1891, and in 1895 we had a discussion which touched it on the Factory Bill of 1895 in Committee here. At that time we were not united as to the remedy which we proposed for sweating. There were proposals made before the Committee for compulsory factory work in the tailoring trade on the suggestion of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors. There was a suggestion made as to the adoption of a licence system based on a New Zealand law, and there was no amendment moved pointing to Wages Boards. I do not think that it would have been in order, but it was discussed on the licensing proposal. In 1896 the Boards were formed in Victoria for wearing apparel, I think, and in 1898 the subject was supposed to be sufficiently ripe, and my Bill was, I think, drawn by Mr. Arthur Llewelyn Davies in that year.

3924. Will you tell us what were the main features of that Bill?—The Bill was the same as it is now in all essentials. The main difference is as to the Schedule which was introduced after the Guildhall Conference.

3925. The first Bill, then, did not specify particular trades, I presume?—No. Of course it gave the power to the Home Secretary, following the principles of certain mining Orders and of certain Dangerous Trades Orders; not, I think, because it was not felt that the Bill would have to pass in a different form, but because it was thought that that was the best way to raise the discussion of a subject which was at that time new here.

3926. Then you adopted the plan of putting certain trades into the Schedule?—The original

Chairman—continued.

Bill was the Bill from 1898 to 1906 without alteration. Then came the Guildhall Conference on the subject, at which we had the assistance of many colonial politicians who had practically dealt with the subject, and of Mr. Hoatson, of Leek, who had taken a leading part in the matter, and we shortly afterwards had present in this country Colonel Rao, the President, I think, of the Employers' Association in Victoria and also, at one time, of the Anti-Sweating League of Victoria, and we had others who took great interest in the subject—one or two of the Australian Bishops and Sir Reginald Talbot, the Governor of Victoria. The result of a very general discussion was, that it was felt that the measure was becoming one that was likely to have practical results in legislation and that it would be better to consider a more distinctly experimental form of Bill by putting certain trades into the Schedule. Personally, I have never seen my way to adopt, and though I do not reject, I am, on whole, opposed to Universal Wages Boards; and, therefore, the experimental trial was always in my mind; and as far as I was concerned, as representing the original promoters of the Bill, I very willingly fell in with the suggestion that there should be a schedule in which the trades should be set forth.

3927. That is, you lay considerable stress on the point that the legislation should be experimental?—Yes, absolutely.

3928. Realising the considerable difficulty involved?—Yes, and not only that, but, also believing in the wisdom in the interest of the great Trade Unions, for example, of limiting legislation of that sort, for my view is still that of the majority of the Trade Congress on that subject.

3929. Now, perhaps, we might run through some of the clauses of the Bill, unless there is any point you wish first to touch upon specifically?—I do not know whether you would like me to deal at all with the modifications introduced. The only important one is the schedule—the others are merely verbal. The main trade which is in the schedule is that which has been selected in almost all countries and colonies for experimental legislation of this description which has succeeded; that is, the trade in wearing apparel—the tailoring trade and the white trade, lingerie. Those are the trades which have been specially dealt with in most cases.

3930. Are there any other modifications of importance that you would like to direct our attention to?—No, I think not.

3931. Perhaps, then, you will run through the clauses of the Bill at this stage, or would it suit you better to do that later?—I do not know how far the Committee wish to go into detail on this Bill, because naturally, as I have said, the Bill is an experimental Bill. It was drawn originally in the form in which it was easiest to raise the question before the House; but, as representing the original promoters, all I wish for is that the experiment should be tried of Wages Boards, representing employers and employed in some trade or trades which would give a fair chance to the experiment.

3932. Subject

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3932. Subject to that, as the Bill itself has been referred to us, I should like to ask you a few questions upon the working of this Board. With regard to the first clause, is it your view that the Board should have jurisdiction over the wages paid; or the rates of payment made to the workers in factories as well as to home workers?—It is impossible, in my opinion, to draw a line between factories and workshops and between workshops and outwork and home work; but I imagine that in view of the evils complained of and the extreme lowness of wage which we call "sweating," and certain other conditions in certain trades—those specified, for example, in the Schedule—in practice the factories would be let alone; but I do not think they could be excepted in principle.

3933. For home work piecework rates would have to be fixed?—Yes.

3934. Would you contemplate that the Board should fix time rates as well for the factory?—My impression is that it would be unnecessary in the first instance to deal specially with factories: I think that it would be advisable to fix general prices; but those prices would, in those cases, usually be fixed below the prices normally paid in factories.

3935. That would affect the constitution of the Board somewhat. If you were only going to fix the prices to be paid to home workers you should, I imagine, only have home workers represented on the Board?—I do not think it would be wise to restrict the representation in that way. I think it would be wise to represent, both as regards employers and employed, what I may call the entire industry.

3936. The factory workers and the home workers?—Yes; the forms in which the Boards would work out should be left, I think, extremely elastic if the law was framed as an experimental law and with the intention to apply it only to one or two trades; because the experience gained would be essential to the future success of the law; and the experiment could be best tried and the experience best gained if the system were an elastic system. For example, it would be desirable, I think, to have different Boards for different parts of the country—different areas with a measure of co-ordination for the whole.

3937. If you were practically fixing rates of payment only for home workers, do you think there would be any risk if you had representatives of the factory Workers on the Board, of their desiring rather to put up the rates of payment for outwork, so as to make it more desirable for the employer to have the work done in the factory?—I think in the tailoring trade it would be wise to guard against that by only having representatives from the factory workers in connection with co-ordination, and that as regards the districts the majority of the members would be those mainly concerned with home work. In the lingerie trade—the white trade—I do not think there is the same difficulty of trying to force all the work into the factories at once.

3938. Do you anticipate that there would be much difficulty in organising the home workers

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Chairman—continued.

so as to get a satisfactory representation from them?—Yes, I think it is only fair to admit that the subject does present difficulties. Of course it has been discussed in several Colonies, and it has been discussed here certainly by me with Mr. Askwith. Mr. Askwith has been a witness before you and I think you have asked him questions with regard to it, and I should not object as a first attempt to a nomination of the members. What I want is that experiments should be tried, and that both sides should be fairly represented in the experiments tried. But, although these are very important details, they are, after all, details.

3939. You would recognise that the sweated-industry conditions of our Colonies, especially as regards home work, are on a very much smaller scale than here, and not so serious?—They are on a very much smaller scale, but some of the salient features and chief difficulties are represented there.

3940. But still they are not so difficult to deal with as here?—That is so.

3941. You have contemplated the possibility of it being necessary in some trades to nominate members?—I have discussed that matter with Mr. Askwith, and with some inspectors, and I must say they do not all agree. Persons who are far better informed on this subject than I am do not all agree: so that I speak with great hesitation on a subject which divides in opinion the best informed persons. But this is to my mind at the most only a detail, as I have said, and the essential thing is to get, what you do get in some places where the Boards are nominated, a real representation of the workers employed.

3942. Would you anticipate, if there were legislation of this kind, that voluntary workers, and people outside organisations, would make it their business to help these people to organise?—Yes.

3943. There is a suggestion in Clause 5 that the price might be either a piece-work price or a time wage?—Yes. Of course that is general, and is connected with the questions asked as to the exclusion of factories. I do not think it would be possible to exclude factories altogether from our purview; but in practice I think in these experimental trades with which we should start they would be excluded. I do not think they would come in in practice; but I do not think you could make an absolute exclusion or use words which would tend to an absolute exclusion. It is most desirable, of course, in all labour legislation to avoid such a classification and such differences in the law that it becomes advantageous to turn some sort of work into another, merely for the purpose of evading the law.

3944. I am not quite clear whether there is any penalty upon the workman or workwoman, or is the penalty solely upon the employer?—That is a subject which, as you know, has been discussed on the Coal Mines Regulation Acts. Some of the Coal Mines Regulation Acts decide one way and some decide the other. But it is after all a detail—the object is to ensure the enforcement of the law, and the point you men-

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tion is not one to which I attach first-class importance.

3945. With regard to the advantages expected, and the results which would be likely to follow, I should like to put this one phase to you. A good deal of this home work is work done in competition with work done by machinery and under superior conditions in factories, and it is quite possible that a rate of payment may be made for doing the work in a factory which enables the worker to earn a very fair wage, while the same rate only yields a very small wage per week to the home worker. For instance, I may give an illustration I have met with. I saw a woman working in a well-equipped factory with machinery making buttonholes in coats and waistcoats where they pay 4½d. per gross, but she earned a very good wage, though, obviously, if a woman had to make buttonholes at home at 4½d. per gross it would be a deplorable wage, and it might furnish one of those cases of extreme hardship. How would you contemplate it would be possible to increase a wage like that?—We, all of us, of course, have a habit of looking, and very properly, to possible hard cases, but, of course, we also know that when these laws come to be put into force, it is found that we have exaggerated the difficulties. I think you will find from Mr. Aves's Report that the difficulties foreseen in that way in Victoria are declared by him not to exist, although he holds a personal opinion which he took out with him, which he records in the last line of his report. But as regards all his evidence, and the facts set forth, they all point in this direction, that you must not exaggerate these little difficulties. There is, of course, no doubt that in some trades you would have the same difficulty which the Home Office experienced in the grinding trade of Sheffield, where there were two classes of work paid at very different rates but producing the same article. The Home Office had certainly enormous difficulties to contend with in the case of the grinding trade, but finally they were got over. Similar difficulties may exist in other trades, but, speaking with great deference to the opinion of others who have greater experience than myself, I doubt whether the difficulties would be very great in the white trade or in the clothing trade. There is, of course, an enormous amount of work in the tailoring trade which is done by sewing machines of various kinds, but the amount which is actually done right through by machinery is, I think, not very large.

3946. Will you, in your own way, state briefly and broadly the advantages which you would expect to accrue to the home workers from such legislation as this?—It is a matter upon which I should not care to waste very much of the time of the Committee. The evils seem to me to be enormous and admitted. They are such as those which were pointed out before Lord Dunraven's Committee of the House of Lords, and which have been pointed out before you here; and I should imagine from your examination very early in your evidence of people like Miss Squire, you must have become convinced

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that there are great evils in connection with sweating in this country which it is desirable to remedy.

3947. Do you look to a raising of the general or best rates of payment, or is it that you anticipate that the average rate will be raised, and the low rates levelled up?—What I should attach special importance to at the beginning would be the improvement of the lowest rates—cases such as those known to yourself where rates are paid which are concealed as being improper rates in a town where the general rates are very much higher. There are hidden rates—secret sweated rates; and publicity itself is of enormous importance in those trades.

3948. Do you anticipate that there would be much difficulty in the way of evasion of the rates by collusion between the work people?—That is, of course, a matter upon which a great deal of evidence has been given by people at one time or another. I think that your questions to Mr. Askwith were important. I was allowed to see Mr. Askwith's evidence, and my note is that he deals with the matter at Question 3941; and, from his great knowledge, he deals with it better than I should be likely to do. His opinion is of the greatest value, and I should be glad to accept his opinion, and to say that I agree with it.

3949. With regard to the areas, would you suggest that the Boards should have jurisdiction over the immediate locality in which they were formed?—I should hope that, in the case of some one trade at all events, it would be possible to try the experiment of Boards covering all parts of the country, with co-ordination.

3950. These Boards are to be formed, then, on the request of persons in any district?—As with the Housing laws, I think, it all rests upon the request of persons. It is a Parliamentary form. I should think that if there is a schedule of trades to which this law is to apply, it would be better to have the Boards formed at the same time after due preliminary inquiry through the whole country.

3951. Then, if one particular district applied for a Board, and the Home Office thought that there should be a Board, you would then have those Boards formed in every district where that trade was carried on?—My view is a very moderate view. I want to have an experiment, and I want to have the experiment tried in as satisfactory a manner as possible, and I think that it would be best in the first instance to start with one or two important trades, and, by having Boards for those over the whole country—not starting until you were ready to start everywhere.

3952. And then some arrangement for co-ordination?—Yes.

3953. That would help you to get rid of one difficulty which has been mentioned sometimes—the difficulty of competition?—Yes, that is a question which I have discussed most frequently with Mr. Askwith and others; and, speaking for myself—not venturing to speak for others—I am confident that we should be able to solve that difficulty. No one pretends that

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that there are not very great difficulties. But the effect on price is, on inquiry, shown I think, to be much less considerable than was supposed. The effect on price of bringing up the lowest wage of the worst-paid workers has been found to be either *nil*, or, very slight indeed. But the risks and dangers are great; and, therefore, it is that I suggest experiment to be tried in that way.

3954. Would you give to the Co-ordinating Authority any compulsory power to alter the rate arrived at by the local Wages Board, or to bring it up? Supposing in one locality they had fixed a lower rate than elsewhere, with a view to assist them in competition with another district, would you give this Co-ordinating Authority power to compulsorily increase that rate?—To compulsorily increase the rate, no; but I think the acts of the Area Authority should, before they are actually published, be brought before the Co-ordinating Authority, and the Co-ordinating Authority would be the Authority to publish the rates for the various districts.

3955. You would not allow them to become operative until they had been sanctioned?—I think the better plan, in order to avoid the difficulty, is to do what is done with Home Office rules, as is done, for instance, with the lead rules—to bring them all together, and then issue them from the Home Office.

3956. You do not make any provision for that in the Bill?—No. I frankly admit that those are developments which have come up in the last few years, in the discussion of a trial experiment.

3957. These were not in last year's Bill?—No; they were the result of a desire on my part to meet people like Miss Squire and other Inspectors who have given a great deal of time to this question. If you are drawing a Bill to apply to all trades, you must have it in a more or less elastic form.

3958. The questions I have put apply to competition between districts at home, but then there is, of course, the question arising from time to time of competition from abroad, at least in regard to some of the trades?—Yes, but in my opinion that is exaggerated. Of course, the tailoring trade is an export trade, just as the lingerie trade of Paris is an export trade, where a similar enquiry has taken place; but I do not believe that the raising of the sweated wage at the bottom of the scale—even the raising of it largely—does affect the price.

3959. Would the fact that the employers and the workpeople were both on the Board and both strongly interested in retaining the trade, exercise a restraining influence upon them, to prevent them putting the prices up exorbitantly?—I think so. Of course, theoretically, there are some industries where wages are reduced by the efforts of philanthropic or charitable people, who intend to do good, but in practice do a great deal of harm, but one has never seen such a trade become, through its theoretical cheapness, a great export trade. It does not happen in practice. Even the agitation with regard to

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Chairman—continued.

prison goods failed to show any considerable export trade based upon the theoretical facts.

3960. What is your view as to the payment of the expenses of the representatives of the workers?—I confess I think it would be very small. I do not think it is really a matter of the slightest importance. We have, at the present moment, an enormous number of inquiries taking place in this country, some of which are paid for out of the local rates, and some of which are paid for out of national taxes, and no one has ever bothered to know which they came out of. Very few of us know from what source the expenses are met.

3961. Do you contemplate that the charge should come either upon the rates or the taxes, or is it to be a payment made by the workers themselves?—According to all analogies, it should come either out of the rates or the taxes. It should be either part of the business of Local Authorities, or it should be paid out of the public taxes if the inquiries were under the auspices of the Home Office. But my point is that it is extremely small, that such inquiries are made at the present moment—that you have an enormous number of meetings, for instance, with reference to the dangerous trades, and yet hardly any member of this House knows out of whose pocket the expenses come. They are extremely small.

3962. I am thinking rather of the payment of a wage to the worker for giving up his time in attending and sitting on the Wages Board?—The practical difficulty is not found, I think, in the mining trade, for example. Our miners' representatives have of course to meet in great numbers. That you may say is the case of a Union. But then there are, as you know very well, Trade Councils. Now Trade Councils have never been close-fisted about these things. Trades Councils represent trades which are very feeble trades in their own place on all sorts of inquiries, and this question of expense has never been raised at all.

3963. Of course the home workers are a very poor class of people; they have very little spare money?—It is conceivable that difficulties might arise with home workers in the rural districts, but in towns the Trade Councils would not bother about the expense. They would do it for them; they have done it everywhere.

3964. Is it your view that the home workers should be represented upon the Co-ordinating Authority?—It is very difficult, of course, to say whether the most sweated class of home workers would find in their ranks the best representatives of their views. That is questionable. The experiment has been tried in France, but it has not been very successful.

3965. Take the case of sending a representative to London, for instance?—In France they pay the cost of representing the workers both on the Conseil Supérieur du Travail and also on the Commission du Travail, which is a sort of Cabinet of the Conseil Supérieur. But the cost is not a large one and they do pay it out of the State funds.

3966. There is one other point which has been brought before us, and that is with regard

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to new patterns and new designs. It is said that if the Wages Board is to fix the rate of payment that involves their fixing it practically before the thing is made; and it has been suggested to us that in many trades, where competition is very keen indeed between manufacturers to produce new patterns and new designs of various kinds, they would hesitate about submitting their new patterns and new designs to competing manufacturers who would then see them really before they began to make them?—It was mentioned to me that this Committee had taken some evidence upon that matter, and I was asked to read the evidence of a Nottingham lace manufacturer, I believe, on that subject. I also read that of Mr. Askwith, and I also discussed it with two of the Inspectors, and I came to the conclusion that it is not very important. Mr. Askwith made a practical suggestion founded on his great experience, which is similar to an impression which had occurred to me from my own experience, and which, I daresay, would occur to most of us, namely, that you would cover it by a general rate first, and that you would fix your general rate in such a way as to cover it and leave a margin. In mining operations, where you come to a different kind of coal—coal which is harder or softer, as the case may be, and where you cannot at first fix the rate, you make the best shot at it you can, so as to cover it with a margin, and then you fix it later; and by the time you fix it the whole trade would know.

3967. That illustration from mining hardly covers a question where secrecy is desired?—No, it does not; but you would have to make a working arrangement which you would not be quite sure would work out right. You cannot be quite sure what the amount of the earnings will be; you cannot be sure—just as you cannot be sure as to the amount of stone in the coal, or its hardness.

3968. We had suggestions with reference to the box-making trade, where a great variety of boxes are used for cigarettes, sweets, and so on?—I had a talk with Miss Squire—with one of the Inspectors, at all events—who was asked about it.

3969. It seems that there is a great deal of competition in the trade, and competitors wish to put their goods in special boxes with new designs in order to get the trade, and it was said that they would not like competitors to see these?—There are 400 different kinds of boxes, I believe, in the chocolate trade in London; but the inspectors tell me they are very easily reduced, so far as rates of pay go, to very few categories; so that the design upon them would not matter. You would make classes which would include all possible pictures; but of course this is a practical point upon which the inspector's opinion is better than my own, as I need hardly say, for I have no knowledge of it.

Mr. Trevelyan.

3970. I did not quite gather what your view was with regard to the function of the Central

Mr. Trevelyan—continued.

Board. Would the constitution of the Board be on much the same lines as the Local Boards?—There must be employers and employed represented upon it unless you would entrust the co-ordination entirely to a single Arbitrator—the best imitation of Mr. Askwith you could get.

3971. It would be advisable in any case, would it not, to have representatives of both sides?—In the same or similar things in other countries they have nominally a representative of both sides on the Central Authority, but in practice it falls into the hands of some two or three leading people. In France, for example, I imagine that if M. Waddington, a great manufacturer, and M. Fontaine, a great official, agree, they would get their way. Clearly they know much more about the matter than the people who are brought in either to represent the workers or the employers who have not made a study of it. I imagine that the others would really not do much more than sanction and approve decisions which would rest upon a knowledge which they could not possess.

3972. Then is your idea that where the Central Board felt that there was an inconsistency between the decisions of the Local Boards they should have power to alter them, or only have power to suggest to the Local Boards to alter them?—With regard to a matter on which none of us have experience, and on which we can only foresee the difficulties which may arise—and very likely turn out quite wrong—I do not wish to lay down anything like a binding opinion, even for myself, still less do I wish to try and force anybody in a particular direction. But, subject to that natural remark, the drift of my mind has been, I think, in the direction which I indicated in my reply to the Chairman's first question on the point, namely, that a price list should not be actually published as binding until the co-ordination had taken place, and I think that that co-ordination should be a very gentle one at first.

3973. I gather your idea really is that the Central Board might have to make suggestions, but would never require to exercise compulsion?—We know how it works in the Dangerous Trades with special trades. It is really settled in advance by special rules; but when there is a great dispute someone is called in to arbitrate the matter, and it has generally been in effect settled (before the nominal arbitration takes place) by a conference which has, of course, preceded it.

3974. I should like you, if you do not mind, to tell the Committee what you think about the question of licensing workers and places?—I am a heretic on that point. My friends and those with whom I have worked on the Wages Board movement for several years past have always taken up an attitude of hostility towards licensing, and of course the Home Office is very hostile to licensing, because they think it will give an enormous amount of paper work and will tend to become a mere form. But, in spite of my acquaintance with the views of the Home Office and of my friends, I personally have always been inclined to be in favour of licensing also. I am in favour of both. But I regard
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Mr. Trevelyan—continued.

Wages Boards as quite a different thing from the licensing proposals for instance as to home work by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald. Those proposals deal with marked evils, and deal with them perhaps usefully. But they are quite different things, acting in a quite different way, but able to combine with Wages Boards. They are in the nature of Public Health Acts; they start from the sanitary point of view. Ours is a wage proposal.

3975. There is no way in which they could injure the wage proposals?—No, I do not think so. They are quite a different thing.

3976. Do you think they might assist it to a certain extent in case there were an attempt on the part of home workers to evade the operation of the Act?—I think if there were time for real joint action between the Local Authorities and the Home Office each might assist the other to an incredible extent. But the difficulty, of course, is that the Inspectorate Staff is not strong enough in every case. If they had time enough to do it, theoretically they might do it, and ought to do it, but they do not do it much. I think, looking at what exists now, that would meet your question as to what might exist. I think it ought to be so, but I am afraid in practice it is like two departments of the Government, neither knows what the other is doing.

3977. If there were a licensing system should you prefer it to be in the hands of the Local Authority or of the Home Office?—Of course, I fought against the workshops going to the Local Authorities; but it is of course past praying for. I do not believe in the Local Authority. I know that it works admirably in a few places, but you cannot trust it in the places where you most want it. You have got the same difficulty with regard to the Housing question. You know where the evil is in the rural districts, and your remedies do not work there. They work somewhere else.

Mr. Dewar.

3978. How would you answer the employer of labour who says, "If you are going to interfere with my freedom in this way you must protect me against the foreigner who is not interfered with?"—That of course is a purely theoretical argument, such as great practical men often indulge in. It is mere theory. It assumes all sorts of facts which I deny.

3979. How would you answer him when he gets on the Tariff Reform platform?—I never answer a man who starts with theoretical arguments.

3980. You do not think they are effective?—They are not effective to my mind at all events. I never take any notice of them.

3981. He can point, you admit, to the difference between Australia and this country?—Yes, certainly. I have never placed Colonial example very high. Of course the circumstances are quite different. We have probably more to learn from the lingerie trade in Paris than we have to learn from Colonial experience.

3982. There is rigorous protection there too?—Protection does not affect the lingerie trade

Mr. Dewar—continued.

of Paris. It is an enormous export trade, at very high prices, which they keep up by means of the excellence of their manufacture; but in parts of the trade there is the most appalling sweating.

3983. Do you think a minimum wage might tend to displace, in some degree, home work?—Of course all improvement tends to displace some wretched condition, and undoubtedly tends to individual cases of hardship. But to be a reformer one must, I think, believe that these individual cases of hardship are fewer than it is generally believed; and it is for the general benefit that that kind of hardship should be inflicted. The Paris Inquiry revealed, and any inquiry here reveals evils of the "Old Poor Law" type, and of charitable assistance keeping down wages. Individual cases may be very hard, but still it is not for the benefit of the country that general wages should be kept down by Poor Law assistance or charitable assistance.

3984. Do you think that those unable to earn that minimum wage form a large part of the home workers?—There is, of course, the question of slow and fast workers.

3985. Has that difficulty been met?—It has been met by the practical man. I think you asked questions of Mr. Askwith with regard to that. I am not an authority on the question—I believe it has been met.

3986. You do not anticipate any difficulty in that direction?—I think there is much less difficulty in these proposals than there has been caused by such changes as the Compensation Acts for instance, notably in Mining. There may have been a tendency under these Acts to displace the slow worker.

3987. You, I think, strongly desire that this Act should only be experimental?—That is my view.

3988. What is it that you are chiefly afraid of; what difficulty do you anticipate may arise to show that it has been a wrong experiment?—The difficulty was raised by one of the questions of the Chairman, and by Mr. Trevelyan, and that difficulty is undoubtedly a great difficulty. It can be met and dealt with in my view, but it will require very careful handling; and you want to have the best man you can get to solve that difficulty before you can hope to extend the experiment very widely. The Chairman of the first Board, or the person who does the first advising and co-ordinating work for one great trade, must be a very good man; but when the work has once been done he will have laid down principles which we, I think, shall be able confidently to follow.

Mr. Fell.

3989. Can you tell us why you pitch upon two such very important trades to start the experiments upon as these two—tailoring and lingerie?—Because they are the trades in which sweating has prevailed in the greatest number of countries and colonies. The whole of the American States which have exceptional legislation directed against what they call "sweat shops" or "tenement factories," deal with tailoring

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Mr. Fell—continued.

ing and with the white trade, and curiously enough, with the cigar trade. Those are, I think, the only three trades which are dealt with in all the American special laws. Then, in the Colonies, I think everywhere, wearing apparel has been specially dealt with, wherever there has been any special dealing with any trade. And here, undoubtedly, the Amalgamated Society of Tailors, the London Tailors, and the Leeds Tailors, and also the Irish Tailors, represented by the Irish Trade Congress, have, for a great number of years past, agitated for special conditions for the tailoring trade on the ground of the specially sweated conditions of the tailoring trade; and I think it is acknowledged that it is a very special trade. In France you have the same demand you have in Germany, that the wearing apparel trade, including the lingerie trade—the white trade—and others have to be dealt with first.

3990. My point is that those are such very large trades. If this is to be an experiment, and it should fail in the case of these two very large trades, it would do more damage than it would if the experiment were tried on some smaller industry?—Yes, but if it were to succeed only in some other sweated trade such as the making of cardboard boxes or some of the other trades which have been specially mentioned, you would not have gained much from an experiment in so small a trade. People would say—“This is such an exceptional trade.”

3991. If you made a success with regard to some, you could extend it, no doubt?—I am afraid you would not. I cannot think of any of those other trades in which the experiment would be so valuable.

3992. If it is an experiment, then it seems that your suggestion is it should be tried on a very large scale; and that is the point which strikes me as the danger of it?—I cannot think of any small trade where it would be a real experiment. There are certain sweated trades which are almost confined to three or four towns. Those would be no use to begin with, I think.

3993. The tailoring trade must extend to every town in the country?—Yes, it does.

3994. And would want a Board, I suppose, all over the country?—Yes. I said I should like to begin with a trade which would have a Board over the whole country.

3995. We have had before us witnesses who have factories at Colchester as well as London?—Yes.

3996. And have told us they paid different rates in the two places?—Yes; that is the case with many of the trades where trade unions do deal with wages. Of course the engineers are a stock example, and the engineers are everywhere.

3997. I gather from you that the killing of a trade is no remedy for sweating?—I do not think I said that, and I have never thought of any trade which would be likely to be stopped by the passage of this Bill.

3998. I put it down as the result of what I gathered from your remark?—No. I have never contemplated the possibility of the killing of

Mr. Fell—continued.

any trade. Of course, there are hand branches of certain manufacturing trades which have been supposed to have had their life or rather their death-struggle shortened by legislation. There are cases of that kind, but they are outside anything which has been contemplated in this Bill. I think I mentioned the famous case of the grinding—the different kinds of grinding—by machinery and by hand, as, for instance, razors.

3999. Do you think this legislation would tend to drive work into the factories?—I confess I think in the tailoring trade it would. I think it would in the long run have that tendency, but that tendency would operate slowly. But I think in the tailoring trade the operation would be in that direction.

4000. And the middle-aged cannot work in factories, I think?—I do not know that that is so; but I do not like the work of married women in factories, if you are thinking of them.

Mr. Parkes.

4001. Can you tell us where the demand for this agitation against sweating comes from mainly—from the home workers or from the factory workers?—I think the good people who first started the agitation in this country, and who procured Lord Dunraven's Committee, and the people who have had a great deal of influence in that direction, are among the church workers. They, no doubt, have seen the evils of sweating in home work.

4002. What I want to know is whether the agitation came from the home workers themselves or from people who work among them?—It came, no doubt, in the first instance mainly from church workers.

4003. Do you think it desirable to in any way diminish home work?—There is home work and home work. There are kinds of home work which one would not think it desirable to diminish at all; but, as a general rule, home work in towns is carried on under conditions which no one would desire to see continued, and one would prefer to see it diminished.

4004. You spoke, I think, of it being undesirable for married women to work at home work?—No, I did not say at home work. I was asked generally with regard to factory work being unsuitable to the older people. That was the question that I was asked.

4005. You would not deprive married women of the opportunity of doing home work?—There is home work of so many different kinds. There is home work of a kind which no one would wish to see stopped, and there is home work of a kind which everybody would wish to see stopped—fur pulling, for instance, is an example.

4006. Would you deprive women of an opportunity of earning money by home work?—A little while ago I was answering a question as to the tendency of factories to discourage certain classes of work. I was not speaking of home work in the abstract; but, as I say, home work depends upon the character of the work and you cannot lay down a general principle.

4007. White

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4007. White work of course extends all over the country?—Yes.

4008. And in Ireland and in Scotland?—Yes.

4009. How would you get a wage board sitting in London to settle wages in country districts in England or in Ireland?—You do not get it in any trade. The Engineers do not have the same wage under all circumstances, although they come as near to it as it is possible to come. You do not get it even in Government work which extends over the whole country. Or, take printing, where there is a fair wage in the printing trade, you do not get a uniform wage all over the country, but you have a wage which is more or less like an Ambassador's salary, conditioned to the cost of living in the place where the employment is.

4010. Is the co-ordination not with the object of securing uniformity?—Not uniformity of wage, but uniformity having regard to the circumstances—with regard to house rents mainly, and all sorts of other conditions. Take the case of the agricultural wage. The agricultural wage in Surrey is a pound, while the agricultural wage not very far from Surrey is 15s.

4011. That would mean, then, that there would be different prices in different parts of the country?—There are in every trade.

4012. That being the case, you could not get rid of competition between the different districts?—No, that is the very question which I was asked, and as to which I referred to Mr. Askwith's answer. It exists now, and the theoretical difficulty which is raised is less great in practice than it appears to be in theory.

4013. That is a matter which some of the witnesses complained of. They said they met with competition from different parts of the country, and that the country competed successfully with goods made in London?—It does with regard to some things, of course. We all of us deal as to certain things with rural districts. Certain trades in certain districts have special facilities. Take the knitted trade of the Hebrides, or take certain forms of Irish local industries, we, all of us, have to do with them.

4014. If you cannot get rid of different prices you cannot get rid of competition?—No. As a general rule you find industries set down in particular places. Those places ought to be, it might be thought, places which have natural advantages for the carrying on of the industries; but sometimes it is rather a question of inherited habits. No one can say why all the best needles in the world are made at Redditch. They always have been, and nobody can get them made anywhere else.

4015. If the element of home competition comes in it necessarily follows that the element of foreign competition comes in?—Yes, theoretically.

4016. Some of the manufacturers have complained of that to a large extent?—Yes, and I met them in answer to a question by the Chairman. I said that when you come even to

Mr. Parkes—continued.

people who are not friendly to my view on this subject, they admit that there is no evidence to show that prices are raised by the raising of the lowest wage—the wage at the bottom of the scale. Now that affects the main case of competition which could be put before this Committee in connection with this Bill—that is the tailoring trade. In the slop tailoring trade, we do a large export business; there is a large export trade in the slop tailoring, yet we do compete, and compete successfully, with other countries, and my answer would be that there is no evidence to show that the raising of the wages of the most sweated worker would raise the prices.

4017. Not perhaps in some cases, but in other cases it would?—I am very sceptical about that.

4018. We had evidence to show it, I think?—The evidence is very often based upon beliefs which are not supported by facts. I think that many manufacturers are unaware of the prices which are paid lower than their own.

4019. Do you think that Australia is any guide to us?—No, I have never alleged that any one country is a guide to another. Of course you inform yourself about what has happened elsewhere, as some things are common, but you do not take any one country as an absolute guide to any other in anything.

4020. The Australian experience is quite experimental at present, is it not?—No, I do not think so. I think the Victorian efforts have met with conspicuous success. Of that there can be no doubt, because we have people who are entirely non-political, who have come here and have told us the same thing—people on both sides. We have had Colonel Rae over here; we have had the Governor of Victoria; we have had all sorts of people, quite impartial, as well as employers and employed, all telling us the same thing, that it has been a very great success. The leader of the Conservative party in the Victoria Upper House, who had opposed all this legislation very strongly, made a speech to that effect in himself moving the last addition to the list of the Wage Board trades.

4021. Our evidence tends to show that they were somewhat experimental, in consequence of the fact that all the wages were on the ascending scale, and that they had no experience of wages in the descending scale?—Of course there are trades outside Wages Boards where they have had to face very heavy drops of wages in Australia, and it must not be assumed that all wages are ascending in Australia by any means. They have had very great drops in some trades. You see, they are subject to booms, and there are moments of very deep depression. If the wages have ascended in the sweated trades, it is, I think, because there were secret wages—far too low in proportion to the general wages of the country.

4022. You are aware, of course, that there is an association in this country opposed to Wages Boards?—There are some good people in this country who are opposed to all legislation. There are anarchists of the deepest conservatism in this country, of course, though there are

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Mr. Parkes—continued.

are few now as compared with what there used to be when I first came into this House. I myself was brought up in the strict Ricardo school. I know all about it.

4023. No doubt you are aware that there are a great number of home workers who feared that the result of legislation would be to drive work from the home into the factory; would that be a good thing?—One finds, of course, that good people who have a strong view against legislation, can always produce workers of some depressed type who will honestly think that they are going to be ruined by any proposal for legislation which is made. It is a form of our friend "the poor widow."

4024. They fear they will be deprived of their employment?—Yes, they think so, no doubt. Honestly, no doubt many people think so. But on the whole I think there can be no doubt that home workers in the sweated trades are strongly in favour of improvement of their condition. I have no doubt about that; but it is, of course, impossible, either for one case or the other case, to be proved. One cannot count heads; there are no means of doing that, but I am confident that the great majority of home workers desire legislation. I admit at once I cannot prove it, for it is impossible to prove it.

4025. You have no idea, I suppose, of the number of home workers?—Of course there are the census returns. But I think, with the painful experience of one who has been trying to sit on the Census Committee of the Royal Statistical Society, all census returns of rates of wages and of numbers of persons employed in any trade in any country are most imperfect and misleading. They must be. You cannot get them exact.

4026. It is an admitted fact that there are thousands of home workers in each of our large towns?—Oh, yes, no doubt. On that point, which is a curious and interesting one, I have been trying to get at the facts in individual cases. But it is very difficult. For example, take the Home Office Return [Cd. 3986]—"Supplement to the annual report of the Chief Inspector"—"Returns of persons employed in non-textile factories." Then there are, in the same document, returns of the Local authorities of persons employed as out workers in various trades. Now it is impossible to read those Returns and to believe that they are in the least degree accurate. The return at Leeds is that only 1,132 persons are employed in the whole trade of wearing apparel at Leeds, whereas the return is that 7,259 persons are so employed in the City of London. I do not believe those statements a bit. I am not of course specially attacking this Return, but I say that I believe that all Returns of persons employed in any trade are necessarily most misleading. I do not think it is possible to establish statistics with regard to them.

4027. Do you think it is desirable to reduce the number of home workers and to increase the number in factories?—In some trades I have no doubt it is, but I cannot possibly give a general answer covering all trades.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

4028. There is nothing about the Court of Appeal in this Bill. As you remember one of the points which Mr. Gladstone raised on the second reading as a point to be discussed by this Committee was whether it is desirable?—If we are dealing experimentally with certain trades in which sweating largely prevails we want to get experience, but I do not think we want to set up the elaborate machinery of a Court of Appeal. If it were proposed to establish universal Wage Boards for all trades—which I have never proposed—or to establish the system which has just been repeated in New South Wales—Mr. Wise's Act—or the New Zealand law of Mr. Reeves, there would be a case for a Court of Appeal. I can see no ground for it at all in connection with this experiment. But of course some of the duties which are in my mind as those which might be discharged by a Court of Appeal, would be covered by my answer with regard to co-ordination.

4029. I gather that your chief hope is that the lower rates will be raised nearer to the level of the higher, but you do not think or expect that the higher rates will in any one case be raised higher than they are now?—I never like to bind myself to too wide a reply, but generally speaking, I should be disposed to agree. I think the experiment would be an experiment which would have the effect of raising the rates at the bottom of the scale.

4030. And if it did no more than that, I understand you to say the question of foreign competition would not arise?—No, it would not; it would not raise prices.

4031. Then is it your opinion that there would be great objection on the part of the employers to Wage Boards?—Taking the employers of the country, there is generally a sort of well understood, not very violent, but rather general opposition to all new laws.

4032. As Mr. Aves says in Australia, they did not like this, but they would rather have this than something else?—Of course Mr. Aves is a very able man, and has worked very hard. But he reports an opinion in the last line of his report which is his own opinion with which he went out. The facts, bar the opinion in the last line, are, I think, very admirably set out, and I think it is more encouraging as to the employer's view of Wage Boards than what you have just put. I will quote passages if you like.

4033. I only want your own opinion?—I think, as regards the facts, this report substantiates my suggestion that everybody is in favour of it now.

4034. Do you think the English employers would object very strongly to this?—English employers are always opposed to legislation, not very violently though.

4035. Not more against this than anything else?—No.

4036. Of course this Bill will do nothing towards getting rid of the greatest evil of all, namely, the seasonal irregularities. Have you any suggestion by which that could be dealt with?—In some trades it is of course inevitable. I mean, there are some trades which are absolutely

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absolutely seasonal. But I think legislation rather tends to get rid of seasonal irregularity in the trades which we have been talking about. Take the case of trades connected with ladies' dresses for example. People may order their gowns too late for a ball, and then the workers sit up late into the night making gowns which might have been ordered a month beforehand. Now I think legislation tends to check that kind of seasonal irregularity. But, of course, you cannot check it in the jam trade or the fish trade. As regards the trades which are in our minds here I think this legislation would have some tendency in the direction of diminishing it.

4037. Do you anticipate any difficulty in connection with middle women? In some trades there are many, and in others there are none?—I think I ought to say that I am not competent to deal with that. I have discussed it with Mr. Askwith, who has gone into it a great deal, and I have heard it discussed between him and some of the Inspectors, but I have no separate knowledge and I should not repeat so well as they would have told you what their opinion is. If I spoke it would not be my opinion, but the opinion of other people, and I think it better not to venture to give an opinion.

Mr. Hugh Law.

4038. There are two quite separate proposals which it is intended to deal with as far as I understand. There is the proposal made with the special object of obtaining better sanitation—a proposal which, as it is quite obvious, might tend to deprive of work some of those who need it?—Yes, just as all regulations or by-laws may.

4039. There is also a proposal which has been made, which is not embodied in the Bill, that instead of training people you should merely register them; that is to say, that any home worker, before obtaining work, should register her name and address with the Local Authority?—There are two kinds of registration of out workers. The principle of registration is in the law now; but there is a great difference between the registration which the Home Office favour, and the licensing, to which they are strongly opposed.

4040. Which do you think is preferable?—Personally I am in favour of very strong sanitary regulations. I do not see the same objection to licensing that is put forward; but I understand the objection, and all my friends are against me on the point.

4041. You do not think that the ends which could be obtained by registering could be obtained by legislation?—I am afraid registration tends to what the Home Office say licensing would be, a mere paper transaction in many cases. The Returns show us that there are no prosecutions, and surely when you have a very good inspecting staff, as they have in some of these towns, if there were an intention on the part of the Local Authority to make it more than a mere form, you would find a certain proportion.

Mr. Hugh Law—continued.

4042. There is a great variety of conditions among home workers. Are there any processes which you would be inclined to prohibit altogether from being carried out in the home?—That brings one to Dangerous Trade legislation. At the present moment of course, the powers of the Home Office are very wide in regard to dangerous trades. If you look at the Act you will see they are enormously wide. They can make anything a dangerous trade, just as you can prohibit the employment of children under the present law if you like, for the Local Authority has only to say that the employment is bad for the child and can stop it. The powers are enormous. They are not applied generally, and it is so to some extent with the Home Office powers as to dangerous trades.

4043. Do I understand they can prohibit fur pulling being done in the home?—They do not. They never act until after they have had a long series of inquiries, and then they yield to the representations that are made to them, and finally they may put out a very mild order. But of course you can see what they can do, because they absolutely prohibit the employment of women in white lead, and they limit the hours of men to four hour shifts. They have cut down the hours of the men enormously. That was done by a stroke of the pen. The power is enormous.

4044. Going to the other end of the scale, have you considered the problem of rural home workers where, speaking generally, the work is not done under any very great pressure or under any specially unsanitary conditions?—Yes. Take the case which is in my mind of the Donegal industries—industries in the north of Ireland and the west of Ireland. Supposing Ireland were an area for a Wages Board for that trade, I imagine that the conditions would be very sympathetically taken into consideration.

4045. Take, for example, embroidery upon linen, or the making of hand lace. We have had evidence that there, like the tailoring trade, to which you have referred once or twice, there is very severe foreign competition. We had evidence from the Inspector of the Congested District Boards that in the case of certain lace there was very severe competition with Germany, and in the case of embroidery upon linen there was competition from Teneriffe?—I am not familiar with the lace trade, except that I know of the extreme difficulty which two lace manufacturers had of telling what was their own and what somebody else's. On two occasions I have seen them totally unable to recognise a piece of their own work. In the case of embroidery that industry has been brought before me very much in connection with the Swiss cantons, where they have much greater difficulties than we have, because they have about the same number of separate legislative authorities in Switzerland for this purpose that we have for governing London. So that they have the difficulty in an aggravated form. They have this difficulty in the embroidery trade at this moment. But, of course, the embroidery trade, like the ribbon trade, is a trade where

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[Continued.]

Mr. Hugh Law—continued.

fashion changes very suddenly from one place to another. There comes a sudden taste, for instance, for the Bulgarian embroidery, or for Greek embroidery, or for Russian embroidery. Of course you cannot prevent ladies' fashions changing or their getting everything at one time from Bulgaria or at another time from Moscow or at another time from Athens. A great deal of fashion comes into this question. I doubt whether in the regular home industries of the very sparsely populated parts of the United Kingdom changes of fashion would operate as much as they would with regard to embroidery. Take the trade I was mentioning to you just now—the knitting by old people for bed clothes, &c. It is done in the Hebrides—the Western Highlands of Scotland. That is a permanent trade; it always goes on; and I do not think you would find very much of this foreign competition. But in the embroidery trade I admit there is a good deal of it. That is a very special trade and it flies about from one part of the world to another.

4046. I was very anxious to see the way you met the difficulty, for I think you recognise it does exist?—I think in the embroidery trade you would have a great deal of trouble—the Swiss have.

4047. It is not that we have to meet a great deal of foreign competition, but that the wages in the hand-lace, rather unlike those in some of the other trades, represent a very large proportion of the price of the finished article?—Yes, the exact opposite of the lingerie trade of France, where the finished article is the most expensive in the world, and they export it in enormous quantities, while some of the people who do the work get an extremely low wage.

4048. If, then, the principle of minimum wages were to be extended to the districts where a trade of this sort is carried on, we should be met at once in a very aggravated form with the difficulty presented by foreign competition?—My impression is that, supposing Ireland were an area for a Board, with a co-ordinating power, an industry of this sort would be dealt with tenderly, and quite rightly so, by the co-ordinating power. I do not think there would be an attempt to introduce sudden and startling changes, such as would effect price, and therefore, foreign competition. But it is impossible to make a more satisfactory answer, I think than that general answer. I think an Irish Board, with a co-ordinating Board in London might be trusted not to affect prices in that degree.

4049. If you had a trade carried on in several different places, do you think it would be possible to leave one part of the country out?—I should be very sorry to contemplate that. I have considered it. I have discussed it with authorities much higher than myself, but I should be very sorry to contemplate it, I should not like to have to face it. I would infinitely sooner try and bring it all in gently; there was a moment when it was desired to leave Ireland out of Truck legislation, for example, but I think the best friends of Ireland admit now that it was far better to have brought it in.

Mr. Hugh Law—continued.

4050. You said, once or twice, that you did not lay very great stress upon colonial experience?—It is a general principle with me that I do not lay great stress on the experience of one country for any other.

4051. You thought France was a great example?—I thought the lingerie trade in Paris was nearer to us than the experience in Victoria.

4052. I was wondering whether you had any very special experience of legislation in other countries; for instance, France?—They have not tried a Wages Board in France. Of course they have the most conservative body in the world, from the point of view of resistance to new legislation which can possibly infringe on individual liberty, in the French Senate. The Senate is the most terrible body to get legislation through that the whole world presents us with. Therefore, they have very special difficulties with regard to legislation, but their great officials and their Labour Commission, which is virtually managed by the great Conservative Senator, M. Richard Waddington, very carefully discuss in advance and inquire into the bases of possible legislation of this kind—legislation which they, I think desire, but which it is very difficult in France to carry. Their inquiries are, I think, of great value to us, but they have no law of this kind. They are ahead of us in some forms of "labour-legislation" all the same, because they have such large official powers.

Mr. Brunner.

4053. Clause 5 of the Bill, Sub-section 1, says that the Board is to fix the minimum rate for out workers of piecework only?—Yes.

4054. Of course it could not be done otherwise?—That is so.

4055-7. Have you read Mr. Aves's evidence that in Australia the attempt to fix a piecework scale has been deliberately given up?—Will you kindly refer me to the particular words of Mr. Aves? Do you mean the last page? The last page of the Report is in curious contradiction to the rest of the book. Mr. Aves's evidence here has not been shown to me, but I have read his Report through quite carefully.

4058. Look at Question 3,913 and the three next questions?—Of course I should prefer his very-carefully-considered language in his Report to language in his evidence which he may or may not have corrected. I do not find that in the Report there are points as to fixing piecework rates which present these difficulties. But where he sums up he seems to use words which imply a decision against fixing legal wages. I have very carefully examined his report, but his evidence I have not seen.

4059. Can you tell us from your experience in other countries—say, America—whether piecework rates have been successfully fixed?—America is the least likely country in the world for this purpose. There is no legislation of the kind that we have here with regard to labour in America. The legislation there is on an altogether different basis.

4060. I understood you referred previously to America?—

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SIR CHARLES DILKE.

[Continued]

Mr. Brunner—continued.

America?—That was in talking about licensing. They have a most elaborate system of licensing in certain home-work trades.

4061. Then assuming that the example of Australia is not very favourable to us, we have no experience in the world at the present time?—We have the experience of all our own Arbitration Boards as to trades in this country which, more than those of any other country, have fixed wages.

4062. I was not referring to wages except in the sweated industries?—I should answer that in the mining trades prices have been fixed down to the smallest details between employers and employed, and I should suggest that that experience is much closer to us and much more valuable to us than experience as to foreign laws. It bears on all questions of fixing wages surely.

Mr. Boland.

4063. I wish particularly to ask you about the Irish lace trade. We had considerable evidence here showing that practically the Irish hand-made lace trade is purely for export, and that the price is fixed by competition with foreign markets?—I really know nothing about the lace trade, but I saw it was stated in the House of Commons that public assistance was being given to the Irish lace trade in connection with its sale in London; and I at once said we ought to see that the workers got a fair price according to the general principles prevailing. I began to make inquiries to see whether the wage was a proper one, because public assistance should not be given with a view to its sale here if it is not. But I did not know that the Irish lace trade is for export only. Of course there is an enormous export trade of lace from other countries as we know, and always has been from Malta, from Switzerland, from Belgium; but I do not know the different classes of lace. There is machine lace and there is hand lace. Lace is such a wide word that I do know what is included under it.

4064. As regards the price that is paid for Irish lace it is practically fixed by the rate in New York, Paris and London. Therefore this particular industry is in a very different position from the other industries which have been considered by this Committee?—Does your remark apply to Waterford lace, for example; there was a great lace factory there, or are you only speaking of lace that is made by home workers?

4065. I am speaking of hand work lace?—Then you are not speaking of the Waterford Factory.

4066. There is practically no machine-made lace in Ireland?—What is the Waterford lace? Is it hand-made lace which is brought to a central depot?

4067. There is no machine-made lace in Ireland at all, it is all hand-made?—I do not know, I am ignorant of the Irish lace trade.

4068. Assume the fact that at least 90 per cent. of the total production of Irish lace is sold

Mr. Boland—continued.

abroad—in London, New York, or Paris—does not that rather distinguish this particular industry from the other industries which we have been considering here, where it is a home trade?—Of course I should prefer to try the experiment in the ordinary branches of tailoring and the white trade,—the clothing trade, rather than a very special trade like the lace trade. But I cannot talk about the lace trade, because I do not know it.

4069. Do you think the experiment should be made in a trade where admittedly there are special difficulties?—There are, I know, great evils prevailing in certain branches of the lace trade in certain countries. For instance, there is the question of the employment of very young children on the ground that unless they are employed at a ridiculously early age they cannot learn the trade—their fingers never become sufficiently dexterous to learn the trade. That is a crying evil in the lace trade, but I do not say it exists in Ireland. I only put in that *caveat* because I should be sorry to assume that the same horrible conditions exist in the lace trade in Ireland. I do not know; I know they do in certain countries.

4070. There is a general distinction, is there not, between the Irish lace trade and sweated industries?—There is a great distinction between rural home workers and sweated industries generally, but I should not like to draw a line between them.

Mr. Massie.

4071. With reference to your view that if the sweated wage at the bottom of the scale were reduced, the selling price would not really be affected, one wonders whether you have noticed some evidence that we had given by Mr. Newey, of Birmingham, a manufacturer of hooks and eyes, who said that if he doubled the price to the carders the public would not feel it, but he asked at the same time that foreign goods should be kept out?—I do not think that I have read that evidence, but I have read some remarks made about it by a very competent person, in which it was rather turned upside down or knocked about. But I am not familiar with it, though I have heard that point referred to.

4072. It would confirm your view, would it not?—I do not wish to say anything about it, because I think I have not read it.

4073. In that case it would hardly seem necessary to keep goods out?—In a great many trades the employers themselves do not know the wage that is paid.

4074. If the public would not feel it according to him, it would not be necessary to ask for foreign goods to be kept out, because the home trade would not be affected?—That is what I intended to imply in my general words about secret wage.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Thursday, 14th May, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Arthur Dewar.
Mr. Fell.
Mr. G. P. Gooch.
Mr. Arthur Henderson.
Mr. Hugh Law.
Mr. Massie.

Mr. Parkes.
Mr. Richardson.
Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Stuart Samuel.
Mr. Trevelyan.
Sir Thomas Whittaker.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. GUY P. MORRISH called; and Examined.

Chairman,

4075. You are a member, I understand, of the firm of Welch, Margetson & Company, of London and Londonderry, and you have factories in London and Londonderry?—Yes.

4076. You reside in Londonderry, I think?—I do.

4077. Are you prepared to give us some evidence with regard to shirts and collars in particular?—Shirts and collars form the principal industry of Londonderry.

4078. You are Vice-President of the London Chamber of Commerce, I understand?—I am.

4079. And convener of the Shirt and Collar Manufacturers' Committee of Londonderry Merchants?—Yes. I have been asked by the Shirt and Collar Manufacturers to give evidence on their behalf; and also by the London Chamber of Commerce on the principles of the Bill.

4080. We may take it that you have had very considerable experience and knowledge of the work of the trade, at any rate in Ireland?—Yes.

4081. Will you give us briefly some information as to the conditions of work in Ireland and the rates of payment earned, particularly with regard to home work?—Certainly.

4082. Before you do so, I will ask you to what extent you employ home workers and workers in the factory?—We employ about 2,000 out or home workers, and 1,000 in the factory; and that proportion of about two to one is, I should say, more or less carried out throughout the trade. That is to say, where any one has a factory, their outworkers would almost double the number of their factory workers.

4083. Will you now give us some information as to the earnings and conditions of work?—Derry is really the centre of the shirt and collar

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Chairman—continued.

making of the whole of the United Kingdom, and has been so for the last 60 years. My firm have had a factory more than 60 years; and it is estimated that in the City of Derry alone there are 10,000 people employed in the manufacture of shirts and collars. The rate of wages paid in Ireland for trades generally is, I think, at a lower standard than in Great Britain, with the exception of the shirt and collar trade; and our rate of wages—both piece rate and time rate—are higher in Derry than they are in the West of England or in the Glasgow districts, and the female operators are able to earn considerably more money than the male unskilled labourers.

4084. Is most of the work paid by piece?—All the outwork is paid by piece.

4085. And in the factory?—In the factory, about 70 per cent. of the female labour is paid by piece and the other 30 per cent is time work, and that includes the work of forewomen and others whom it would not be possible to pay by piecework. But where it is possible at all, the work is paid for as piecework.

4086. What wages would an adult woman worker earn in a factory?—In our factory we have about 200 under 18 years, and about 600 over 18 years of age, that is to say, 200 young persons, and about 600 adults; and the wages earned by the young persons would be on an average from 4s. to 6s. a week; that is to say, learners, children or young persons who are able to come into the factory. They come in as young persons—not as children by the law, and they would be put on to earn at 4s. a week.

4087. And what age would that be?—About 15.

4088. They begin at 4s.?—They begin at 4s. a week as learners, and as soon as they are able

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Mr. MORRISH.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

to earn more than 4s., they are put on piece work prices, and the average for those who are on piece work will be 6s. a week.

4089. Then what are the earnings of those above 18 years of age?—Above 18 years of age the average machinist would be about 10s. a week, and for folders, ironers and those employed in the laundry, they would be 12s. to 15s. a week.

4090. What would be the lowest rate that would be earned by the adult?—I do not think any adults need earn less than 9s. Of course there are a great many who do, but that is owing to absence and non-attention. The ordinary average would be 10s. a week in a factory when we are working 50 hours a week. Unfortunately, at present trade is slack, and that would not be the average now, because we now only work about 42 hours a week.

4091. But in an ordinary time you work about fifty hours a week?—Fifty hours a week.

4092. And the average wage for an adult woman would be about ten shillings?—Ten shillings—that is among the machinists.

4093. Do you pay the outworkers the same piecework as you pay the workers in the factory?—No, because they work at quite a different work. The way the trade is carried on in Ireland is this: The factories cut the work and they make all the trimmings and fittings, that is to say, they make the cuffs, the fronts, the neckbands, they hem the body, and then the work in that condition is done up in bundles of a dozen—all the necessary parts to make a dozen shirts, buttons, the yoke pieces, &c., are done up in the bundle, and it is then sent out to what we call "Stations," which may be 20 or 40 miles from our factory; and twice a week the work is distributed there, either by our own men or by an agent whom we employ, to the outworkers who come from their own homes to collect the work; and all they have to do is side-seaming and putting the garments together, stitching the sleeve to the side of the body, and stitching on the fittings which have been made in the factory, and work the button-holes.

4094. Then really the work done in the home is different to that which is done in the factory?—It is different entirely. The factory makes all the fittings and prepares all the work for the outworkers.

4095. Have you any knowledge as to the amount which individual home workers can earn in an ordinary week's work?—That could only be an estimate; because nearly always it is the household—the family who do the work.

4096. They do it amongst themselves?—They do it amongst themselves. All our outworkers really are the wives and daughters of cotters and small farmers who have their home duties as well as our work to do; they milk the cows and they labour in the fields. At potato time, for instance, we find it very difficult indeed to get work done, because they are out in the fields, and it is so at all cropping time. So they only work at our work when they have time to work at it. It is practically their only means of earning ready money; because a

Chairman—continued.

small farmer, except when he sells a cow, has no opportunity of raising money other than by what his women earn. So we give our work out to one member of the family, who distributes it among the rest, and they are all employed. The children, or the younger persons, will do things like sewing on buttons and finishing, while the older ones are doing button holes and sewing-machine work. The rate of wages for this work will vary from 2s. 6d. to 4s. 6d. a dozen, according to the amount and quality of work and labour put into the shirt.

4097. You said it could only be an estimate: but have you formed in your own mind any estimate which would at all indicate to us what these people do or could earn?—We have several families of four or five who are able to take out twelve dozen in a week.

4098. And do I understand those would average 2s a dozen?—The average would be 3s 3d. a dozen.

4099. That would be then 39s. a week?—Yes.

4100. When you speak of a family of four, that would include the mother and possibly three daughters?—Yes.

4101. Have you any idea, taking the case you are speaking of, what age the daughters would be?—They would be mostly adults.

4102. Then you may take it that would represent practically the work of four adults?—Yes.

4103. Some of them occupied part of the time in household work or working about the farm?—Yes. Of course they have no fixed hours for the work. They work when they have the inclination and according to what demand there is at the time for money.

4104. And this work takes place largely in the country districts?—Yes, entirely; there is practically no shirt work done in the town at all by outworkers.

4105. Would you say that there is no home work done in the town of Derry?—No, I would not say that, because there is collar work done, but as regards the shirt work it is all work which is done in the rural districts, and that extends right away from Inishowen to County Londonderry and to County Donegal.

4106. Would you say from your knowledge that the same conditions prevail in Belfast?—No, there is less country work there.

4107. Is there more home work in Belfast?—No, I think the work is more confined to the factories in Belfast.

4108. I think you said that collar work is done at home in Derry?—In Derry, yes.

4109. Can you give us any indication of the earnings of the people in that particular trade at home?—They earn just the same rate of wages as they would in the factories.

4110. The same piecework rate?—The same piecework in that case is paid.

4111. What would an average worker in a factory earn?—Machinists about 10s., patent turners about 12s. 6d. or 13s. on an average a week, and hand turners would earn 9s. or 10s. a week. They would be the younger persons; and button-holders—machine button-holders earn 13s. or 14s. a week on an average.

4112. Is

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

4112. Is the work which is done at home done by sewing machines?—Yes.

4113. And, going back to the shirt work, do they in the country districts use sewing machines?—Yes. But that is only a part of the work; it is not all done with the sewing machine. There is one sewing machine in a family which does the sewing machine part. The rest of them are working button holes, or putting on buttons, or doing hand work—finishing.

4114. So far as your knowledge goes, do you think these people work under what you would call satisfactory conditions as regards surroundings in their home—in proper sanitary conditions and cleanliness?—Certainly, as regards their cleanliness. Of course, their houses are just what such houses as they have to live in are; but their doors are always open; you never pass a house in Ireland without seeing the door wide open; it may have, perhaps, very few and small windows; but the door itself is always open. I know the houses fairly well, because I have been over many of them, and they are spotlessly clean. They could not do the white work in dirty surroundings. They have to bring their work to us, and we would not give work to them again if it were not clean. The work comes to us from the home workers just as clean as it does from the factory.

4115. You have a general idea of the suggestions which have been referred to us; some of them embodied in a Bill which has been before the House of Commons; and I think you have formed some rather decided views as to the wisdom of legislation on those lines?—Yes, that is so.

4116. Will you give me first of all your general opinion as to the desirability of such legislation?—My own opinion is that such a Bill is entirely contrary to the natural laws regulating trade, and that even if, as we know, there is sweating in certain industries it is not fair or justifiable to apply that to the whole trade. For instance, I put it in this way. My firm have been, I think, honourably employed for 60 years making shirts, and, all of a sudden, there is a Bill brought into Parliament to label us as being a sweated industry, because the Sweated Industries Bill applies to the shirt trade, and we are the shirt trade, or engaged in the shirt trade.

4117. Would not a remark like that have applied equally to the original Factory Legislation? Would it not have been possible for some employers 70 years ago to have said, "We object to this legislation because it labels us as being unkind and tyrannical employers"?—No, I do not say that. There was nothing objectionable in the name as there is in this Bill. This Bill implies by its name that the shirt trade is a sweated industry.

4118. What is really implied surely is that there is what is known as sweating—by which we usually understand very low payments for work in the shirt trade?—Yes.

4119. It does not follow that that means that all work done in the shirt trade is sweated?—

Chairman—continued.

It requires that explanation I must say to the ordinary lay man. I think a "Sweated Industry Bill," which applies to the shirt trade, certainly implies that the shirt trade is a sweated industry. But, anyhow, apart from that, we, as employers, agree that it is most desirable and we are most anxious to see sweating put down; and if a Bill were introduced which should only apply in cases where an industry has been proved to be a sweated industry, I think all decent employers would do everything in their power to support such a Bill.

4120. Suppose that the operation of this Bill were to fix a rate of wages which would be a satisfactory rate to good employers—probably the same rate as they are paying, but that it would require those who were paying less to level up to that payment—what disadvantage would that be to, or what reflection would that throw upon the good employer?—I do not see how it is possible to frame such a Bill as would take all the circumstances of our trade into account. I may tell you, to illustrate what I mean. An ordinary shirt passing through our factory goes through 49 different processes or operations, and it seems to me it is quite impossible that any Wages Board could fix 49 minimum wages for the manufacture of a shirt. Then you must remember that every other factory carries out the operations in a somewhat different manner, and you would have to have a list of perhaps 200 or 300 minimum wages in every factory.

4121. Those lists exist now?—Yes. But then if a Board has the power to say what the correct minimum wages for those various processes are, it seems to me it would have a most impossible task to perform.

4122. But it is done now?—No, it is not done; there is no Board. We have individual knowledge of our own trade, but if the Board is to consist of three or four employers and three or four employees, they will not have the knowledge of what exists in every factory, because we all carry out our work according to slightly different systems; we employ different machines; and the mere fact that one sewing machine will do a certain quantity of work, and another will do another quantity of work, creates a difficulty. We pay different rates of piecework for working a high speed machine doing 4,000 stitches, or for a slow speed machine doing only 2,000. There are different piecework prices. Now what I have said has reference to merely one process of shirt making. The same object to my mind would be gained if the Government would encourage Conciliation Boards and Arbitration Boards. Such Boards are increasing every year, and are doing great good in other trades—in fact, in nearly all trades.

4123. How would you suggest that the Conciliation or Arbitration Boards should be able to insure that the payment decided upon as a reasonable one was in fact the payment made by a class of employer who was disposed to pay the lowest wage he could?—In the same way as they do at present; because Conciliation Boards have been in existence for a long time

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[Continued.]

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time now, both among textile and non-textile trades.

4124. They generally exist now where you have a powerful trade union on the one hand and a union of employers on the other, and where you practically have the whole trade, both employees and employers represented by those two organisations?—Yes.

4125. But in the case of home workers we are dealing with a very poor class of people, altogether unorganised and also sometimes with a class of employers who compete with one another very closely, and thus prices are brought very low. Now I want to know how we should be able, with an Arbitration or Conciliation Board, to compel payment of the rate of wages decided upon or to ensure compliance with an award?—I do not see why there should be any greater difficulty in the way of the home workers being represented by a Board of Wages as suggested in this Bill. Take, for instance, our district, Inishowen—a district 60 or 70 miles long, 40 miles wide—practically the whole female population, which is scattered over the mountains there, are doing work, and how they are able to be represented by this Wages Board I do not see.

4126. Assume the Board to be in existence. Then what I want you to tell me, if you can, is this—what is your view as to how the decision of the Board—the Board having been constituted—should be enforced with regard to employers who may be disposed to ignore its decision and pay a lower rate. How would you help the poorer workers to get the rate from such employers? Under the Bill you see it would be illegal to pay less, but if the Board be an Arbitration or Conciliation Board, it would be a voluntary Board, and I want to know how you would ensure that its decision should be enforced among the class of people that we have to deal with?—In the same way as is done at present. Pressure would be brought to bear by the local Trade Union.

4127. But there is no Trade Union?—Trade unionism would naturally be the outcome of any encouragement given of this sort.

4128. One of the difficulties of the home workers is that they are so poor, so disorganised, so scattered, so helpless, in many areas that they have not been able to form trade unions or to help themselves?—That is one of the difficulties I see under this Bill also, but how are you to get these people represented on the Board.

4129. Having got them represented that difficulty would apply to Conciliation or Arbitration Boards?—This Bill certainly would prevent anything lower than the minimum wages being paid. I suppose, apart from that the ordinary law of trade would rule. If persons could get more elsewhere they would go elsewhere, and if they saw their neighbour working under better conditions, they would get employment there as they do to-day.

4130. Does it not work rather the other way; that when a man can get his work done at a lower rate it tends to cut the prices and to take the trade away from those who are paying the

Chairman—continued.

better rates?—Then it falls back upon the law of supply and demand.

4131. That is where we are now with these sweated industries, and these very low payments which we wish to remedy?—I do not see how you can legally compel anybody to pay a wage unless there is some legal machinery for doing it.

4132. I want to know if you have any suggestions other than those embodied in the Bill, whereby you would secure the payment of a better wage which the Arbitration Board or Conciliation Board as you suggest might fix?—It does not follow because you fix a minimum wage that you are going to benefit those who were being paid an insufficient wage before, because I think you will find—especially in London—many of these trades will then drop out altogether, because the man who is employing sweated labour is not a man who is making a vast fortune, he is generally a little man who is struggling along to make a living himself, and if you raise the wage he gives to his employees it will tend to kill his trade altogether, and then those now receiving not such a good wage as they should do will be simply thrown out of employment. There is no doubt to raise the rates of wages in the sweated industries in London will kill those industries altogether. That may possibly be a good thing, but at the same time it is going to throw many unemployed upon the market.

4133. Do you think it would necessarily kill industries; might it not rather lead to people who had more capital, more efficient machinery, and who were working under better conditions, doing the work?—Certainly not under the present conditions of Free Trade.

4134. The bulk of this trade is a home trade, is it not? The goods are largely sold at home?—Yes, but there is nothing to prevent it coming in. Now we have shirts coming in from Belgium. Shirts made in Belgium are now being imported into England, especially a class of shirt made by sweated industry in the East of London to-day; also rough flannel shirts.

4135. As you are aware, the cheapest class of work is not always done by the lowest paid labour?—As a rule I think it is.

4136. Is it not a general rule that the output is the cheapest where the conditions are the most efficient and the labour is the best paid, for instance the cotton trade in Lancashire. They beat the cotton trade in India although the wages in India are very much lower than the wages in Lancashire?—Yes.

4137. It is efficiency which enables them to do it; and my suggestion would be that these sweated industries would be so to speak, tuned up in character and quality and efficiency?—Makers of working men's shirts in Belgium are, I suppose, superior to the makers of working men's shirts at home.

4138. Exactly, and does not that indicate that that is the direction in which improvement is needed at home?—If you are going to do away with this cheapest class of labour in the East End of London you are going to do away with the trade altogether.

4139. Then

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[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

4139. Then we might get men more efficient even than the Belgians?—I do not see how. It is the cheapest thing on the market.

4140. Now with regard to the Bill itself. Do you wish to offer observations on the various clauses?—I should like to go through the Bill.

4141. I will ask you not to go into too much detail criticism because this is only a general proposal?—As regards the fixing of the area which is to be done by the Secretary of State, is that intended to be done after a Public Inquiry has been held, or has the Secretary full power to fix any area?

4142. The Bill is not ours; so you must not ask me questions upon it, but take the Bill as it stands?—Taking the Bill as it stands it apparently leaves it entirely in the hands of the Secretary of State as to the fixing of the area. That, I suggest, should only be done after a Public Inquiry has been held and witnesses have been heard representing employers and employed in the district affected. I say that because, knowing as I do what are the conditions in Ireland, I know the difficulties which would arise. Although the areas may be close to each other, they are frequently so different that the same Wages Board would not be applicable to the different conditions of the trade.

4143. I think we may assume that the Secretary of State would make, not necessarily a Public Inquiry, but an Inquiry through the factory inspectors and others as to the condition of the trade and as to what area should be fixed?—Sub-section 2 provides that an inquiry shall be held into the desirability of appointing a Wages Board; but it does not say anything about the area.

4144. The question as to what area a Wages Board should apply to would naturally be involved in that?—It would be most important that the area should not cover too large an extent, or a part where the trade is being carried on under different circumstances.

4145. Then you would not suggest or approve anything like uniformity of payment in the same trade throughout the country?—If there is going to be one minimum wage throughout the country, that would be a quite different Bill altogether.

4146. You indicate a wish that the areas should be small?—If there are going to be different minimum wages fixed for different areas, I say means should be provided in the Bill by which the Secretary of State could obtain information before fixing those areas.

4147. That is practically intended in the Bill undoubtedly?—With regard to that I should like to ask whether employers and employed would be represented by Counsel; or would it be necessary for them to appear themselves at a Public Inquiry?

4148. There is nothing, I think, said about a Public Inquiry?—Later on it refers to the Coal Mines Regulation Act, and that Act, I think, makes no mention of whether either employers or employed can be represented by Counsel or others whom they may elect. Subclause 3 of

Chairman—continued.

Clause 1 says at the end: "Persons employed in their district in or about their trade." Does that apply to trades which are allied to similar trades? For instance, in our district, shirt collar manufacturing is the principal thing, but we have also another industry connected with it, although indirectly, and that is the making of boxes. Now would those words, "in or about their trade," imply that that industry could be brought in too.

4149. I imagine that a Board to fix the payment for making collars would not have anything to do with the fixing of payment for making boxes?—I should think so too, but it seems to me that the words "in or about their trade," give an opening for such a thing as that to take place. Then Clause 2, Subclause 1, uses the words, "Trade Union or Trade Council which represents persons employed in the trade in the district." I would suggest that the words, "Trade Council" in that subsection, should be omitted altogether, because as a rule a Trade Council is a Council composed of practically every trade in the district, and perhaps only one man on the Council has real knowledge of one particular trade.

4150. This is merely you see for an application to the Home Secretary to make an inquiry?—Quite so, but there might be all sorts of vexatious inquiries asked for by persons who were not qualified to make application for an inquiry.

4151. It could scarcely be very vexatious I should say?—If it necessitates the holding of an Inquiry it would involve people coming up to give evidence and so forth. Then on reading Clause 3, Subclause 1, it is not clear to me whether it is intended to convey that the Chairman shall be elected either from the Wages Board, or other than the Wages Board. It says, "A Wages Board shall consist of a Chairman and such number of other members, not less than six, and not more than ten," and so on.

4152. I suppose the Chairman would be an additional member?—Would not that require some sort of amendment to make it quite clear; because if you read that and Sub-clause 4 together, it would appear to be possible for the members of the Board to elect the Chairman from themselves, I take it.

4153. That is a detailed verbal criticism?—If it were carried out in this way it would mean a majority for whoever was able to elect the Chairman.

4154. Perhaps you need scarcely trouble about detailed amendments like these; we want rather to deal with broad general principles?—Then Sub-clause 3 of Clause 3 says: "The representatives of employers and of persons employed shall be chosen by the employers and the persons employed." There is no machinery existing to-day for the election of such persons, among the employed anyhow, especially in rural districts, and I cannot see how, for instance, the district of Inishowen is going to return three representatives to this Wages Board, and there is no registry of workers or of would-be voters. There is no definition of who would

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would have the privilege of voting, or who would not have the privilege of voting, and, to my mind, one of the most difficult things which this Bill would have to meet would be the election.

4155. That would be a matter which the Secretary under the Bill would have to arrange?—Then does Clause 4, Sub-clause I., leave it open for members who have served their term of office to be re-elected for the ensuing Wages Board?

4156. These criticisms are really too minute?—But they seem to me to be most important, because this Bill is such a basket sort of work.

4157. Perhaps you will touch now on broad principles?—Clause 5, Sub-clause I., refers to the fixing of the minimum rate of wages, and I should like to show the difficulty there would be. I have already referred to the number of different processes, even in our trade, which one has to go through, and the difficulty would be to fix these various minimum wages on the different processes in practically every factory; because the way in which we carry out our work is not the way in which our neighbour carries out his work; we sub-divide our work very differently, and it would be necessary to fix the wages of a great number of different processes.

4158. But you have all those rates fixed now?—Yes, we have those rates for our factory, but our neighbour perhaps does not do it in the same way. He might use different processes.

4159. Then he would have his rates?—Yes; but I do not see how that would assist the Board, who might have three representatives of the employers on it; for those three representatives might do their work in a totally different way to other members in the trade.

4160. You are, of course, aware that there are voluntary Boards in existence where rates of payment have been fixed for very complicated details and for a very large number of processes, processes no doubt, varying in the different factories very much in the way that you suggest is the case here?—That I can understand in the case of a Board, because that Board would not consist of three representatives of a trade, but the trade itself would act altogether. Supposing I was not representing the employers on the Wages Board, then I should have no means of seeing that my prices were fixed. Then, throughout the whole Bill, there is no mention of any appeal against the wages fixed by the Board. Nobody can make an appeal, either employers or employed.

4161. Do you suggest there should be an appeal?—Certainly. I think it would be a very great injustice if there were no form of appealing against the decisions of this Wages Board; because the representatives might fix a price which would involve a great injury both upon employers and employed. Where there is a Conciliation Board or where there is a Trade Union to meet together to fix their different piece work prices, it is quite a different thing—quite different from the way this

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Chairman—continued.

Board is carried out because there are such a few members of it. In Derry there are between 40 and 50 factories, and if they were represented by three persons it would be impossible for those three persons to know all the details of the different processes carried out in those 40 or 50 different factories, and it would be equally impossible for the three representatives of the employed to know the different processes. Then in the same Sub-section, 5 (i.), it says, "either by time or by piecework." Well, that would certainly suggest both by time and by piece work; and it would be quite possible for the Board to fix wages by time which could not be properly or efficiently be done unless it was paid by piece, and *vice versa*. In our trade, for instance, we pay both time and piece. If we have any special work to be done we take it from the piece workers and give it to a time worker.

4162. That is exactly what is intended here?—Then as to Sub-clause 2, would it be left to the Secretary of State to determine whether the total minimum wage of the finished article should equal the total minimum wage of a given article when it is done by various processes. You see what I mean. If we give a piece of work out for one hand to finish it right through, a minimum wage would be fixed for doing that. But we might give that work out to 15 different people with 15 different processes. Now, should the minimum wage of those 15 different processes equal the minimum wage given when one hand does the work?

4163. That would be a matter for the Board to determine when it fixed the various rates?—It says, you see, "the minimum rate of wages may be fixed for any kind or kinds of work in a trade." I suggest that would mean that it applies or is intended to apply to the minimum wage to be fixed for young persons, and the minimum wage for adults. Now that, as it seems to me, is rather adverse to what this Bill has apparently been framed for. If that were so, and the minimum wage for young persons was fixed lower than the minimum wage fixed for adults, there would be an encouragement to employ young persons instead of adult labour. I do not think I have anything further to say upon the Bill except that I would strongly urge that the Bill should have some other name given to it. I think it is really a great injustice to a trade to label it as being a trade connected with the sweating industry. When you say, "A Sweated Industry Act" includes this trade and that trade," I think it is doing that trade a very great injustice. I do not see why it should not be called "The Minimum Wage Act," or some other such name. But to call it "The Sweated Industries Act" is to cast a slur upon any trade that it should be controlled by an Act with that name.

4164. You are aware that our Committee is entitled the "Home Work Committee," and we are not in any sense responsible for the Bill or for its title. It is the Bill of a private Member which has been referred to this Committee?—Quite so.

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4165. I

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Mr. *Stuart Samuel*.

4165. I think you have stated that your firm has been in existence making shirts for the last 80 years?—My firm has been in existence 80 years, and we have been making shirts in Ireland for over 60 years.

4166. You object to your firm being associated with trades that pay sweated wages, I understand?—Yes.

4167. You consider you pay good wages?—We do.

4168. Will you explain to me what your objection would be to other people who cut rates and pay lower wages being compelled by a Wages Board to pay a fair rate of wage, and thus not cutting under you?—I have no objection if the Bill can be so framed as only to affect those who are carrying on sweating, and not affect the general trade. That is why I say first of all that I should not object to it if the Bill would apply simply where it has been proved, by inquiry or by the information of the factory inspector, that sweating did exist. Then I should not object to it, and nobody would object to it, except those who were sweating.

4169. I suggest to you that that is the object of the Bill. The Chairman mentioned that it was only to put a stop to paying unduly low wages, and a good employer will not be affected, except to his own benefit, by an Act which prevents a bad employer paying lower wages?—That is the intention of the Bill, I understand, but, as far as I can see, there is nothing to prevent this Bill being applied to my own trade.

4170. I suggest it would only apply to your own trade if you paid unduly low wages?—Not necessarily so, Sir, I think. It all depends—we should be in the hands of the Wages Board.

4171. You do not suggest that the Wages Board would raise the highest wages that are at present paid?—No, they would not raise the highest wages, but if the Board is equally divided among representatives of the employers and employed, the whole thing would really be in the hands of the chairman, who, I take it, has a casting vote on that Board.

4172. Do you think employers and employed would be so unreasonable as to necessitate an impartial chairman to decide the rate of wages. Surely they could come to an agreement in the same way as the Conciliation Board which you suggest?—I think they would, as a rule.

4173. I noticed on two occasions that you used the word "children," and you corrected the expression to "young persons"?—Yes, I should not have used the word "children."

4174. Might I ask you what is the lowest age of children that are employed in these trades in Ireland?—Fifteen, I think.

4175 I am speaking of home work?—That I have no knowledge of.

4176. Do you give your work out direct to the worker, or do you employ a middleman; or do you adopt both systems?—Both; we employ an agent in about four of our stations, and our own men give out at the other three or four. In all cases, whether our agent gives out the work, or whether our employee gives it out, the

Mr. *Stuart Samuel*—continued.

price that we are paying for that particular dozen is always written on the ticket that is given out in order to ensure the worker getting that amount.

4177. You exercise control over the wages paid by the middleman, I take it?—There are no middlemen. We state what wages he is to pay and that price is put on the ticket with the work when it goes out. It is an entirely ready-money transaction. The work is handed over the counter when it is examined and it is paid for on the spot.

4178. You recommend that the Home Secretary should fix small areas for the Wages Boards which are to be established?—It may be necessary to fix small areas.

4179. Would not that defeat the purpose of the Bill. Would not there be a tendency on the part of the employer to send his work to the area where the lowest rate of wages obtained?—If he did, the natural law of trade would step in, and the demand in that area would be so great that the person would be able to demand a higher rate of wages. I mean to say if there is more work than there are hands, the law of supply and demand would come in.

4180. The law of supply and demand at the present moment obtains, as it is suggested to the disadvantage of the worker, and if legislation fail, and it reverts to the present state of things, there would be no advantage to anybody, would there?—In the case you put, even if small areas were fixed with different minimum wages, the thing would adjust itself.

4181. Does not the Bill demand for its success that the area should be fairly large, having due regard to the different rates of wages obtaining over the country?—It seems to me to be increasing the difficulty of doing their work if they are large.

4182. You referred to cheap labour in East London?—Have you any factory in East London?—We have not in East London, but we have in South London, Bermondsey.

4183. East London is often taken to mean all parts of London, other than the west?—Yes, that must have been what I was thinking of at the time. Our factory is in Bermondsey—south-east London.

4184. Do you export any of your goods?—Yes.

4185. What class of goods—shirts?—Yes.

4186. Do you export shirts to Belgium?—We may have a customer or two for the highest class of goods. Amongst the best class of customers throughout all the capitals of Europe there is always a demand in spite of tariffs; and even to America we send shirts and collars. Among customers who think it is the correct thing to wear English manufactured stuff we do a trade.

4187. Is it not the fact that the large bulk of your trade is export?—A large portion of it is—yes; but our principal trade, I would say, is home trade. We pride ourselves on being a firm that does the home trade.

4188. I suggest to you that, in spite of the low rates suggested to be paid abroad, it is, as the Chairman suggested, a matter of the efficient worker

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Mr. Stuart Samuel—continued.

worker; and you, in doing a large export business, say that you are able to compete with the under-paid foreigner?—Our principal export trade is with South America, where the most monied class of people live. I suppose there is no such wealth to-day anywhere as there is down the east coast of South America, and there our biggest trade is, in the best class of stuff.

4189. In addition to that do you not export to the Continent of Europe?—Yes, we do; but only for the best class of hosiers—not the general trade. We cannot touch the lower class trade at all. We specialise, and our stuff is sold and sold by virtue of its being English made.

Mr. Arthur Henderson.

4190. I should like to ask you whether you really suggest that your trade should not be associated with sweating?—I do.

4191. You really do?—I do.

4192. Have you seen the evidence that was taken before the Lords' Select Committee on this question?—No.

4193. From the Report of the Committee I see that the life of those engaged in the shirt-making trade is very hard and that the wages are very low. Then we have a statement of prices which I should like to call your attention to. Shirts of the common description are sold wholesale for 10s. 6d. a dozen; for sewing these shirts 1s. 6d. a dozen is paid. Is that a sweated figure?—That depends. If it includes the whole making of the shirt; yes.

4194. I am taking it as it stands—it says 1s. 6d. a dozen; 6d. for finishing a dozen; for cutting out, about 1½d.; this comes to 2s. 1½d.; and the sweater, according to Mr. Arnold White, gets 4s. Are those prices, in your judgment, sweated prices?—I should say they were—yes, in that class of trade.

4195. The statement also goes on to say: "This leaves the share of the middleman about 50 per cent. of the gross sum he receives." Surely that is sweating?—Apparently it is—yes.

Chairman.

4196. Do you know if there are such conditions now?—We make no workmen's shirts at all. All our shirt trade is the white shirt trade and the highest class coloured trade. We do not do any of the low class or workmen's shirt trade at all, and I have really no knowledge of that class of trade.

Mr. Arthur Henderson.

4197. If anything like those classes of prices obtain in this class of trade then, as it is part of the shirt making trade, surely it would have something to do with your objection to the term "sweating" being applied to it to-day?—Do you mean to say you would tar the whole trade with the same brush because sweating is going on?

4198. How can we differentiate. If there is one part of the trade in which it can be proved

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Mr. Arthur Henderson—continued.

that sweating still obtains, as it obtained at the time of the Lords' Inquiry, surely we have a right to say that that is a trade in which sweating is carried on?—But it is not a sweated industry—the whole trade is not.

4199. Can you give us evidence that this has been improved upon?—It seems to me unnecessary to name a Bill in this way, the "Sweated Industries Bill," if it is going to apply to a trade or a part of a trade which is not a sweated industry.

Mr. Robinson.

4200. With regard to the employment of children, you said in the early part of your evidence that a lot of young people were employed as out workers; but to Mr. Samuel I understood you to say you were not quite clear on the matter. Can you give us any idea whether young children are employed?—There are not a lot of young children employed. The only cases where they are employed is where a family is doing out work and some of the youngest members may be stitching on buttons, but there is no employment of children carried out in that way in the trade. In a family the youngest child might be put on to sew buttons.

4201. I understood you to say there were families who earned £2 or more in a week. In such cases there must be a good number of young children employed?—There is no doubt if the children are able to do the work they would be employed on it, but there is only a small portion of the work on which children could be employed. I mean to say, on the maximum quantity of work sent out—12 dozen shirts—there is very little work which little children could do.

4202. Would it not be a good thing to prohibit young children being employed?—If it could be possible to do it; but of course in the case of the cottar's family doing the work it would be impossible to guarantee that a child in that house was not doing any of it. We do not encourage it at all, we simply give our work out to the person who calls for it, but there is no doubt that the households do the work.

4203. You have told us that when you are fairly busy 50 is the regulation number of hours per week?—Yes.

4204. And that is the extreme, I suppose, except at very busy times?—Yes, 50 hours is our ordinary working week, and there are only 30 days in a year that we are allowed to work overtime, overtime is two hours extra.

4205. Now you are working about six hours less?—Yes.

4206. Do you find that the output is relatively less in that proportion?—No, it is not. If you reduce the time by 10 per cent., you do not reduce the work by 10 per cent. You do reduce it a certain amount but not in the same proportion as the time by which you reduce it.

Mr. Massie.

4207. You would not object to a statement of this sort - that the shirt industry is an industry

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Mr. Massie—continued.

in which sweating is especially apt to occur?—I would not say “apt to occur.”

4208. You said, I think, in your evidence that the home workers in Ireland were in the ratio of two to one of factory workers?—Yes, something like that.

4209. Did you mean those were the figures for the whole Kingdom or for Ireland?—For Ireland. I would say it is far higher in Ireland than it is anywhere else, because shirt making originated there by being a cottage industry. It was only introduced into the factories after it had been brought to large dimensions as a cottage industry.

4210. The ratio you gave, however, was really the ratio for Ireland?—Yes, for Ireland.

4211. I think you said that the same price was paid per collar to home workers as to the workers in the factories?—Yes.

4212. Does not the factory make any special preparation for the home workers as to collars as it does with regard to shirts?—No, not quite in the same way.

4213. You are quite aware of the almost infinite complications there are in the lace trade?—Yes.

4214. That is a trade in which prices are fixed—the difficulty is overcome?—Yes, by Arbitration Boards.

4215. Then you would perhaps see that the difficulties which you apprehend are not found insuperable?—Not in a Board consisting of the members of the trade. But I think the difficulties are very great where the trade is represented by two or three or four or some small number of representatives; because I say it is impossible for them to be conversant with the whole conditions of the trade as carried on in factories other than their own.

Mr. G. P. Gooch.

4216. I understand you to say that in certain cases you employ middlemen or middlewomen?—We employ agents.

4217. In those cases do you know exactly what the agents give to the home workers, or do you yourselves settle what the home workers get?—We settle it ourselves. Whether our work is given out by an agent or by our own employee, it all goes out with a ticket, and on that ticket is written the price we are paying for the work to be done on that particular bundle.

4218. Is the price written on the ticket, the price which is received by the home worker?—Yes. Our commission to the agent is paid quite separately. We pay him a commission on every dozen of work he gives out. If he gives out 200 dozen or 300 dozen a week he gets so much commission on those bundles.

4219. So you know, in the case where there is an agent, or in the case where there is not an agent, exactly what the home worker gets?—Yes, exactly.

Mr. Parkes.

4220. Have you any idea what number of home workers there are in the district of

Mr. Parkes—continued.

Londonderry you represent?—No, but I should think that in the whole shirt making area there are 25,000 to 30,000 people.

4221. In the whole industry?—In the whole industry. But it is impossible to form any accurate estimate; because, although we all keep our registers of out workers we cannot be sure that the register covers every member who works for us. We may have some women's names on the register whom we give work to, and who take that work home, and perhaps gives it to two or three members of her family who are not on our register; so that we are not able to get a really complete register of the people whom we are actually employing.

4222. You said you objected to the words, “sweated industry,” as being applied to your industry?—Yes.

4223. Do you think there is any sweated work going on in Ireland in connection with shirt making?—No, I do not.

4224. Do you know, as a matter of fact, whether there is any sweated work going on in London in that industry?—Not to my knowledge. The only knowledge I have of factory work in London is our factory in Bermondsey, and that I know, not from being there habitually, but from being there on business at intervals.

4225. Can you suggest any remedy in the case of a sweated industry?—No, except as I said before, by some Conciliation or Boards of Arbitration.

4226. May I take it that the people in your employ in the North of Ireland are satisfied with the condition of things as they find them there now?—I think they are.

4227. Has there been any agitation by them for an increase of wages?—I think in the whole history of the shirt trade there have not been more than three strikes which one could take note of. One was in our own place when we were altering prices from time work to piece work. It was only a small strike, 15 or 20 men going out. Now they would not go back to the old conditions under any circumstances.

4228. Have prices gone up within the last few years?—I should not say that prices have gone up, but the capacity for earning has increased because machinery has so improved. Before we used to work the sewing machines always by foot power and be able to do about 1,000 stitches a minute; now the machines are driven by power, and they do up to 4,500 stitches a minute.

4229. Do you say that different factories have different methods of doing their work?—Yes.

4230. Does any one follow your particular method, do you think?—In a general way they do, but not in detail.

4231. May I take it then that to understand your factory you would want to have a Board of your own?—No, I think it would be possible where the area was small and if there was some way by which employers could lay before the Wages Board the details of their various processes.

4232. If

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Mr. Parkes—continued.

4232. If you covered a wide area the difficulty, I suppose, would be this, that you would find it impossible to find one man to give the casting vote who was acquainted with the various details of the trade in such an area?—I think so.

4233. Would it be an impossible thing to find a man who would be able to adjudicate upon these matters?—I do not suppose it would be impossible, but it might be difficult.

4234. Suppose the action of this Wages Board were to raise prices throughout, what would be the effect?—If they raised prices throughout the whole kingdom equally, I suppose the conditions of the trade would be very much the same. I am speaking now of the better class trade, I am not speaking about the low class trade—the workmen's shirt trade—because that would immediately lay itself open to foreign competition.

4235. Would the raising of prices interfere with the foreign trade in any way?—Yes, it might do, because now where we are selling in tariff countries we are only just able to get in.

Mr. Hugh Law.

4236. I think in answer to the Chairman you said that adult women working in your factory were earning better wages than male labourers?—Yes.

4237. Did you mean better wages than the agricultural labourer?—Not necessarily the agricultural labourer.

4238. You suggested they were earning on an average 10s. or 12s. a week?—Yes.

4239. That would be about the average of the agricultural wage?—Yes, it would be. I do not suppose the agricultural wage would be as high as that. Then there is a certain amount of unskilled labour which is only getting 12s. to 13s. a week in Derry—carters and men like that.

4240. Quite so, but that is not less than the women earn?—Yes, some of our women earn 15s.—18s.

4241. Your best women—you said your average women?—I did not say the average.

4242. You also told us, I think, that the earnings of the average family, where there were four or five, would be 39s. a week?—Not the average, but we have many cases where families are able to earn that.

4243. You would not say that any large number are actually earning that?—No, but we have workers, who perhaps apply themselves more to shirt making than to their ordinary work on the farm who earn that, but I do not say for a moment that that is the average.

4244. You are really satisfied that the price that you pay for the shirts is really received by the workers themselves?—Yes.

4245. You are clear that there is no subdivision or sub-letting?—There is not.

4246. Are your agents at Inishowen shopkeepers?—Yes.

4247. They simply take and give the work out on commission?—Yes.

Mr. Hugh Law—continued.

4248. Is that all they do?—That is all they do.

4249. The people come to the shop for it?—We have no station actually at the shop. We have always a different room to the shop if our agent happens to be a shop-keeper. We do not allow him to give his work out over the counter of the shop. We have our own room and our own examiner in that room, and the people who work for us bring the work to that place, and it is examined by our examiner, and whoever is the agent or person we employ, takes the work that is finished and gives out the work that is to go out, and the wage is paid according to what is on the ticket which we have made ourselves when the bundle is made up.

4250. Is that practice peculiar to your firm, or is it the general practice?—I think it is the general practice.

4251. You have told us as to the income of the people who are making shirts in the rural districts; as to the collar making you say it is carried on partly in the factories, and partly in the City itself?—We have perhaps 300 names on our out workers registry for collars. But that includes cases where married women can do work at home without leaving their families or women who perhaps may be incapacitated in some way, and not able to go to factories. But most of them are women whom we have employed, and who have since gone to live at home, and we have kept them on because they are willing to do home work.

4252. You said, in answer to the Chairman, that you were on the whole satisfied with the sanitary conditions and the cleanliness of the homes of the home workers?—Yes.

4253. You were speaking then, I imagine, of the rural home workers, because you spoke of the doors being open?—Yes.

4254. Are you equally satisfied with the conditions of the homes of the home workers in Derry?—Their surroundings must be fairly clean, because they are all working on white work, and if you take six dozen white collars into a dirty place, and let them lie about while they are being made up, the result would be such as we could not admit for a moment. It is not a thing that is done. On the contrary, they come back to us practically as clean as when the cutter was cutting the material.

4255. Have you visited the homes where the work has been done?—Yes, I have, but not for the purpose of discovering the condition of the homes. I have been to places where our hands have been ill, and so on. There are awful hovels in Derry, no doubt, but I do not think those are the places where the home work is done, because those hovels are generally occupied by people who have not the amount of skill for doing home work.

4256. You would think the home workers are on the whole superior?—Yes, certainly.

4257. Coming now to the general principles of the Bill, I want to learn how you think you, as a reputable firm of employers, making a good class of shirts as you do, would be hurt by the establishment

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Mr. Hugh Law—continued.

establishment of a Wages Board?—I think we might be handicapped.

4258. Let me put it to you in this way. In Victoria, as perhaps you know, the standard laid down by legislation was the rates of wages paid by reputable employers in the district. Now if you are reputable employers, might you not reasonably suppose that the rates fixed would not be higher than those you are at present paying, and would not the effect be that others who are paying less rates would have to pay the same as you are now paying, and if that were the case, how would you be hurt?—In that case we should not be hurt. The way I think this Bill would hurt us and others would be in the way it would be carried out. That is to say, the Wages Board, for instance, might fix a rate on time work when we are paying on piecework, or *vice versa*, and it might fix minimum wages which would not be applicable to the conditions of our work.

4259. I think it is quite clear from the Bill that it is intended that the Wages Board should fix both piecework rates and time rates?—It gives the option.

4260. This is really a point of detail; but do I understand you have a definite objection to the principle of the establishment of a Wages Board?—Yes, I have to the principle of any interference between labour and capital.

4261. Now with reference to the area. If it was decided to create a Wages Board in the shirt trades, covering the whole of the shirt trade, with different prices for the different districts, can you suggest to me what you would require, if that were *un fait accompli*, as the proper area for the Irish shirt trade—for the north and north-west. Supposing you were faced with the fact that it had been so decreed?—I should say you would have to keep certain parts of the rural district separate from the city district.

4262. Do you mean you would exempt rural home workers altogether from the scope of the Bill?—No; if the principle of the Bill is to be carried out, you cannot exempt anybody. Everybody will have to be brought into it.

4263. Do you mean your idea would be that there would be one Wages Board?—There would have to be a Wages Board who had to deal with factories, and another Wages Board who had to deal practically with outworkers; because the conditions of employment are so different; and the knowledge required for one Board would be different to the knowledge required for the other Board.

Mr. Arthur Dewar.

4264. You sell shirts wholesale, I understand?—Yes.

4265. Do you only make the better class of shirts, or do you make all kinds of shirts, including working men's shirts?—No, we do not make working men's shirts at all.

4266. If there is no impropriety in the question, I will ask you what is the cheapest class of shirts you sell, what do you sell them

Mr. Dewar—continued.

for per dozen wholesale?—My prices are only our prices to our warehouses. Those prices are different to the wholesale prices.

4267. What are the cheapest you sell to the wholesale trade per dozen?—I think the cheapest would be about 24s. to 25s.

4268. Can you tell me at what price those would be sold retail if one went into a shop?—The ordinary percentage that the trade would put on would be 25 per cent.—the hosier about 33 per cent.

4269. Now, do not answer if it is a trade secret. If you receive 24s. or 25s. a dozen, what does it cost you to make them?—I do not know that I can tell you that.

4270. I mean including material, labour, and everything?—I think the money paid in wages altogether would be 9s. to 10s.

4271. Is that for the home worker?—No. For the home worker the wages would vary from 2s. to 4s. 6d.—here it would be 2s. 6d.

4272. 2s. 6d. a dozen for the home worker?—Yes.

4273. Then what about the labour in the factory?—There would be the difference between the 2s. 6d. and 9s., that is 7s. 6d.

4274. How do you account for that large difference?—Because there is far more work done in the factory than there is outside. What we pay to the home worker is only a part of the process, and the home worker's share of the work of the shirt would amount to 2s. or 2s. 6d. In the factory we prepare the work, we cut it, we make all the trimmings, the cuffs, and so on, and the outworker has simply to put them together.

4275. Then what are the other costs?—There is the material, and then there is the laundry work.

4276. How much will that come to?—The laundry work would cost from 3s. to 6s.

4277. Do you mean for washing?—Washing, starching and smoothing.

4278. 6s. per dozen?—From 3s. to 6s. per dozen.

4279. Do you do your own laundry work?—We do all our laundry work.

4280. No, what does the material cost per dozen?—It varies.

4281. But what for the cheapest class of shirt of which I am talking?—I do not think I can tell you.

4282. Not even approximately; perhaps you would rather not tell?—It is not that, I would rather not, but just for the moment I cannot get the cost into my mind.

4283. The material for a shirt of that class is fairly cheap, is it not? Would it be 2s. 6d. a dozen, or more than that?—Oh, yes, more than that. I should say it would come to about a shilling a shirt. That is approximate. I could not speak exactly.

Chairman.

4284. Surely there must be an error here. You gave a figure of 9s. for wages?—Yes.

4285. Then you add 3s. for washing?—No, the laundry is included in the 9s. When I spoke

14 May, 1908.]

Mr. MORRISH.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

spoke of labour I meant the wages paid in the factory including laundry.

Mr. Arthur Dewar.

4286. To be quite frank with you; I want if I can to see how the wages paid to the home worker compare with the profit made on the article. Can you tell me that?—No, I could not.

4287. Can you tell me how it is that you would pay from 3s. to 6s. for washing shirts, and only from 2s. to 3s. for making?—It is not only a matter of washing. The laundry work is the most skilled work there is in the whole trade, and Derry holds its reputation by its smoothers. We pay smoothers up to 3d. a piece even.

4288. You said in answer to my friend, that your main objection to the principle was a general objection to interference between capital and labour in any way?—Quite so:

4289. But would not you agree with me that sometimes capital is in a position to take advantage of labour?—I suppose there is no doubt that that is so.

4290. Even in that case would not you interfere?—Things generally adjust themselves.

Mr. Dewar—continued.

4291. Would you not interfere if capital was in a position to take advantage of and did take advantage of labour?—It would be all right provided that interference only took place under those conditions, there should be no interference where it was not necessary or justifiable.

Mr. Stuart Samuel.

4292. How is your middle man remunerated; do you pay him a salary?—No; we pay by commission on every dozen he gives out. That is to say for every dozen he gives out he receives sixpence.

4293. Do I take it that the middleman's profit is a commission?—He is not a middleman, he is an agent only. He is employed by us, and works on commission in this way—that for every dozen of work he gives out to our workers in the country, he receives sixpence to cover his expenses of providing, for instance, a person to give out the work.

4294. In answer to one of my colleagues's questions, I understood you to say that that system is not peculiar to your business alone, but that it is general in the trade?—Yes, that is so.

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APPENDIX.

APPENDIX No. 1.

Paper handed in by Mr. *William Bridgett*, 18th March, 1908.

MINIMUM TARIFF ADOPTED IN APRIL, 1907, BY THE MAJORITY OF LACE MANUFACTURERS IN NOTTINGHAM.

Drawing :— $\frac{1}{8}$ d. per thread per 12 yards.

Rover Threads }
Ripping Threads } $\frac{1}{8}$ d. per thread per 12 yards.

Clipping :—1d. per 1,000 clips, or $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per clip per dozen yards.

Scolloping :—All qualities of 40 inches to the Rack and commoner paid $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per dozen yards.

Qualities between 40 inches and 24 inches paid 1d. per dozen yards.

All better qualities $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. per dozen yards.

APPENDIX No. 2.

Paper handed in by Mr. N. Buckner, 25th March, 1908.

CLASS F.
LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.
CLOTHING CONTRACTS—RATES OF WAGES.

Minimum Prices to be paid by the Contractors to Workpeople for making up the various descriptions of Clothing required by the Council from 1st July, 1905, to 30th June, 1906. No deductions are to be made for Sewings, Silk, Twist, Thread, &c.

No. in Schedule.	DESCRIPTION.	Minimum Prices to be paid for the different kinds of work.						Minimum Price fixed by the Council for making up each garment.
		Machining.	Beating.	Finishing.	Pressing.	Button Holing.		
						Hand.	Machine.	
CLASS F.	CLOTHING FOR PARKS CONSTABLES, BANDSMEN, &c.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	d.	d.	s. d.
2	Capes, cloth (for inspectors) - - - - -	- 4	- 7	1 6	- 3	4	-	3 0
7	Coats, frock (for conductors of bands) - - -	2 0	4 0	3 6	1 6	-	-	11 0
9	Jackets, serge (for summer wear by constables)	- 11	- 9	1 8½	- 8	-	1½	4 2
10	Do. do. (for summer wear by inspectors) -	1 4	2 4	2 6	1 2	-	2	7 6
11	Do. cloth (2nd class officers in charge, &c.)	1 0	1 6	- 11	- 11	-	2	4 6
12	Overcoats (for constables) - - - - -	1 3	2 0	1 11	1 2	-	2	6 6
13	Do. (for inspectors) - - - - -	1 8	2 1	1 11	1 2	-	2	7 0
14	Trousers, cloth (for bandsmen and conductors)	- 6	- 5	1 6	- 6	-	1	3 0
15	Do. do. (for constables) - - - - -	0 4½	0 3	1 5	- 5	-	-	2 6
16	Do. cord (for tree pruners) - - - - -	- 4	- 2	0 10	- 1½	-	-	1 6
17	Do. serge (2nd class officers in charge, &c.)	- 5	- 2½	1 0	- 4	-	-	2 0
18	Tunics (for bandsmen) - - - - -	2 0	2 11	2 11	1 2	-	-	9 0
19	Do. (for constables) - - - - -	1 1	1 6	2 2½	1 1	-	1½	6 0
20	Do. (for inspectors) - - - - -	1 8	3 3	3 1	1 3	9	-	10 0
21	Vests (for conductors of bands)- - - - -	- 4	1 2	2 6	- 6	-	-	4 6
22	Do., sleeved (for lavatory attendants, &c.)	- 5	0 11	1 2	- 5	-	1	3 0
	CLOTHING FOR OFFICERS AND MEN AT WOOLWICH FERRY AND GREENWICH TUNNEL, AND FOR MAIN DRAINAGE AND RIVER STEAMBOAT SERVICES.							
23	Coats, frock (for superintendent) - - - - -	2 0	4 0	4 2	1 6	10	-	12 6
27	Jackets, blue navy cloth, D.B. Pea (for captains)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
28	Do. do. do. (for 1st mates) - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
29	Do. do. do. (for 2nd mates) - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30	Do. do. do. (for chief engineers)	1 3	1 10	1 5	1 2	10	-	6 6
31	Do. do. do. (for second engineers)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
32	Do. do. do. (for third engineers)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
33	Do. do. do. (for piermasters) - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
34	Do. do. do. (for lift attendants)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
35	Do. blue pilot D.B. monkey (for piermasters)	1 3	1 9	1 5	1 3	10	-	6 6
36	Do. do. (for piermen) - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
37	Do. do. (for boatswains and seamen)	1 0	1 6	- 11	- 11	-	2	4 6
38	Do. blue pilot reefer (for deputy piermasters)	1 0	1 6	- 11	- 11	-	2	4 6
39	Do. do. (for piermen, stokers and deck hands)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
40	Overcoats, superfine blue cloth (for superintendents)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
41	Do. blue pilot cloth (for captains) - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
42	Do. do. (for 1st mates) - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
43	Do. do. (for 2nd mates and steam-boat officers) -	1 2	2 6	1 5	1 2½	-	2½	6 6
44	Do. do. (for piermasters) - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45	Do. do. (for deputy piermasters) - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
46	Trousers, blue cloth (for piermen, deck hands and lift attendants)	- 4½	- 3	1 5	- 5	-	½	2 6
47	Trousers, blue pilot cloth, with linings to knee (for piermen—Woolwich Ferry) - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

No. in Schedule.	DESCRIPTION.	Minimum Prices to be paid for the different kinds of work.						Minimum Price fixed by the Council for making up each garment.
		Machining.	Basting.	Finishing.	Pressing.	Button Holing.		
						Hand.	Machine.	
		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	d.	d.	s. d.
48	Trousers, superfine blue cloth (for superintendent)							
49	Do. blue doeskin (for officers)	5	4½	1 6	5		½	2 9
50	Do. do. with lining to knee (for officers —Woolwich Ferry)	5	2½	1 0	4		½	2 0
51	Trousers, blue serge (for stokers and seamen)	4½	4	1 0	4½	5		2 6
52	Vests, blue navy cloth (for officers)							
53	Do. superfine blue cloth (for superintendent)							
CLOTHING FOR MESSENGERS AT CENTRAL OFFICES, &c.								
54								
55	Coats, frock	2 0	4 0	3 11	1 9	10		12 6
56								
57								
58	Jackets, Norfolk	10	1 6	1 3	0 10		1	4 6
59	Do. patrol (for boys)	1 0	1 9	1 4	10		1	5 0
60	Do. serge (for chainmen)	1 0	1 6	11	11		2	4 6
61								
62	Overcoats, plain	1 4	2 6	1 8	1 4		2	7 0
63	Do. with piping							
64	Trousers, blue serge (special)	6	5	1 4	5		1	2 9
65	Do. do.	5	5	1 2½	5		½	2 6
66	Do. do. (for boys)	4½	3	1 2	5		½	2 3
67	Vests	4½	4	1 0	4½	5		2 6
68	Do., sleeved	5	0 11	1 2	5		1	3 0
69								
CLOTHING FOR INSPECTORS OF COMMON LODGING HOUSES.								
70	Jackets, serge	1 2	1 8	2 6	1 0		2	6 6
71	Overcoats, cloth	1 2	2 6	1 5	1 3		2	6 6
72	Trousers, serge	5	5	1 2½	5		½	2 6
73	Do. cloth (for chief inspector)	6	6	1 10	7		1	3 6
74	Vests, serge	4½	6	1 2	4½		1	2 6
GENERAL.								
75	Coats, rock, S.B. (for drivers to weights and measures inspectors)	1 6	2 10	2 5	1 7		2	8 6
76	Garibaldi, canvas overalls	10		3	1		1	1 3
77	Do. grey twill overalls	10		3	1		1	1 3
78	Jackets, blue dungaree (for oilers, cleaners, &c.)	8		4½	2		½	1 3
79	Do. canvas	8		4½	2		½	1 3
80	Do. do. with flannel linings	7		7½	2½	4		1 9
81	Do. kersey (Works department)							
82	Do. do. (for boiler cleaners)	1 3		5	3		1	2 0
83	Do. woollen (for boiler cleaners)	11½		1 2	4		½	2 6
84	Do. red serge (for orderly boys at Blackwall-tunnel)	4	4½	5	4		½	1 6
85	Overcoats (for drivers of weights and measures vehicles)	2 2	3 0	2 7	1 6		3	9 6
86	Slops, blue serge	6	4½	4½	2		1	1 6
87	Suits, blue dungaree combination	11	3	3	6		1	2 0
88	Trousers, canvas	6½		3	2		½	1 0
89	Do. do. with flannel linings	3½		6½	2	3		1 3
90	Do. dungaree	6½		3	2		½	1 0
91	Do. kersey (for boiler cleaners)	1 3½		2	3		½	1 9
92	Do. woollen do. do.	3½	3½	7	3		1	1 6
93	Vests, woollen do. do.	5	1	3½	2		½	1 0

Cutters, 42s. per week minimum, and maximum hours of Labour per week, 50. Hours of Labour per week for all other classes of Workpeople not to exceed 54½.

Spring Gardens, S.W., July, 1905.

G. L. GOMME,

Clerk of the Council.

APPENDIX No. 3.

PAPER handed in by *The Chairman*.PRÉCIS, FURNISHED BY THE HOME OFFICE, OF
REPORT PUBLISHED BY THE BERLIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (OCTOBER, 1906) ON HOME-WORK IN BERLIN.

Taking the principal branches of trade in which home-work prevails, viz., clothing, tailoring, shirt-making, millinery, hat-making, shoe manufacture, fancy goods manufacture, cigarette manufacture, &c., it is found that 140,000 workers were employed in their own homes and in workshops. After making allowance for the latter and including certain minor industries, it is calculated that the total number of home-workers proper in Berlin is from 110,000 to 120,000.

Of this total, a very considerable proportion are women; thus in the women's and children's clothing branch 90 per cent. of the home-workers are females, in the men's and boys' tailoring trade more than 80 per cent. are females, whilst shirt-making, hat-making, and millinery are almost entirely in female hands. In certain of the minor trades, e.g., stick-making and gold-frame-making, men are chiefly employed.

A notable feature of the Berlin home-work is the employment given to married women. Thus one firm, employing 70 women, quoted 61 as married, 3 widows, 1 divorced, and 5 unmarried. Of the 25 on the pay roll of another firm 22 were married.

Berlin is the home of the clothing industry in women's and children's goods. In women's and children's mantles, blouses, petticoats, skirts, &c., Berlin produced 90 per cent. of Germany's output. As regards men's tailoring, Berlin takes about one-fourth of the whole German production, and as regards boys' suits about three-fourths.

The system of home-work relieves employers of the trouble of providing workshop room, &c., for so large a contingent of workers, and more readily accommodates itself to fluctuations of trade than the factory system. Further, a large number of married women are enabled to work in their own homes for some part of the day and thus supplement their husband's income. The average hours of work of married women are stated to be 8 per diem, children and the household claiming a share of the day. The hours of labour of unmarried women are longer and approximate to those of male workers, the latter averaging from 11 to 12 hours daily. Home-work is, to a great extent, the work of unskilled labourers, and the women employed often have no special skill or practice in the work taken up.

The following table compiled from statements supplied by a firm making boys' clothing gives some idea as to how the husband's wages are supplemented by the wife's earnings in home-work:—

Occupation of husband.	Husband's wage.	Wife's earnings.	Combined income.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Labourer - - - -	1 4 6	- 3 -	1 7 6
Bootmaker - - - -	1 10 -	- 3 6	1 13 6
Labourer - - - -	1 4 -	- 3 6	1 7 6
Bootmaker - - - -	1 5 -	- 3 6	1 8 6
Potter - - - -	1 10 -	- 3 6	1 13 6
Compositor - - - -	1 8 -	- 4 -	1 12 -
Gunsmith - - - -	2 15 -	- 4 -	2 19 -
Policeman - - - -	1 3 -	- 4 6	1 7 6
Locksmith - - - -	1 19 -	- 5 -	2 4 -
Saddler - - - -	1 7 6	- 5 -	1 12 6
Bootmaker - - - -	1 4 -	- 5 -	1 9 -
Labourer - - - -	1 10 -	- 5 6	1 15 6
Locksmith - - - -	1 5 -	- 6 -	1 11 -
Locksmith - - - -	1 10 -	- 6 -	1 16 -
Leatherworker - - - -	1 7 -	- 7 -	1 14 -
Carpenter - - - -	1 15 -	- 7 -	2 2 -
Cooper - - - -	1 10 -	- 7 -	1 17 -
Metalsmith - - - -	1 5 -	- 7 6	1 12 6
Mason - - - -	1 16 -	- 7 6	2 3 6
Railwayman - - - -	1 3 -	- 8 -	1 11 -
Labourer - - - -	1 4 6	- 8 -	1 12 6
Labourer - - - -	1 4 -	- 8 -	1 12 -
Glazier - - - -	1 7 -	- 8 -	1 15 -
Omnibus Conductor - - - -	- 17 6	- 9 -	1 6 6
Post Office Porter - - - -	1 6 6	- 9 6	1 16 -
Smith - - - -	1 18 6	- 9 6	2 8 -
Post Office Porter - - - -	1 6 -	- 10 6	1 16 6
Ditto - - - -	1 7 6	- 12 6	2 - -
Joiner (wife is assisted by grown-up daughter) - - - -	1 - -	1 11 6	2 11 6

(For full statement, see page 11 of Report.)

The Report contains numerous statements, in many cases extracted from wages books of middlemen, showing the earnings of home-workers in different trades. The following example, giving the actual earnings of 11 women engaged in the costume and blouse industry during the four weeks of February, 1906 (a month in the busy season), shows the great variations due to different degrees of skill.

	1st week.	2nd week.	3rd week.	4th week.	Total.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
A. married - - - -	1 1 9	1 2 1	1 3 10	1 2 4	4 10 -
B. " - - - -	- 15 5	- 9 4	- 15 6	- 9 11	2 8 2
C. " - - - -	- 13 10	- 6 7	- 11 4	- 10 6	2 2 3
D. " - - - -	1 3 1	1 1 6	1 4 6	- 15 8	4 4 9
E. " - - - -	- 9 7	- 12 9	- 15 -	- 13 10	2 11 2
F. " - - - -	1 2 9	1 2 9	1 1 -	- 19 10	4 6 4
G. " - - - -	- 7 8	- 8 1	- 10 6	- 9 3	1 14 6
A. single - - - -	- 18 -	1 2 9	1 1 -	1 13 6	4 15 3
B. " - - - -	- 15 6	- 19 3	1 - -	- 18 -	3 12 9
C. " - - - -	- 14 2	- 11 4	- 16 -	- 14 -	2 15 6
D. " - - - -	1 - 1	- 18 11	- 16 -	- 19 7	3 14 7

Workpeople in the costume and blouse industry, which employs about 11,000 persons almost all females, are only fully engaged for eight months of the year, work being slack in the remaining four; the figures quoted above do not therefore form a satisfactory basis for calculating annual wages. From other sources it is estimated that the average earnings per year of each home-worker in this trade amount to about £34; this average rate includes, however, the earnings of many unskilled workers and apprentices, and it is calculated that more than half the workers earn over £40 annually.

The average earnings of persons mainly, however, employed in making ladies' and children's mantles, is calculated at £37 10s. per year; they are busily employed for eight months of the year, slack for two months, and practically idle for the remaining two months. It is estimated that about 27,000 home-workers are engaged in this trade in Berlin.

The difficulties in calculating average wages are considerable, questions arising as to time spent on work, the varying degrees of employment, the capability of the worker, his expenses on materials such as thread. Again, some home-workers have private customers, others work for several firms; in some cases the home-work is the regular means of livelihood, in others it merely supplements other sources of income. The general movement of wages is said to have been upwards in the course of the last few years, this being the case especially in the clothing trade, where labour prices increased about 25 per cent. in the five years 1901 to 1906. The rates paid to home-workers on piece-work are stated to compare favourably with the wages of factory workers.

Considerable attention is devoted in the Report to the question of "middlemen," who are usually employed in the Berlin trades as intermediaries between the large firms and the actual workers, and who in some cases have small workshops of their own. It is said that the great majority of Berlin home-workers prefer to make use of the middleman, and he is by no means regarded as a sweater.

Home-workers live mostly in the outer portion of the town or in the suburbs, and, by obtaining their work through the intermediary of a middleman in the neighbourhood, save the expense and loss of time incurred in conveying their goods to and from the place of business of the principal. Further, as most middlemen work for several firms, some perhaps wholesale and others retail, the system tends towards regularity of employment. The proportion of the amount paid by the principal, which the middleman retains for his services, varies from one-third to one-half, the former figure being usual in cases where the middleman is only a distributor and has no workshop of his own. The net income of the middleman is not large; in the women's and children's clothing trade, a middleman employing eight or ten home-workers is estimated to make from £100 to £125 a year.

APPENDIX No. 4.

Paper handed in by the *Chairman*.

THE LEGISLATIVE REGULATION OF HOME INDUSTRY IN CERTAIN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

NOTE.—This memorandum is based on the information now in the possession of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade. No special inquiry has been made.

GERMANY.

There is as yet no systematic regulation of the home industries in Germany, though the subject has constantly been debated for many years in the Reichstag. The Secretary of State for the Interior, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, stated in the Reichstag on February 28, 1908, that there are probably as many home workers in Germany now as at the time of the occupation census of 1895, viz., 426,000, and he estimated that about one-half of these workers are engaged in family workshops, where the worker is assisted by members of his own household.

Workers of this class are in general outside the provisions of the Industrial Code and the special Orders issued under that Code by the Federal Council regulating hours and conditions of labour. Thus Sections 120A to 120E of the Industrial Code, by which employers are required to maintain their workshops, machinery, appliances, &c., in such a condition that no danger to the life and health of the worker may be occasioned, do not apply to them, and the same exception holds good of the regulations which the Federal Council has issued in relation to the clothing and tobacco industries.

On the subject of the employment of children, however, general regulations exist applicable to the whole of the home industries. These regulations are contained in the law of March 30, 1903, which provides that *entrepreneurs* who intend to employ children shall notify the local police authority in writing that such children, whether their own or others, will not be employed on Sundays or festivals; and fixes the minimum employment age at 10 years in the case of the employer's own child (though this age may under certain circumstances be reduced), and 12 years in the case of other children; and contains provisions as to the duration of work, intervals and school attendance.

An Order of the Federal Council of December 20, 1905, schedules a number of occupations largely carried on as home industries in which children of the head of the family may be employed at the age of nine years, yet not between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m., before morning school and an hour after afternoon school, while an interval of two hours must be given at noon.

Several industries may not be carried on as home industries in Germany. Such are the manufacture of explosives and phosphor matches in the Empire generally, and the manufacture of clothing for the Army in Bavaria.

Difference of opinion prevails as to the extent to which home workers come under the three insurance laws regarding sickness, accident, and old age and invalidity, owing to the difficulty of distinguishing between principals and dependent employees.

At the present time there is before the Reichstag a Government Bill which will affect all home workers engaged in the cigar trade. The Bill applies (Section 1) to workshops in which cigars are made or sorted, in so far as the employer exclusively employs in them members of his family, and those in which one or several persons perform such work without being engaged by an employer directing the workshop, the term workshop being interpreted so as to include "rooms which serve for sleeping, living, or cooking."

It is required (Section 3) that no room may be used for this purpose the floor of which lies more than 1 ft. 7½ in. below the ground adjacent, and if an attic room it must be plastered; it must be at least 8 ft. 1½ in. high (though exceptions are permitted), and must be well lighted and ventilated, and contain a minimum (yet variable) cubical space for each person. Until January 1, 1913, however, existing workshops may, in exceptional cases, be exempted altogether from the provisions under this section.

Cigar-making and sorting (Section 4) may not take place at all in bed rooms, nor cigars or tobacco be stored therein, and in other rooms (Section 4) tobacco or cigars in process of manufacture may only, as a rule, be kept to the extent of a day's requirements at once, or a week's requirements if kept in closed receptacles.

A cigar-maker (Sections 6 and 7) may only employ his own children on the completion of their twelfth year, yet not even then for third persons, and he may not employ the children of others belonging to the household at all. Children above 13 years, and exempted from school attendance, and young people between 14 and 16 years, may not be employed between the hours of 8 p.m. and 8 a.m. (though each State may modify this rule), and at noon they must have an interval of at least two hours, while work on Sunday and festivals is forbidden in the case of children and young people.

Before work of this kind can be begun in a home workshop the police authority must be notified by the immediate employer or the person responsible for the room, and similar notification must be made

before children or young people can be employed. Certificates are to be issued by the police for the rooms approved for this work, and employers-in-chief may only allow work to be performed in such permitted workshops; they must also keep registers of all persons to whom they give out work, with the addresses of their workshops, and these registers must be produced to the police authority or the Factory Inspectors on demand.

The Governments of Bavaria and Baden, countries in which home industries are very largely carried on, have recently made investigations into these industries through their Factory Inspectors, and the reports which have been published as a result contain various recommendations as to their legal regulation. The measures suggested by the Bavarian Report (1907) include:—(1) The obligation to employ wages books or tickets; (2) the extension to all house workers of the insurance laws; (3) obligatory registration; (4) the fixing of minimum rates of wages with allowances for rent, light, heating and time lost in fetching and delivering work; (5) inspection of the dwellings used for domestic industry; (6) the placing of the industry under factory inspection; and (7) absolute prohibition in the case of certain trades.

Among the measures proposed by the Baden Factory Inspectors are:—(1) The extension of the insurance laws to the home industries; (2) the introduction of wages books; (3) the extension of the functions of the Industrial Courts to these industries; (4) the placing of these industries under factory inspection; (5) the compulsory registration of all home workers; and (6) the fixing of minimum piece-rates, either by the Industrial Courts, acting as Boards of Conciliation, or Chambers of Labour, or Special Commissions.

FRANCE.

The report presented to the French Chamber of Deputies by the Committee which was charged with the examination of the "Bill relative to the Regulation of Work" of July, 1906, stated:—"In France home-work is free. In its regulation France has allowed herself to be greatly out-distanced by foreign nations." No laws have been enacted in special reference to home workers, and the general laws respecting the hours of labour only apply partially to home workshops.

The home workshops subject to these laws (June 12, 1893, and July 11, 1903) are (1) those in which persons other than members of the families residing therein are employed, members of a family being held to include besides the parents only children and wards; (2) those worked by steam or mechanical power; and (3) those classed as "dangerous or unhealthy." Under these laws it is the duty of the Inspectors of Labour to see that workshops are properly lighted and ventilated and that the convenience and safety of the workpeople are sufficiently ensured. From these laws, however, workshops in which only members of a family are employed are exempted.

It is found that home workshops subject to these laws can easily be transformed into home workshops not so subject, and *vice versa*, and as a consequence the application to home workers of the general regulations is attended by difficulty.

It is the duty of the Factory Inspectors (called Inspectors of Labour) to see that the provisions of the laws are duly observed.

Further, the rooms or lodgings of home workers come under the sanitary regulations applying to all dwelling-houses under the Public Health Law of February, 1902, yet no laws or regulations specially prohibit home-work by persons suffering from infectious or contagious disease.

There is in France no system of licensing either in relation to home workshops or home workers, nor are employers at present compelled to keep lists of home workers in their employment. A Bill now before Parliament, however, requires heads of establishments or their agents, giving out work to be executed outside such establishments either in workshops or homes, to keep lists of persons entrusted with work, together with addresses, and to furnish the Inspectors of Labour with the same on demand, and sub-contractors are under the same obligation. The primary object of this provision is to enable the Inspectors of Labour to detect such workshops coming under the general law of 1892 which now evade control.

As regards child and juvenile labour, there is no legal restriction as to the age of workers in home workshops in which only members of the family are employed, but in workshops where other persons are employed the general law of November 2, 1892, prohibits the employment of children under 13 years (or under 12 if they have obtained an official certificate of proficiency in primary studies and a certificate of physical aptitude), even though belonging to the family.

Only home workshops in which persons other than members of the family are employed come under the provisions of the general law of July 13, 1906, on the weekly day of rest, and then only in respect of the strangers; the law does not apply to the work of members of the family.

Several classes of home workers are protected from uncertainty as to the prices of work to be paid to them under an old law (of March 7, 1850), which obliges a manufacturer, whether agent or intermediary, who gives out yarn to be woven or reeled, to register in a special book belonging to the workman and in his possession the weight, length and other particulars in regard to the work to be done, and the wages in legal money, calculated on the legal unity of weight or length. This law was introduced in the special interest of the house weaving industry, and it was extended by Decree of July 20, 1853, to workers in cotton velvet, and in the dyeing, bleaching and finishing of stuffs. It is stated, however, that the provisions of this law are not very efficacious, and a Bill now under consideration proposes to add to the particulars which an employer must furnish to his workers. At present the application of this law rests in the hands of the judicial administration (police commissaries, officers of gendarmerie, &c.), but the Chamber of Deputies has adopted a private Bill to transfer this duty to the Inspectors of Labour.

No special regulations prohibiting the use of specified materials on account of danger to health apply to home workers; no local by-laws exist regulating the wages or hours of home workers; nor have tribunals been established to deal with these questions. Further, there is no law prohibiting the "truck" system in regard to the payment of these workers or prohibiting or regulating fines for bad work, or deductions for material, &c.

without a licence therefor as provided by this article. But nothing therein contained shall apply to collars, cuffs, skirts or shirt waists made of cotton or linen fabrics that are subjected to the laundrying process before being offered for sale.

“Application for such a licence shall be made to the Commissioner of Labour by the owner of such tenement house or by his duly authorised agent. . .”

All other kinds of work, save those scheduled, may be carried on in any part of a tenement house without licence, and are only subject to the provisions which apply to factories or bakery and confectionery establishments.

As to what constitutes a “tenement house,” the law states (Art. I., Sec. 2, “Definitions”) :—“The term tenement house, where used in this chapter, means any house or building or portion thereof which is rented, leased, let, or hired out, to be occupied, or is occupied, as the home or residence of three families or more living independently of each other and doing their cooking upon the premises, and having a common right in the halls, stairways, yards, water-closets or privies, or some of them, and for the purpose of this Act shall be construed to include any building on the same lot with any dwelling-house and which is used for any of the purposes specified in Section 100 of this Act.”

It will be seen that a licence is granted to an entire tenement house, and that single tenements or apartments are not licensed separately. It is, however, stipulated that none of the articles scheduled may be manufactured, altered, repaired or finished in a part of a cellar or basement of a tenement house which is more than one-half of its height below the level of the curb or ground outside or adjoining the same, and that no room or apartment of a tenement house may be used for the manufacture or working of the scheduled articles unless it be well lighted and ventilated, and contains at least 500 cubic feet of air space for every person working therein.

Nor may these goods be made in such apartments by “any person other than the members of the family living therein,” except that in licensed tenement houses persons not members of the family may under special conditions be employed in apartments on the ground or second floor used only for shops of “dressmakers who deal solely in the custom trade direct to the consumer.”

The section does not apply, however, to work performed in the apartment of the person or family for whom it is done. Family sempstresses working in their own homes are therefore, as a rule, excluded.

Before a licence is granted an inspection of the house must take place in order to “show the existence of no infectious, contagious or communicable disease nor of any insanitary conditions in the said house,” and a licence must be exhibited by the owner in “a conspicuous place in the public hallway on the entrance floor of the building to which it relates.” An inspection of each licensed house should also be made not less than once in every six months.

The Commissioner of Labour may at any time revoke a licence if the health of the community or of the employees requires it, or if the owner of the said tenement house or his duly qualified agent fails to comply with the sanitary orders of the Commissioner within 10 days after the receipt of the same.

While thus the obligation to licence premises rests solely with the owner or his agent, and licences are not issued to home workers, an employer is required before giving out work to ascertain that the building wherein the home workers reside is duly licensed and that no person whom he intends to employ lives in a room or apartment in which infectious, contagious or communicable disease exists. He must also keep a register of such workers, with their addresses, which register must be open to inspection by the Commissioner of Labour, who shall on demand be furnished with a copy.

Under Section 102, articles manufactured, altered, repaired or finished contrary to the provisions of Section 100 “shall not be sold or exposed for sale by any person,” and the Commissioner of Labour may either “conspicuously affix” the label or tag “Tenement made” to articles found to have been unlawfully manufactured, &c. (a proceeding known as “tagging”), or he may seize and hold such articles until they have been disinfected or cleaned at the owner’s expense, failing which they may be destroyed. Provision is also made for the “tagging,” disinfecting and destruction of articles made in workshops and rooms in which disease exists.

Moreover, whenever it is reported (Section 104) to the Factory Inspector that there are being shipped into the State any of the articles specified in Section 100 which have been “manufactured in whole or in part under unclean, insanitary or unhealthy conditions,” the Inspector shall examine the articles and the conditions of their manufacture, and if they or any part of them are found to have been manufactured in improper places or under unhealthy conditions or to contain vermin, he shall affix to them the label “Tenement made,” and shall report to the local Board of Health, which shall thereupon “make such order or orders as the public safety may require.”

Subject to the directions of the Commissioner of Labour, the execution of the law is entrusted to the State Factory Inspectors and the local Boards of Health.

In the Instructions issued to the Factory Inspectors under the law, several important points of procedure and interpretation are dealt with.

As licences are granted to complete buildings and not to single tenements or rooms separately, it follows that the entire hygienic conditions of a house need to be considered before the issue of a licence. As the Instructions state: “Anything in any part of a tenement house which would render work therein unclean or unsanitary should be treated as a ground for refusing or revoking the licence or for stopping the work, and should be reported and noted upon as may be proper.” Thus the overcrowding of one or more apartments or the presence of an ill-kept, overcrowded, ill-smelling shop, not itself subject to Section 100, may render the whole house unfit. Sanitary plumbing in every relation is particularly insisted upon. In short, the criterion for granting a licence to a tenement house is that the articles scheduled “may be manufactured there under clean and healthful conditions.” In addition to the usual forms of uncleanness on walls, floors, &c., and around plumbing, “an excessive amount of soiled bedding or clothing, stale food, rubbish, garbage, slops or offal in a room” may be construed as rendering a room unclean.

Dealing with the distinction between shops and living-rooms, the Instructions lay down the rule that workrooms used for either sleeping, family washing or cooking, are to be regarded as living rooms and not classed as shops, even though constructed for that purpose, and no outside workers may be allowed therein. But a living apartment that is used exclusively as a shop, there being no cooking, washing or sleeping therein, is to be regarded as an "unconnected shop," and outside workers are allowed therein; as a workshop, however, it must strictly conform to all the requirements of the Factory Laws.

The term "family" has been defined as meaning "a group of persons living together in one household," so that it may include *bona fide* domestic servants and lodgers.

There is no specific prohibition of overcrowding, and the only rule as to the same is contained in the clause requiring 500 cubic feet of air space for every worker in an apartment. Rooms are, however, required in addition to be well ventilated, in addition to being well lighted, and it rests with the Factory Inspector to determine whether these conditions exist.

As to the execution of the law the Instructions state: "Until all arrearages are disposed of and the law be in full force the Inspectors should waste no time over technical violations . . . and in enforcing compliance and abating violations the low-grade tenements should be dealt with before any material time be devoted to the better class of tenements, commonly called apartment houses. And, all other conditions being equal, finishing work should be dealt with more summarily than custom work, and living apartments and upstair shops than lower-storey shops."

Between the coming into operation of the amended law on October 1st, 1904, and September 30th, 1906, 7,791 applications for licences (disregarding 25 duplicates) were received in the whole of the State, of which 5,819 were granted, 1,525 were refused, 187 were cancelled by the applicants, and 240 were undetermined at the date of the Return. During the same period, 103 licences were cancelled at the request of the applicants and four were revoked on account of unlawful conditions, so that at September 30th, 1906, there remained 5,712 licensed premises. Of this number, 5,261 were in Greater New York, and 451 in other parts of the State. It has been found that about 25 per cent. of the applications for licences are refused on first investigation, but many are subsequently granted.

Regarding the small number of licences revoked during the year (four) the Department of Labour observes: "This number will doubtless increase just as soon as the Bureau can undertake systematic periodical inspections of licensed houses. For, while the administration of the law has produced remarkable improvement in the houses affected by its provisions, it is obviously true that the number of revocations of licences is disproportionately low. When we begin the periodic inspection (of licensed houses, which should by law be visited at least once every six months) we shall, where necessary, by the process of elimination or revocation of licences force upward the standard of sanitation in the houses against which we proceed. When this can be done the real purpose of the legislation will be accomplished."

No exact statistics exist as to the proportion of home workers registered under the law of the State of New York, but the number is estimated at from 85 to 90 per cent.

It is reported that no special difficulties have been encountered in compelling the licensing of premises in which home industries are carried on. Nor does it appear that irregularity occurs in the transfer of licences, owing to the fact that a building is licensed as a whole, and that an employer is required to ascertain before giving out work that the homes of his workers are actually licensed.

The effects of the operation of the law are stated as follows by one of the Factory Inspectors of the State: "A tendency towards sanitary homes, prevention of disease, elimination of overcrowding, and a physical and moral improvement in the lives of the workers."

The Labour Law of this State provides an alternative method of regulating the conditions under which home-work is performed, viz., by treating a home worker in a tenement house as the proprietor of a "tenant factory," in which case he becomes responsible for the sanitary and cleanly condition of the premises he employs.

The following is a copy of the licence used in the State of New York:—

Application No.....	Licence. State of New York.	Licence No.....
Department of Labour-Bureau of Factory Inspection.		

To whom it may concern:

This licence is granted under the provisions of Chapter 415, Laws of 1897, as amended. It permits the use of premises known as.....for manufacturing, altering, repairing or finishing purposes as provided by said law.

This licence must be framed and posted in a conspicuous place in the public hallway on the entrance floor of the building to which it relates. It will continue in force so long as the premises throughout are kept in a clean and sanitary condition, and so long as all other provisions of law relating thereto are fully complied with.

Albany.....(date)

(Signed) Commissioner of Labour.
" First Deputy do.

THE LAW OF WISCONSIN.

The law of Wisconsin likewise applies to the whole State, but there are, in fact, no tenement house workers in the small towns or rural districts.

The responsibility for licensing rests both with the employer and the worker, and licences are granted in respect of individual workrooms. Both the rooms in which work is done and the workers are licensed by the same document, the licence specifying the kind of work, the number of hours licensed, the dimensions of each room, and their situation in the block, with the maximum number of persons who may be employed.

In his application for a licence a worker must state, on a form provided, the owner or agent of the building, the kind of work done, the method of payment (whether by day, week, piece or contract) and the name and address of his employer.

An employer may only give work to duly licensed persons, and he must keep a list of all tenement workers in his employment.

Before a licence is granted the Commissioner of Labour or a Factory Inspector must satisfy himself by inspection of the home that articles can be manufactured therein under clean and healthy conditions. It is found that about 10 per cent. of the applications received have to be placed on probation, and that on the whole 5 per cent. are refused. About 70 per cent. of the home workers are now believed to be registered.

The law is reported to work successfully. The transfer of licences is said to be impossible owing to the ample data for identification insisted on, *e.g.*, a red number at the upper corner, the name of holder, street number, and description of rooms licensed. At the same time it is found that many employers engage workers without telling them that they need to be licensed, and the workers are too ignorant to know of this liability; lists of home-workers also change so greatly in short periods that it is difficult to keep up with new lists; and, moreover, "workers change homes frequently, so new licences must be issued when we find them again."

The verdict of one of the Factory Inspectors charged with the working of the law in Milwaukee is as follows:—

"The results are good when an Inspector is kept constantly on the field. When employers and workers know that the Inspector is on the field enforcement is easy. Leave the field and employers neglect to compel workers to be licensed before giving them work. Success is a return of constant vigilance."

The form of licence used in Wisconsin is as follows:—

Licence.	No.....
State of Wisconsin.	
Bureau of Labour & Industrial Statistics.	
To whom it may concern.	
The premises herein described having been inspected by an officer of this Bureau licence is issued under the provisions of (name and date of law) to..... permitting the use of rooms in the.....building located at No.....Street, in the City of.....for the purpose of manufacturing.....No. rooms licensed.....located on.....floor, dimensions of each room.....x.....cub. ft. (space for four rooms). Total cubic feet air space.....Maximum No. of persons who may be therein employed.....	
(This licence must be posted in a conspicuous place in the rooms or apartments to which it relates as provided by law and remains in force only while the premises continue in a healthy and proper condition and all the provisions of the factory laws relating thereto are complied with).	
Given under the authority vested in me this.....day of.....190...	
	(Signed).....
	Commissioner of Labour & Industrial Statistics.
Issued by	Inspector.

BELGIUM.

In Belgium there is no general regulation of Home Industry, but the home workers have the benefit of the law of August 16th, 1887, forbidding the truck system and the payment of wages on licensed premises. "Family workshops" only come under the Factory Act of December 13th, 1889, when steam or motor power is used.

SWITZERLAND.

In Switzerland the home workers do not come under the Federal factory legislation, and no special laws exist on the subject. The cantons have power to legislate separately, but little has been done.

Prior to 1905 several cantons prohibited factory workers from taking work home with them, but in that year the prohibition was incorporated in an amendment to the Federal Factory Law.

APPENDIX No. 5.

PAPER handed in by The *Chairman*.

DOCUMENTS CONCERNING SWISS LEGISLATION ON THE SUBJECT OF HOME WORK—PROCURED THROUGH THE FOREIGN OFFICE, FROM H.M. MINISTER AT BERNE, FOR THE USE OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE.

Copy.
No. 56.
(36848).

Berne,
November 5th, 1907.

SIR :—

With reference to your despatch No. 20 Commercial of the 13th September, instructing me to obtain all available information respecting Home-workers and Sweated Labour in Switzerland, I have the honour to enclose copy of a Note which I have received from the Federal Government in reply to my inquiries on the subject.

In Switzerland, President Müller remarks, Home-work is not subject to any special regulations.

The only Federal regulation bearing at all on the subject, in an indirect and purely negative manner, is contained in Article 2 of the law of 1st April, 1905, relating to Saturday labour in manufactories.

By Article 1 of this law it is decreed that in Industrial Establishments, subject to the factory law, the hours of labour on Saturday shall not exceed nine hours, including the time occupied in cleaning up, nor must they in any case be prolonged after 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

By Article 2 to which attention is drawn, it is forbidden, by giving work to be done at home, to evade the limitation of the hours of work fixed by Article 11 of the factory law and the preceding Article of this law quoted above.

The Note continues to state that although there are no further Federal regulations on the subject, several Cantons have special laws for the protection of labour, but none of them contain any other regulation on the subject than the prohibition to give work to be done at home beyond the legal hours of work.

Although the language of the Note is sufficiently explicit, I thought it desirable to communicate with His Majesty's Consular Officers at Geneva, Lausanne, and Zürich. In forwarding the laws and regulations relating to masters and workmen generally, in the Canton of Geneva, Sir George Philippo states that in that Canton there are no laws or regulations relating to Sweated Labour and Out-workers.

Consul Galland forwards from Lausanne certain Federal laws, one being that of the 1st April already referred to, as also the police regulations for the Commune of Lausanne, which do not appear to touch the subject.

Sir Henry Angst, whose Consular district embraces thirteen Cantons, reports that there are no laws in any of the Cantons dealing with the question of Home-workers. Private investigations have been made by some trades unions on the subject, but no official reports have been published.

The Secretary of the Union of Swiss Workpeople, who is a member of the Cantonal Council of Zürich, states that he endeavoured to obtain some regulation prohibiting the combined use of rooms as work rooms and bed rooms, but unsuccessfully, on the ground that the conditions in Switzerland were not so serious as to require legislation.

He adds that there are laws in force for the protection of labour, and a book on the subject has been compiled, entitled "Arbeits-gesetzgebung in der Schweiz," but that it contains no special regulations dealing with Sweated Labour and Home-workers.

Although therefore there is no direct legislation respecting Home Industries, the question is exciting considerable interest in industrial circles, as is shown by an extract from an article on the condition of Home Industries in Switzerland, published in the Encyclopedia, to which President Müller has called my attention in his note of the 28th September, and also in an Abstract of a paper† * * * *, which are enclosed herewith. The question is considered to be one of great difficulty which should be approached with caution.

I have, &c.;

(Signed) G. F. BONHAM.

Sir Edward Grey, Bart., M.P., &c., &c., &c.

Berne,
28 Septembre, 1907.

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE :—

Par Note du 19 courant, Votre Excellence a bien voulu nous demander des renseignements sur les lois et ordonnances existant en Suisse touchant le travail à domicile. En réponse à cette demande, Nous avons l'honneur de faire savoir à Votre Excellence que, dans le domaine fédéral, seule la loi ci-incluse concernant

† See p. 3 *infra*.

le travail du Samedi dans les fabriques, du 1 Avril 1905, contient une disposition, encore que toute négative, sur le travail à domicile (Article 2); il n'existe pas d'autres dispositions fédérales sur la matière. En revanche, divers cantons possèdent des lois particulières pour la protection du travail (lois industrielles); mais toutes sur l'objet en question, ne contiennent d'autre prescription que celle ci, savoir qu'il est défendu de donner aux ouvriers du travail à faire à domicile en dehors des heures légales du travail. En Suisse, le travail à domicile n'est pas soumis à une réglementation légale positive et particulière.

Peut être l'Article "Hausindustrie" dans le Handwörterbuch der Schweiz-Volkswirtschaft de N. Reichesberg 11^e volume 2^e moitié, page 951, présenterait-il aussi quelque intérêt pour la Legation.

Veillez agréer, &c.,

Signé au nom du Conseil Fédéral Suisse.

Le Président de la Confédération,
(Signé) MÜLLER.

Le Chancelier de la Confédération,
(Signé) RINGIER.

Son Excellence, Sir George Bonham, &c., &c., &c.

SUMMARY of an Article by A. PFLEGHART, Solicitor, of Zürich, on "Some of the Conditions of Home Industries in Switzerland," published in the latest Swiss Encyclopedia.

The origin of contract work in Switzerland dates from the days of pedlars, who both found a sale for the industries of the hamlets and villages they visited, and introduced new ones—such as the silk and ribbon industries brought in from France and Italy by refugees in times of trouble. In these days it is generally members of export firms or large warehouses who give out work, thus making use of the working capacities of the population of the surrounding neighbourhood, either to keep up their reserve stores or to execute orders.

Home-work is conducted on two systems—the Wage and the Sale system. In the former the "Verleger" (Contractor) provides the looms, tools—raw or half-finished materials. On the Sale system the worker provides his own materials, and makes a contract either to sell to one firm or more, at his own price. On the Wage system there is no regular tariff of wages, except in the hat, stocking-clock, silk-purse, men's clothing, shoemaking, and some branches of the watch-making trade. As a rule they vary according to the different branches of industry, the age and skill of the worker, whose gains are also affected by deductions for bad work, spoilt materials, &c. The "Verleger," or Contractor, is now generally represented by a middleman, called the "Fergger" (French "facteur"), who acts for the Contractor and is paid either by a percentage on the work given out, or by a fixed salary. He makes conditions with his clients, according to the state of the markets, which, roughly speaking, as far as can be judged in the absence of statistics, seem to be fairly equitable.

It is very different when the Home-worker falls into the hands of the Jobber (piece-work giver), who is apt to degenerate into the Sweater. Though not to the same extent as in other countries, it is admitted that Sweating does exist in Switzerland—particularly in the case of slop work in large towns.

Sometimes when cottages are overcrowded one or more workers, not necessarily pursuing the same industry, will combine to hire a workshop, which they divide up into sections provided with the necessary machinery or implements of their trade, where they can work undisturbed.

The Geneva watchmakers and their families are in some instances provided by their employers rent free with small "ateliers" attached to the factories, where, providing their own tools, they carry out piece work for the Contractors, without being subject to factory rules or regulations.

HOME INDUSTRIES MOST SUCCESSFUL AS A SUPPLEMENTARY SOURCE OF INCOME.

The strength of the position of Home Industries in Switzerland is, that they seldom form the only source of income of the families employed. Even when it is the principal source, the women, children and old people of the household carry it on, while the men cultivate the land, with the help of the whole family in the fine season of the year. This is universally the system where any of the more important Home Industries—such as weaving, embroidery, straw-plaiting, &c., are still found to be in a really flourishing condition. The proceeds of Contract work (Verlagsarbeit) form the staple income of the household for the greater part of the year, and enable many a peasant, who could not live on the produce of a small holding, to remain on the paternal soil and maintain himself and his belongings in a position of independence. In other Alpine districts affected by the stream of tourists, the Lodging and Hotel industry is supplemented by the men, when within reach of large towns or villages, working in factories, and the women carrying on some form of Home-work which does not interfere with their management of the house. The Contract work not being their only source of income, the persons engaged on it can afford to accept low wages in times of depression, or even to be without work for a time, while in the case of slop-work or even the better paid work of parts of watchmaking, as given out to workers in large towns, want is very apt to knock at the door during slack times.

ADVANTAGES OF HOME LABOUR TO THE CAPITALIST.

It is admitted by the same authority that a number of Home Industries have been already absorbed by large factories, or are in process of being so.

Where this is the case it is usually due to advance in technical skill at the factories, combined with the introduction of new and often very costly machinery, resulting as a necessary consequence in the cheapening of the article produced.

In spite, however, of the advantages of greater technical skill, and the superiority of factory work in many other ways, as in the division of labour, and the possibilities of constant supervision, the producer will be inclined to maintain Home Industries as having their own special advantages over factory work, and the superior organisation which it can command.

The Home or so-called Contract work system enables the capitalist to save all the expenses of putting up machinery, rent and amortisation of buildings, arrangements for heating and lighting, which the Home worker provides on his own account. That he can obtain the work at a cheaper rate has already been shown. The Home-workers provide the capitalist, so to speak, with a valuable reserve army, which is not restrained by growing trades-unionism or laws for the protection of labour from putting forth its whole energies in his service, and which in times of business depression can be easily disbanded.

Unlike the factory master, the Contractor for Home-work need not fear a loss of capital contingent on unfavourable years, and his responsibilities for unemployed workers are diminished by the fact of Home Industry not being their only means of livelihood.

ABSTRACT of Paper read by WERNER KREBS, Swiss Secretary of Commerce, Berne, at * * * Basle, June 29th, 1907, on "Home Labour in Switzerland."

After reading a resolution passed at the Fourth Meeting of the International Union for the Protection of Labour, at Geneva, in September, 1906, to the effect that the conditions under which Home Labour is carried on in Switzerland are sufficiently unsatisfactory to justify interference on the part of the State, Mr. Krebs says that Switzerland, as a section of the International Union, is bound to give attention to its resolutions, and as far as possible to give them effect, especially :—

- (a) To examine the social conditions of Home-workers.
- (b) To inquire into the industrial conditions of Home-work in the export trade, especially as regards production and competition with other nations.
- (c) To endeavour to obtain legislation for the protection of Home-workers, and proper methods of carrying out such legislation.

The Swiss section considers that it can best advance this work by petitioning the Bundesrath to institute a comprehensive inquiry into the conditions of Home Labour. At present they could obtain no information with regard to Switzerland, because there was no legislation on the subject.

Is this, it may be asked, because the conditions of Home Labour are so extraordinarily favourable and above suspicion that no necessity exists for the legal protection of the Home-worker ?

Although there are no statistics there is much literature on the subject, and it is quite evident that the regulations which apply to factories would be out of place with regard to Home Industries, but in zeal for the one the other has been too much neglected.

The one point made clear is that every branch of Home Industry varies greatly in its methods of working and the social condition of the workers, and would have to be legislated for accordingly. Dr. Schuler, a great authority on social politics, estimates the Swiss Home Industries as follows :—

Silk Industry	-	-	-	-	employing	32,000	workers
Watchmaking	-	-	-	-	"	30,000	"
† Embroidery Industry	-	-	-	-	"	26,000	"
Strawplaiting	-	-	-	-	"	20,000	"
Slop-work	-	-	-	-	"	8,000	"
Cotton Industry	-	-	-	-	"	7,130	"
Embroidery (hand)	-	-	-	-	"	2,400	"
Linen Weaving	-	-	-	-	"	1,600	"
Shoemaking	-	-	-	-	"	1,500	"
Wood-carving	-	-	-	-	"	1,300	"
Musical Box making	-	-	-	-	"	1,000	"
Match-making Industry	-	-	-	-	"	700	"
Tobacco Industry	-	-	-	-	"	700	"
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	"	1,000	"

The total estimate of workers is thus placed at about 133,000, and it is not too high ; this number would be about 4 per cent. of the whole population, and 54 per cent. of the number of factory workers under Government control. The watchmaking industry, as well as silk weaving, is giving way to factory production, and is on the decline as a Home Industry, while embroidery is on the increase.

Home Industry has many friends and patrons, and the tendency of the benevolent is to develop new branches as means of subsistence to the population of isolated and unproductive valleys.

It has doubtless many advantages over factory work, particularly for the trader and merchant (cheaper production, saving of capital, easier adaptation to the world's markets), and for the worker, greater freedom and independence and change of occupation, as, for instance, when it is supplementary to the working of a small holding, and assists the maintenance of family life in common.

These advantages may weigh in favour of certain Home Industries ; in others they can hardly be reckoned with, as against the disadvantages of lower wages, longer hours, faulty mechanism, unhealthy work shops, more frequent want of work in times of commercial depression, as well as absence of the State protection which the factory enjoys. It is women and children who are mostly employed in Home Industries, and it is for them that protection is most needed, but the difficulty of extending the Factory Act to these cases is so great that no one would attempt it.

† Embroidering silk cloaks for stockings by hand looms

This is why the resolution passed at the meeting in Geneva says nothing of regulating hours of labour, nothing of the protection of women and children.

A resolution regarding night work for the young is the utmost the meeting ventures to suggest.

The first step to be taken is that the employers of labour, whether the Contractor giving out work direct to the worker, *i.e.*, "Verleger" as he is called in German, on his own account, or on behalf of some large firm, or any middle man that he may depute to act for him, should be compelled, as in other countries, to keep a register of the men and women workers in his employ, to be laid before the proper authorities on their demand, and if possible to obtain some control of wages.

The subject is fraught with difficulty, as legislation prejudicial to the maintenance of Home Industries would be generally admitted to be a national calamity.

Legislation would certainly have to deal with the following questions :—

- I.—Definition of the general conditions of labour and the system of registration.
- II.—Healthy conditions of light, ventilation, &c.; use of materials injurious to the health; protection against accidents.
- III.—Wages, mode of payment; the prohibition of the "truck" system; insurance against illness and accident.
- IV.—Hours of work; prohibition of Sunday and night work, and certain age restrictions on the employment of children.

This would be the general programme to be modified according to the needs of the industry in question.

Exhibitions from time to time are useful means of gaining knowledge of the development of Home Industries, but nothing but an adequate official inquiry, comprising, as is the system in England, verbal and often contradictory evidence, as well as written reports by experts, can be of real service.

A commission of experts appointed by the Federal Council, including representatives of the contractors and middlemen, as well as the workers, should be entrusted with the conduct of the inquiry on these lines, and draw up a document which should be placed in the hands of the authorities.

In the words of Dr. Schuler, in which, says the speaker, we are in full agreement, "A number of the most eager partisans of the extension of the principle of the protection of labour have arrived at the conviction that Home Industry as a whole must not be interfered with. They only demand restrictions in certain branches of industry where Home-work has special disadvantages."

APPENDIX No. 6.

Paper handed in by the *Chairman*.

MEMORANDUM, SUPPLIED BY THE BOARD OF TRADE, UPON PROPOSED LEGISLATION
IN AUSTRIA RELATING TO HOME-WORKERS.

A Bill to regulate the conditions of work in the tailoring, white goods (linen) and boot trades has recently been drafted by the Austrian Ministry of Commerce, and has been referred to the Provincial Councils for their opinions.

Although the Bill is of a very partial character, power is reserved by the Government to extend any or all of its provisions to other trades by administrative decree. The provisions of the Bill are intended to apply particularly to dependent workers, whether employed by principals or middlemen, but a class of workers known as "piece-masters," who are independent workers, is also included. It is required that both principals and middlemen shall keep registers of the home-workers and "piece-masters" they directly employ, and "piece-masters" must also keep registers of their home-workers; in such registers must be entered, besides the names, dates of birth, and addresses of the workers, the kind of work done and the date at which employment begins and ends. Principals must keep registers in respect to the middlemen who work for them. Three copies of such registers must periodically be supplied to the Department of Industry, and they must also be shown to the Trade Inspectors and the authorities charged with the execution of the law whenever required.

Persons who have not completed their 18th year may not be employed as home-workers, unless they are members of a home-worker's family, in which case they may be employed occasionally, in times of emergency; but children who have not completed their 12th year may not be employed under any circumstances. A home-worker may not employ persons not belonging to his household, even as apprentices.

Principals and middlemen are required to exhibit in the rooms in which the work is given out to, or received from, piece-masters or home-workers, conspicuous notices summarising the provisions of the law, the hours of giving out and returning work, the nature and rates of wages, and the nature and amount of any deductions therefrom which can be made.

Principals or middlemen must supply to each home-worker employed a wages book, the form of which will be decided by the Minister of Commerce. It will record details as to all work given out and returned, the wages paid, and the deductions made. Workers are required to show their wages books to the local Factory Inspector on demand.

Where the home-workers are employed directly by principals or middlemen who belong to certain Industrial Guilds which have established trade agreements, these agreements are to apply to the home-workers, unless special agreements are arranged. To secure the maintenance of these agreements, and to deal with disputes arising under them, there is to be in each Guild a committee, consisting of a president appointed by the local supervising authority, three representatives of the employers, and three representatives of the workpeople. Special agreements may be made in regard to home-work by any Guild of which principals or piece-masters are members in large numbers. Local employers who are not members of the Guild, and their workpeople, may become parties to such agreements; and if a majority of the employers, with a majority of the workpeople outside the Guild, do so accede, the agreement becomes binding upon *all* local employers and workpeople. Such agreements, and subsequent changes, need the approval of the local administrative authority, which will take the opinion of the Chamber of Trade or Commerce concerned.

Home-workers are forbidden to do work for direct sale. They are also forbidden to take apprentices.

The conditions of employment of home-workers and their workrooms and living rooms are subject to supervision by the local Trade Inspector, who can require the abatement of conditions injurious to the health of the workers or the public. It will be the duty of the police authorities to enforce remedial measures, which, in the event of the prevalence of infectious or contagious disease, may include the closing of tenements in which home-work is carried on, and even the suspension of home-work.

The Minister of Commerce also reserves power to prohibit certain kinds of home-work altogether after hearing the opinions of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Industrial Guilds concerned.

A further provision extends the sickness insurance law to home-workers of the classes coming under the Bill, and not already subject to the law as industrial workpeople.

The Bill does not propose minimum rates of wages, though the question of the standardisation of wages is raised by a model industrial law published in February, 1907.

Home-workers of certain classes will be affected by an administrative decree which the Minister of Commerce proposes to issue, regulating the terms under which State contracts will henceforth be granted. Under this decree, contractors who either possess already or undertake to set up workshops of their own for carrying out such contracts, will have priority over those who give the work out to home-workers.

APPENDIX No. 7.

Paper handed in by the *Chairman*.

MEMORANDUM, RECEIVED THROUGH THE BOARD OF TRADE, GIVING INFORMATION
RESPECTING THE CONDITIONS OF HOME-WORKERS IN HUNGARY, MAY 11, 1908.
—(SUPPLIED BY THE HUNGARIAN MINISTRY OF COMMERCE.)

Apart from the provisions of Article XIII. of the Law of 1891 respecting Sunday rest for Industrial labour, whereby industrial workmen throughout Hungary are obliged to rest on Sundays, the feast of St. Stephen and National holidays, legislation has only recently been directed towards Home-workers.

Article XIX. of the Law of 1907 respecting the insurance for sickness or accident of persons employed in industries and trades renders insurance compulsory for workmen engaged in their own workshop or dwellings on work provided by other persons and paid by them even in cases where the workmen themselves provide the raw material and the accessories. Half the premium is paid by the employers.

The following provisions are included in the recent Bill regulating industry and the protection of persons employed in industries and trades:—

(1) The provisions regulating the conditions of labour for factory hands and workmen are applicable also to Home-workers as laid down in the following terms:

(2) "Employers must apply, with regard to workmen not engaged on their employers' premises, but in their own home or workshop, specific information, including an account of the place in which the work is carried on, besides a register of workmen and wages.

"An employer must produce this information, together with the registers of work in his keeping, for the inspection of the industrial authorities whenever desired."

(3) An employer must allow his employees or their representatives an opportunity of controlling the rates according to which the result, quantity and quality of work not paid by time and wages are calculated.

"The Minister of Commerce may issue regulations for estimating the value of the work for purposes of wages, applying the rates, and collating the data necessary for calculating wages and keeping the registers for entering wages, attention being paid to the special circumstances of separate industries and trades and the workmen employed on them. He may further provide for the execution of these regulations and impose penalties in case of infringement."

(4) "An employer must erect and maintain his workshops or premises, the machinery in the workshop on the premises, his tools, apparatus, and whole establishment in such a state that the health and safety of his workmen in every part of the workshop or premises is assured."

In connection with the provisions governing protection of labour, the contractor, at whose expense the work is being done, is in the case of Home-workers to be considered as the employer, and therefore the obligations with regard to protection of labour which devolve on an employer in the case of regular industrial workmen extend also to the contractor who employs Home-workers.

(5) "The jurisdiction of industrial inspectors extends in general to all business, workshops, contracts or premises, which fall within the scope of this law."

"The Minister of Commerce can regulate by administrative decree according to need those industrial premises which are to be subjected to a regular inspection by the industrial authorities, and may further determine the periods within which such inspection is to be carried out officially."

Only in the rarest cases are the contractors employing Home-workers subsidised by the State, and only then, if it is a question of employing the population of a district where the agricultural employment is not a sufficient support and there is no factory work, and the population is accordingly deprived for the greater part of the year of the means of subsistence. Government support is therefore limited to those cases where Home Work in spite of its numerous drawbacks is beneficial to the population by keeping them from want and preventing them in the end from emigrating.

In such cases, however, the contractor is always obliged, as a condition of the contract, to keep an exact register of the names and wages of his workmen, together with a central register in which a separate sheet is reserved for every workman to be closed at the end of each year. He must further provide all his workmen with books of wages in which he must accurately enter the wages paid, the advance either in cash or in materials, and any deductions that may be made, so that they tally with the data in the business books, and he must pay the wages every time in cash. It is customary to fix the minimum wage that a workman may receive.

The exact fulfilment of all these conditions is under the control of the industrial inspector; only when the latter has certified that the conditions have been duly carried out, is the annual subsidy assigned.

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AND

DIGEST OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

HOME WORK.

SESSION 1908.

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1908.

 I N D E X .

N.B.—The number after the name of each Witness refers to the answer in the Evidence.

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APPEAL BOARDS. See *Wages Boards.*

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BRIDGETT, MR. WILLIAM. (*Digest of his Evidence*.)

Is Chairman of W. Bridgett and Sons, Ltd., Lace Manufacturers and Finishers, Nottingham, Member of Nottingham Chamber of Commerce and Nottingham Finishers' Association, 1519-1524, and has made special investigations about Home-work, 1548, 1619.

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- satisfactory, 1531-1537, 1620-1623—The small amount of child labour is light and voluntary, 1538—Factory and home-workers receive, and cost the same, 1707-1712, if put into factories result would be disastrous to trade, 1569-1576, 1600, 1601.
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- Wages Board*: Nottingham manufacturers consider this unnecessary, 1730-1739, though it might benefit employers, 1610-1612—Wages for new patterns, &c., could not be fixed, 1593-1597, 1613, and friction might arise from disclosure of trade secrets, 1624, 1677-1680, 1685, while foreign competition prevents raising of wages, 1661-1664, 1668—Witness does not see how a minimum wage to workers can be assured, 1761-1763.
- Licensing*: Witness thinks these proposals would probably benefit both the trade and the workers, 1535, 1686-1695, 1702-1705.
- Export and Import Trade*: The chief foreign competition is with France, 1665-1667.

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BUCKNER, MR. NATHAN. (*Digest of his Evidence.*)

- As a Skilled Factory Machinist and ex-Secretary of the Government Workers' Branch, represents contract workers on Government and Municipal Clothing, 2497-2501, 2545, 2562, 2623, 2676, 2680.
- Wages*: Contractors for municipal work, which often involves obligatory rates, reduce expenses by paying smaller wages on other work, while there is usually no "Current Rate" for Government work, 2534-2543, 2548-2558, 2567, 2570-2572, 2574-2576, 2579, 2598, 2600, 2636-2644, 2700-2703—There is constant wage-reduction owing to competition, sub-contracting and lack of organisation among women by whom men are being ousted from factories, 2505-2533, 2547, 2573, 2585-2589, 2603, 2624-2635, 2660, 2664-2667.
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- East End Tailoring Trade*: About ten large firms in London employ thousands of hands on Government tailoring work, 2698, 2699, and are too busy to employ out work only, 2604-2612—Machinists' training, 2615-2622.
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- Machinery*: Improvement in machinery would not reduce earnings, 2667-2675.
- Foreign Competition*: No foreign competition, to Witness' knowledge, in contract or Government work, 2661-2663.

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CLARION GUILD AND HANDICRAFTS EXHIBITION. *Cohen*, 1406-1412, 1460, 1461.

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COHEN, MR. MORRIS. (*Digest of his Evidence.*)

Is a Wholesale Mantle and Costume Maker in Bishopsgate, 1367, 1432-1434, 1471-1475
 —In Witness' factory half the workers are British and large majority Jews, 1435, 1476—There is a trade union both for men and women, but it does not much benefit workers, 1436-1441, 1477, 1478, 1514-1518.

Prices Paid and Wages Earned in this Trade : Witness contradicts Miss Tuckwell's statements, 1369, 1370, and gives usual rates paid, profit on which would be fifty per cent. divided between the wholesaler and retailer, 1371-1391, 1413, 1487-1492, 1505-1508
 —Costumes are made by sectionised labour in a workshop, rates paid varying from 2s. to 7s. per day, 1392-1400—Witness challenged the statement made on costumes shown at the Clarion Guilds and Crafts Exhibition, and no satisfactory reply has been received, 1406-1412, 1460, 1461.

Home-workers : They are chiefly Englishwomen in north and south of London only who do very low class work for small wages, 1404, 1405, 1446-1452—In East End the out-work is done by tailors having workshops for their hands, 1401-1403, 1442-1444.

Wages Boards : Witness has no objection to these, though he doubts their practicability, 1414-1424, 1470—They should protect, both the middleman proper, who is a worker, and the "sub-contractor" or distributor, 1425-1431, 1453-1459, 1462-1469, 1479-1486.

Export and Import Trade : Difficulty of raising prices owing to German competition, 1470, 1503, 1504—Import is much greater than export trade, but the English-made goods are just able to hold their own, 1509-1512.

COLE, MRS. See *Home-workers (Witnesses)*.

CONCILIATION BOARDS. See *Arbitration Boards*.

CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD OF IRELAND, Walker, 694.

COOPER, MISS. See *Home-workers (Witnesses)*.

CORSET MAKING TRADE. Generally, *Home-workers*, 2827, 2881.

COSTUME MAKING TRADE. Generally, *Cohen*, 1367; *Holden*, 3589.
 See also *Sectionised Labour; Tailoring Trade*.

COUNTRY DISTRICTS. See *Wages Boards*.

D

DISTRIBUTING AGENTS. See *Middlemen*.

DILKE, RT. HON. SIR CHARLES. (*Digest of his Evidence.*)

Represents the promoters of the Bill, and describes its purpose, 3920-3922—In 1908 Witness' Bill was first drafted, 3923-3925, and in 1906 the Guildhall Conference decided that it should apply only to certain trades, 3926-3928.

Wages Boards : Witness desires experimental Wages Board for the tailoring and lingerie trades, 3929, 3921, 3989, in which sweating has been so prevalent as to cause agitation in England, America, the Colonies and Europe, 3989-3993, 4007, 4008, 4009, 4070—In these trades there should be a system of Wages Boards connected by a co-ordination Board, 3935, 3936, 3949-3957, 3970, 3994—Proper representation of Home-workers would be difficult, 3937, 3940, 3963, but their expenses could be met by the rates, 3960-3962, 3965—Factories would be disregarded in practice, 3932, 3943—Sweating could be removed by substituting piece-work rates for the lowest rates, 3933, 3934, 3945-3947, 4054—A Wages Board would not allow the raising of wages so as to injure prices, 3953, 3958, 3959, 4015-4018, 4029, 4030, 4034, 4048, 4070-4073—A revelation of trade secrets on the Board might be obviated by general rates being fixed, 3966-3969—Witness would not abolish competition between different districts by fixing a uniform wage, 3955-3988, 4003, 4005, 4026, 4027.

Licensing : Witness favours the licensing of workers, &c., as well as the sanitation proposals, 3974-3977, 4038-4043—American licensing, 4060.

Export and Import Trade : Wages Boards do not necessitate fiscal protection, 3978-3982, which does not affect the Paris lingerie trade, &c., 4045, 4046—Witness contrasts the latter with the English hand lace trade, 4047, 4051.

Employment of Children : The Local Authorities can at present prohibit this, 4042.

Factories : Witness objects to married women working in factories, 4000, 4004, 4005.

DOMESTIC WORKSHOPS : Increasing number of, *Levi*, 1244-1246, 1267, 1357.

Necessity for Licensing, *Levi*, 1274.

Discussion on distinction between Domestic (Middlemen's) Workshops and Home Workers, *Levi*, 1195-1198, 1243, 1264, 1267, 1354-1356, 1366.

See also *Report*, 5.

DONEGAL HAND WORKERS. See *Irish Home Industries*.

Douglas,

DOUGLAS, MR. DOUGLAS SHOLTO. (*Digest of his Evidence*).

Is a Manufacturer of Cardboard Boxes, 1, 2—, a Borough Councillor, School Manager, &c., in Shoreditch, 115.

Box-making: This trade comprises three hundred factories in the East End, 11, 112, 210, 240, 261, 266–269, and full employment is only obtainable for half the year, 4, 189, 190, 207–209—The profits from home and factory work are practically identical, 4, 106–110, 191–193.

Home-workers: They are principally unskilled married women, 5, 91, 204–206, whose general condition is bad, 218, 219, and although good workers can earn good wages, 72, 89–91, 218, 219, their laziness, &c., often prevents this, 123, 124, 204—There are no middle-women, prices being arranged between employers and workers, 66, 72, 132–135; the former should be compelled to remove boxes nightly, 23, 26, 27, 47–49, 86–88, 224, which would stop night work and the extensive employment of children, 39–42, 126, 127, 130, 137–142—The workers could fetch materials, 47, 119, 179–182, 231, 232—Licensing would be beneficial, 184, 189, and employers should register approved conditions of work and names of home-workers, 43, 59, 60, 188, 222.

Wages: Piece rates only are paid, 73, and payments vary with districts, employers, and workers, 10–12, 77, 82, 102, 155, 156, 163—Foreign competition has lately lowered wages, 195–197, 211–214, 262–265, 270–272, which vary in factory from 3s. to 4s. a day, 5–9, 15–18, 66–71, 92, 116–119, and a minimum wage might be fixed, 170–178—Employers should supply all materials to home-workers, 13, 14, 50–58, 68, 93, 94, 120–122, 153, 183, and this would not reduce wages, 154–158—By regular weekly payment the “express” night work would be stopped, 61–64, 233.

Wages Boards: Witness is opposed to this as not being practicable, 84, 159, 200, 230, owing to difficulty of raising rates, 65, 72–75, 95, 125, 145–147, 166–169, 227–229, 243–245, and of securing effective representation, 104, 198, 199, 201, 237–242—If Boards were established they should operate over wide areas, 82, 83, 103, 160–165, and although more practicable in London than elsewhere, 247, their establishment here would increase country competition, &c., 215–217, 246, 248, 251–258—National Boards of Supervision and Appeal Boards would not probably stop this, 247, 249, 250, 259, 260—A strong trades union, which is quite practicable, would benefit employers, &c., 76, 105, 234–239.

Licensing: These proposals are preferable to Wages Boards, 19, 20, 28–31, 85, 128, 131, 136, 148—A certificate should be granted for a sufficient reason for taking home-work in fairly sanitary quarters, 21, 24, 25, 28, 44–46, 184–186—Age-limit should be the same as factories, 32–38—This system would cause extended inspection, 143, 144, 223, 224, but would not raise rents, 149–152—“Sweating” can only be destroyed by the abolition of home-work for which legislation is inadequate, 33, 96–101, 220, 221.

E

EDUCATION. See *Sanitation*.

EXPORT TRADE. Extent in Linen Trade, *Morrish*, 4184–4189.

Reasons for increase in linen trade, *Walker*, 727, 728, 792–797, 863–868, 914, 915.

Constitutes basis of Irish Home Industries, *Walker*, 791, 842, 843.

Comprises the worst paid Industries, *Holmes*, 339, 340.

F

FACTORY WORKERS. Equality in profits for Factory and Home-workers, *Douglas*, 191–193.

Infant Mortality caused by, *Lawson*, 3058, 3059.

Relative employment of Factory and Home Workers, *Douglas*, 4, 106–110.

See also *Home Workers*; *Machinery*.

FAIR WAGES CLAUSE. Protection not afforded to Unskilled and Unorganised Trades.

Fugeman, 3462, 3468–3470, 3485, 3498, 3499.

Failure of, *Buchner*, 2553–2558, 2565–2569, 2636, 2698–2701.

See also *Wages Boards*.

FEMALE LABOUR. Scarcity of competent workers, *Aves*, 3684, 3685, 3857–3859.

See also *Wages (Decline)*.

FILE CUTTING TRADE. Generally, *Home-workers*, 2806.

See also *Vynne*, 2745.

FOREIGN COMPETITION. No effect on English Trade, *Smith*, 1101–1104, 1109–1114; *Levi*, 1282, 1283, 1337; *Cohen*, 1509, 1510; *Watts*, 2387–2390, 2393–2396, 2435, 2436, 2449–2452, 2461–2463, 2466–2477.

Suggested remedy by Tariff Reform, *Walker*, 753, 754, 758, 760, 768, 812–817, 858, 870–872, 878–884, 890–894, 924, 930, 931; *Newey*, 3185, 3186, 3194, 3195, 3279–3283, 3297–3299, 3300–3306.

Superiority:

Index—continued.

Foreign Competition—continued.

Superiority of Foreign Goods, *Walker*, 715, 720, 722-725, 769-773, 804, 839, 875-877, 894.
Cause of reduction in English Trade, *Walker*, 715-729, 732, 798, 800-803; *Bridgett*, 1667.
See also *Wages*.

FRANCE. See *Legislation, Foreign*.

FUGEMAN, MR. F. W. (*Digest of his Evidence.*)

Is Representative of the Post Office and Inspector under the Postmaster-General of the working of Clothing Contracts, 3447-3449, 3451-3456, 3533, 3534, 3581—This inspection has been beneficial in improving rates in many cases, 3457-3459, 3503-3514, 3547-3558, 3582, 3587, although sweating does exist in the factories, 3588—Where organisation is absent, the Fair Wages Clause and Wages Boards have failed to do good, 3546.

Post Office Clothing Contracts: These are allotted by open competition, 3543, 3544, 3578, by competition from selected firms, and by direct preference, 3579, 3580; although the London contracts cover the highest prices, the piece-rates are lower, 3576, 3577—Deliveries against contracts are spread over the year to ensure continuous employment, 3448, 3501, 3504, 3540, 3541—Sub-letting is forbidden, 3465—There are about eight thousand workers employed on these contracts, 3448, 3484, 3485, 3544.

Wages: Witness hands in Contract Clauses insisting on confirmation to current rates, which, however, only apply to skilled and organised labour, 3462, 3468-3470, 3485, 3498, 3499—The standards are now arrived at by comparison of various factories, 3470, 3584; Mr. Buxton is supporting the Board of Trade in determining an adequate standard by an analysis of the best Contractors, 3476-3483, 3495, 3567, 3568—Witness notices a tendency to reduce rates, 3450, 3486-3488, 3535, 3536, and gives reasons:—(1) increased competition stimulated by the late war, 3489, 3490; (2) increasing excess of female labour, especially in London, 3490-3492, 3526, 3527, 3528, 3531, 3532, 3569-3571; (3) the extensive division of labour, resulting in unskilled work, 3493, 3494, 3523-3525, fostered by improvement in machinery, 3461, and shortness of work, &c., 3459, 3460, 3529, 3530—Government work is not generally sufficient to occupy factories and insist on adequate wages, 3471-3475, 3565, 3566—"Pocket-money" and inefficient workers are most common, 3513-3522, 3545, 3576, 3577.

Home-work: This is forbidden in clothing and head-gear trades, but exists in the boot trade in Nottingham, 3463, 3464, 3496, 3497, 3544, 3559, 3560, 3585, 3586, where the Trade Union protects the Home-workers, 3537-3539, 3561-3564, 3572-3575.

G

GERMANY. See *Legislation, Foreign*.

GLOVE TRADE. Generally, *Vynne*, 2708-2744, 2749-2780.

See also *Wages*; *Wages Boards*.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS. *Buckner*, 2500 *et seq.*

See also *Wages*.

H

HART AND LEVY, LTD. Represented, *Smith*, 932.

Alluded to, *Buckner*, 2680.

HEAD-GEAR TRADE. *Fugeman*, 3463, 3484, 3498, 3567.

HOLDEN, MISS IDA. (*Digest of her Evidence.*)

Is a Home-worker connected with the Women's Labour League, 3589, 3590—She has made costumes similar to the one shown at the Bishopsgate Institute, 3591, 3592, and has been paid 1s. 3d. or 1s. 4d. each for them, 3593-3601—By working about eighty-four hours a week, Witness can earn thirteen or fourteen shillings, 3614, 3615, 3621, 3622, 3630-3634—The costumes are sold at 12s. 11d. and 16s. 11d. each, 3616, 3617—Witness has never heard of anyone obtaining the prices mentioned by Mr. *Cohen*, 3609-3613.

Middleman: Witness has always worked for a middleman, in order to obtain a sufficiently small quantity of work; she apparently does not think middleman's profit could be avoided by co-operation among the home-workers, 3602-3608, 3618-3620, 3624-3629.

HOLMES, MR. THOMAS. (*Digest of his Evidence.*)

Is a Police Court Missionary and a member of the Home-workers Aid Association, with ten years' experience among London home-workers, 274-276, 319, 322, 349.

Home-workers: Witness considers them a respectable class of people whose work is usually their sole source of livelihood, 278, 319, 332-334, 348, 350—Sometimes they are prosperous, 320, 321, but Witness gives particulars of a bad case in costume-making, 282-286, 289-299, though he admits that prices at which costumes are sold do not show excessive profit, 287, 288, 325-328, 352-356.

Wages:

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Holmes, Mr. Thomas—continued.

Wages : In some trades these have not altered, 281, 299, 342, but in most they are going down, 342–347, though not owing to machinery, 279–281, nor does the middlewoman affect wages, 335–338—The export trade comprises the worst paid industries, 339, 340—The Particulars Clause is not always enforced, 329–331.

Wages Boards : Witness is in favour of these, which he thinks are practicable and would raise wages, but not affect employment, 300–304, 311–318—Any additional cost of goods must be borne by consumer, 323, 324–328, 354.

Licensing : Witness does not think license inspection is sufficient, thorough sanitary inspection being necessary ; he mentions the classes of work done under sanitary and insanitary conditions, 305–310.

Factory Work is generally no cheaper or quicker than home-work, 281, 294—Witness gives hours of work and states that cost of power machinery is paid by workers, 292, 295.

HOME-WORKERS. National Home-workers' League, *Vynne*, 2706 ; *Lawson*, 3049. Women's Trade Union League, *Macarthur*, 1770.

Employment : Numerically. In United Kingdom, *Douglas*, 204 ; *Shann*, 555–558, 560, 564, 629, 647, 648, 657, 658, 660, 677, 685, 686 ; *Smith*, 1117, 1118 ; *Levi*, 1199–1202, 1248–1260, 1315–1317, 1353, 1363–1365 ; *Bridgett*, 1527, 1528, 1591, 1623 ; *Watts*, 2356–2364, 2478, 2479 ; *Buckner*, 2603–2613, 2653–2655 ; *Lawson*, 3063 ; *Newey*, 3136, 3229 ; *Fugeman*, 3464, 3496, 3497, 3537–3539, 3544, 3559–3564, 3572–3575, 3585, 3586 ; *Morrish*, 4220, 4221, 4256.

In Australasia, *Aves*, 3658, 3767.

In Foreign Countries, *Newey*, 3274–3277.

Range of, *Walker*, 695–709 ; *Watts*, 2391, 2392 ; *Buckner*, 2601, 2602 ; *Morrish*, 4082, 4095, 4096, 4100–4102, 4200–4202, 4208–4210.

Reasons for, *Douglas*, 72, 89–91, 123, 124, 204, 218, 219 ; *Smith*, 1092–1095, 1148 ; *Cohen*, 1404, 1447 ; *Watts*, 2276–2279, 2294–2297, 2306, 2307, 2431, 2435 ; *Vynne*, 2721–2730, 2735–2739 ; *Dilke*, 4003, 4005.

Reasons against, *Smith*, 1053 ; *Levi*, 1211, 1229–1231, 1249, 1250, 1274 ; *Bridgett*, 1569–1576, 1600, 1601.

See also *Report*, 5.

Conditions : Satisfactory, *Bridgett*, 1531–1537, 1620–1623 ; *Vynne*, 2710, 2711, 2716–2720, 2753–2756 ; *Lawson*, 3063, 3073 ; *Morrish*, 4144, 4252–4255.

Unsatisfactory, *Douglas*, 218, 219 ; *Shann*, 558–568, 630–649, 678, 679, 687 ; *Appleton*, 3382, 3383, 3396.

See also *Report*, 6–9.

Private ameliorative measures, &c., *Douglas*, 5960 ; *Macarthur*, 2231–2235.

“Independent” Home-workers in Australia, *Aves*, 3699–3706.

See also *Report*, 12–19, 29, 54 ; also *Berlin Chamber of Commerce* ; *Children, Employment of* ; *Domestic Workshops* ; *Factory Workers* ; *Legislation, Foreign* ; *Licensing* ; *Machinery* ; *Middlemen* ; *Night Work* ; *Organisation* ; *Sweating* ; *Wages* ; *Wages Boards*.

HOME-WORKERS (Witnesses). (*Digest of the Evidence of seven anonymous Home-workers.*)

Witnesses are Home-workers, two of whom and one factory hand are engaged in making baby-linen, 1842, 1851, 1857, 1874–1890, 1901, 1902, 1906, 1916–1918, 1963, 1964, 1968, 1970, 1987, 1988, 1997, earning wages from 10s. to 13s. per week for home-work, and 13s. 6d. per week for factory work, 1858, 1859, 1899, 1900, 1919–1926, 1934–1936, 1939–1945, 1948–1955, 1967, 1971–1975, 1985, 1986, 1989–1994, 2130, 2168, 2169, 2195, 2196, and make valuable comparisons in displaying examples of their work, 1879–1882, 1922, 1926, 1989–1991, 2170, 2213—The other Witnesses represent respectively:—the blouse-making trade, with wages of 9s. to 11s. per week for 12 hours' work daily, 1788, 1792–1796, 1804–1810, 1818, 1819, 1829, 1832–1841 ; racquet-ball covering, with wages up to 4s. 6d. per week for 10 hours daily, 2009–2026, 2030–2035, 2102–2111 ; shirt-making at 10s. per week for 15 or 16 hours daily, 2039, 2048–2056, 2080–2083, 2114–2116 ; and shirt-finishing at about 5s. per week for 18 hours daily, 2084–2101—Most of the Witnesses have families dependent on them, 1790, 1791, 1799–1803, 1843–1856, 1908–1914, 1937, 1938, 1946, 1947, 1950, 1966, 2003–2008, 2027, 2028, 2032, 2036–2047, 2207–2210—The evidence points to a general decline in wages within the past few years, 1830, 1831, 1891–1897, 1903–1905, 1961, 1962, 1998–2002, 2112, 2121–2126, 2162–2164—Several Witnesses complain of the waste of time waiting at the factory for work, only one Witness receiving her work through a middlewoman, 2175–2182—Opinions are divided as to whether work is more pleasant, efficient, and lucrative in a factory or outside, 1877, 1878, 1927–1933, 1956–1960, 2057–2071, 2116–2119, 2127–2130, 2203, 2204, 2211–2215—The price at which the article is sold is usually unknown to the workers, 2131–2144, 2161—Deductions are sometimes made for spoiled work, and in estimating wages, the cost of materials and carriage must be considered, 1811–1815, 1820–1828, 1860–1873, 1976–1984, 2180–2185—Witnesses do not always know beforehand

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Home-workers (Witnesses)—continued.

beforehand at what rate they will be paid, and are in favour of any measures to remedy sweating, such as a minimum wage, an Office for information about employment, licensing, and Wages Boards, so long as fairness and humanity are ensured, 2145-2153, 2157-2160, 2172-2175, 2187-2194, 2197-2201, 2205, 2206, 2216-2221.

HOME-WORKERS. (*Witnesses*) (*Digest of the Evidence of Miss Cooper, Miss Bamford, Mrs. Brophy, Mrs. Mitchell, Mrs. King, Mrs. Cole, Mrs. Somerset.*)

The Witnesses were employed on Home-work at ladies' underlinen, 2782-2788, 2932-2941; paper-bag making, 2793-2796, 2802, 2900-2906, 2921; file-cutting, 2806-2810, 2813, 2962, 2963, 3034-3038; tailoring, 2847-2859; artificial flower mounting, 2860-2874; and corset-making, 2832-2840, 2842, 2843, 2881-2894, 2948-2953.

They work at home for family and household reasons, 2797-2799, 2877-2880, 2895-2899, 2914-2918, 2986-2989, and because of the ill-effects of factory work, 2810, 2827-2831, 2841, 2844, 2845, 2944-2947.

They are practically all prejudiced against legislative interference or Wages Boards, which they think would tend perhaps to equalise skilled and unskilled rates, 2789, 2800-2805, 2822-2826, 2904-2910, 2925, 2927, 2931, 2942, 2954-2961, 2965-2968, 2975, 2993, 2994, 3001, 3002, 3009-3012, 3019, 3020, 3039, 3042-3047, though some agree that a minimum rate could not affect the highly skilled workers, 2790, 2791, 2908, 2909, 2919, 2923, 2968-2978, 2990-2992, 2999, 3000.

HOOK AND EYE TRADE. *Shann*, 557 *et seq.*; *Lawson*, 3053, 3062; *Newey*, 3134.

See also *Children, Employment of*; *Wages*.

HOWARTH, MR. E. G. (*Digest of his Evidence.*)

Is the author of a book on social conditions in West Ham, materials being obtained direct from home-workers, &c., 358-365.

Wages: These vary considerably for the same work, 516, 517, and have lately decreased, 513, owing to increasing machinery, 514, 515, and tendency of workers to cut prices, 445-449, 543-545—Equal wages in factories do not necessarily mean small profits, 383-385, 389, 390—Particulars given of a home-worker earning 8d. per day of 18 hours, 427-432, 436-439, 499, 548, 550.

Home-workers: More supervision on the part of the Medical Officers would improve the efficiency of the present registration, 365-372, 461, 462, 474, 476, 518-520, 534-536—The status of workers varies, the poorest being the least efficient, 373-379, 410-416, 443, 444, 454-456, 542.

Wages Boards: Witness prefers these to Licensing, 480, 521, 522, and advocates their trial, 391-393, 481, 487, 492-498, 523, 524—They should only fix prices, 459, 460, 506, 507, they would thereby standardise wages, 394-401, 496, 500, 501, reduce middlemen, and improve factory home-workers' condition, 403-409, 433-435, 453, 457, 546, 547, although competition with factories would prevent an artificial standard of wages, 387, 388, 393, 402, 471-481, 488, which would destroy home-workers, 422-426, 502, 505, 525-531, 539-541—The difficulty arises in the organisation of home-workers, 477-479.

Licensing: The present system has improved sanitation, 508-512—Witness considers registration essential, 466, 467, 470, 473, leaving sanitary questions to Local Authorities, 463-468, 477, 532, although licensing would drive many into factories and leave the rest unemployed, 489, 490, 533, 537, 538.

I

INFANT MORTALITY. See *Factory Work*.**INSPECTION.** Beneficial effects of Post Office Inspection, *Fugeman*, 3457-3459, 3503-3514, 3547-3558, 3582, 3587.

Increased inspection desirable, *Smith*, 936, 937, 939, 1038, 1078, 1079, 1090; *Dilke*, 3976. See also *Licensing*; *Sanitation*.

INTERNATIONAL (WAGES) CONFERENCE. See *Wages Boards*.**IRISH HOME INDUSTRIES.**

Industries represented: Crochet, *Walker*, 732 *et seq.*
Embroidery and Drawn Work, *Walker*, 696 *et seq.*
Hosiery, *Walker*, 699 *et seq.*
Lace, *Walker*, 696 *et seq.*
Spinning, *Walker*, 710 *et seq.*
Generally, *Walker*, 694.

See also *Export Trade*; *Wages*; *Wages Boards*.

IRISH LINEN TRADE. See *Linen Trade*.

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J

JEWISH LABOUR. *Levi*, 1169 *et seq.*

JOHNSON, JOHN, AND WATTS, LTD. See *Watts*.

K

KING, MRS. See *Home-workers (Witnesses)*.

L

LABELLING. Failure of regulations to check undesirable competition, *Aves*, 3718, 3719.

LACE TRADE. Nottingham Lace Finishers' Association, *Bridgett*, 1523.

Generally, *Lawson*, 3049; *Appleton*, 3334.

See also *Home-workers*; *Irish Home Industries*; *Sweating*; *Wages*; *Wages Boards*.

LAWSON, MISS EDITH. (*Digest of her Evidence.*)

As Honorary Secretary of the National Home-workers' League, Witness chose the London Home-workers who appeared before the Committee, and has studied conditions in the tailoring trade at Leeds, in the hook and eye trade at Birmingham, in lace-making at Nottingham, and in artificial flower and cardboard box making in London, 3049-3054, 3064, 3067-3069, 3077, 3099, 3116, 3117—She wishes to express Home-workers' views, 3055.

Wages Boards: Witness agrees with the Home-workers and objects to Wages Boards, because only the most efficient workers would be employed in England, and factories would be started abroad, 3066, 3070, 3071, 3075-3079, 3083-3098, 3105, 3126-3131.

Home-Work: Infant mortality is increased by married women working in factories, but Witness is not in favour of legislation to stop this, 3058, 3059—Child labour only exists in the hook and eye trade in Birmingham, 3061, 3062—, Home-workers' houses are particularly clean, 3060, 3063—In London very few poor Home-workers, many earn 20s. weekly, 3063, 3077, and none wish home-work abolished, 3073.

Wages: No different rate of payment for home and factory work, though some prefer bad pay to a factory, 3056, 3057—8s. a week is a poor wage, but not necessarily sweating, 3118-3123—Witness would welcome the raising of Home-workers' wages, but Nottingham minimum tariff is not successful, 3124, 3125.

Sweating: Witness found few cases of this, and thinks its prevalence exaggerated, 3080-3082, 3100-3104—Small earnings often keep workers out of workhouse, 3106-3110, and factory workers often earn less than Home-workers, 3101, 3113.

Home-workers introduced by Witness: See *Home-workers (Bamford, Brophy, Cole, Cooper, King, Mitchell, Somerset)*.

LEGISLATION, FOREIGN. Methods of regulating Home-work, Appendix 4-7.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (AUSTRALIAN) COMMITTEE ON SWEATING. See *Sweating*; *Wages Boards (Australasian)*.

LEICESTER. See *Clothing Trade*; *Glove Trade*.

LEVI, MR. ABRAHAM. (*Digest of his Evidence.*)

Is President of the Master Tailors' Improvement Association, 1166, 1318-1322, which is composed of middlemen, 1169, 1295, 1319—He contradicts Mr. Daly as to a deterioration, due to the "Jewish element," in the tailoring trade, 1167-1169, 1212-1215, 1232-1235, 1247, and asserts that Miss Squire's evidence is not substantiable, 1228.

Tailoring Trade: Witness illustrates the high wages paid to Jews (principally) in middlemen's workshops for cheap work, 1174-1185, 1193-1206, 1209, 1210, 1216-1219, 1286-1289, 1296, 1297, 1304, 1334-1336, and better-class work, 1170-1173, 1220-1227, 1298, 1299, 1308, 1309—, these rates are often better than those of factories, 1229, 1255, and have lately improved, 1284, 1285, 1327—The trade is half-yearly, for about 55 hours a week, 1186-1191, 1279, 1280, 1328-1330, 1338-1343—Reduction in hours would be an advantage, 1241, but workers are scarce in busy seasons, 1311-1314, though there is no night-work, 1192, or sweating, 1206, 1207, 1242—The machinery is only used for cheap export work, 1344-1352—Foreign competition has affected the shops, but not Witness' trade, 1282, 1283, 1337, though prices are finely cut, 1300-1303, 1305-1307—Witness contradicts the statement of Mr. Evans that only 6s. is paid for coat-making in the West End, 1358-1362—Examples of prices paid to middlemen, 1178, 1257, 1271, 1331-1333.

Middlemen: These are manufacturing contractors dealing with the shops, 1251-1254, and not mere distributors, 1261-1263, 1265, 1266, 1268-1270.

Home-workers: Witness distinguishes between the Home-workers of middlemen's workshops and the single Home-workers, 1195-1198, 1243, 1264, 1267, 1354-1356, 1366—, the latter are a great evil, 1229, 1230, 1274, and compete largely with the middlemen, 1211, 1231, 1249, 1250—Few only are Jews, 1199, 1200-1202, 1248-1256, 1258-1260, 1315-1317, 1353, 1363-1365—There is a tendency for the workshops to close down in favour of domestic workshops, 1244-1246, 1267, 1357.

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Levi, Mr. Abraham—continued.

Wages Boards: Jews would welcome a proper Board, 1236, 1239, 1240, but Witness objects to proposed methods, 1236, 1237, and suggests that in each district an independent gentleman should arbitrate, 1237, 1238, 1275-1278—No need to fix minimum wages, 1272, 1273—Domestic workshops should be licensed, 1274—Wages Boards would raise wages and shorten hours, 1290-1293—A former Wages Board fell through owing to lack of organisation among the workers, 1323-1326.

LICENSING. Of Home-workers desirable, *Douglas*, 19, 20, 28-31, 34, 37, 38, 85, 128, 136, 148, 184, 189; *Howarth*, 466, 467, 470, 473, 489, 490, 533, 537, 538; *Smith*, 936, 937, 939; *Bridgett*, 1686-1688; *Home-workers*, 2219; *Dilke*, 3974-3976.

Considered inadvisable or unimportant, *Holmes*, 305; *Shann*, 617-620; *Walker*, 704-708, 755, 757, 832, 838, 854; *Watts*, 2445-2447.

Suggested licensing of employers, *Smith*, 948, 1033, 1034, 1036, 1037, 1039, 1080.

Should apply to middlemen, *Smith*, 1052.

Administration of, *Douglas*, 44-46, 144, 223, 224; *Howarth*, 465; *Smith*, 1035-1039; *Dilke*, 3977.

Proposed registration of Home-workers by employers to prevent transference of licences, *Douglas*, 43, 188.

See also *Report*, 28, 30, 31, 54. Also *Child Labour*; *Domestic Workshops*; *Inspection*; *Wages Boards*.

LINEN TRADE. Generally, *Morrish*, 4075.

See also *Export Trade*; *Wages*; *Wages Boards*.

LONDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. *Morrish*, 4078.

M

MACARTHUR, MISS MARY R. (*Digest of her Evidence.*)

As Secretary of the Women's Trade Union League, Witness brought seven Home-workers to give evidence, who, with one exception, are non-unionists, 1770-1784, 2253, 2254.

Home-workers: Witness gives some particulars of the Home-workers whose evidence the Committee has heard, 2222-2231, 2240, 2241—Improvements in home-work conditions of racquet-ball making are being attempted, 2231-2235—It is almost impossible to organise London Home-workers, 2245-2248.

Middlewomen: If middlewomen prove indispensable, it would be desirable to provide that their profits should be at a fixed rate, so that workers get full minimum wage, 2236-2239, 2242-2244, 2255-2270.

Wages Boards: Although under a minimum wage the earnings would depend on skill, the less skilled workers would benefit, 2249-2252.

MACHINERY. Increasing use of, *Newey*, 3147-3149, 3160, 3161, 3217, 3220, 3221, 3246-3251, 3274, 3310-3317.

Limited or declining use of, *Douglas*, 3, 273; *Walker*, 812, 813; *Smith*, 1134-1138; *Levi*, 1344-1352; *Watts*, 2302-2305, 2406, 2457-2460, 2464, 2465; *Aves*, 3802.

Superior to handwork, *Walker*, 715, 720, 722-725, 769-773, 875-877; *Newey*, 3153, 3154.

Does not lessen cost of production, *Newey*, 3150, 3151, 3278.

See also *Report*, 36. Also *Home-workers*; *Wages*; *Wages Boards*.

MANTLE MAKERS. Generally, *Cohen*, 1367.

MATERIALS. Should be provided to Home-workers by employers, *Douglas*, 13, 14, 56-58, 68, 93, 94, 153, 183; *Watts*, 2298-2301, 2317, 2402-2405.

Suggested restriction in use of, *Douglas*, 50, 55, 120-122.

MELBOURNE. See *Wages Boards (Australasian)*.

MERCHANDISE MARKS ACT. See *Wages*.

MIDDLEMEN—MIDDLEWOMEN. Employment of, *Smith*, 1050; *Levi*, 1261-1263, 1265-1270; *Cohen*, 1401-1403, 1442-1444; *Home-workers*, 2175-2178.

Not necessary or not employed, *Douglas*, 132-135; *Holmes*, 335-338; *Smith*, 1120, 1121; *Watts*, 2386.

Abolition considered undesirable, *Walker*, 822-824; *Bridgett*, 1529, 1530, 1539-1542; *Macarthur*, 2242-2244, 2255-2270; *Newey*, 3137-3140; *Holden*, 3602-3608, 3618-3620, 3624-3629; *Morrish*, 4093, 4094, 4176, 4214-4216, 4244, 4247-4250, 4293, 4294.

See also *Domestic Workshops*; *Home-workers*; *Sweating*; *Wages*; *Wages Boards*.

MINIMUM RATE. Feasible for factory work, *Douglas*, 170-178.

Impossibility of fixing, *Smith*, 938, 957-970, 979-981, 983-993, 997-999, 1003-1009, 1042, 1059-1062, 1079, 1129-1131, 1151, 1157-1165; *Bridgett*, 1761-1763.

Futility of Nottingham Home-work Tariff, *Lawson*, 3124, 3125.

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Minimum Rate—continued.

Highly-skilled workers not affected, *Home-workers*, 2790, 2791, 2908, 2909, 2919, 2923, 2968-2978, 2990-2992, 2999, 3000.

See also *Report*, 35, 36, 38-55; *Appendix*, 1, 2. Also *Wages; Wages Boards (Minimum, Rate)*.

MITCHELL, MRS. See *Home-workers (Witnesses)*.

MORRISH, MR. GUY P. (*Digest of his Evidence.*)

Is a member of the firm of Welch Margetson and Co., manufacturing shirts and collars in Bermondsey and Londonderry, 4075-4077, 4080, 4082, is Vice-President of the London Chamber of Commerce and Convener of Shirt and Collar Makers' Committee of Derry Merchants, 4078, 4079.

Home-workers: About twenty-five thousand of these are employed, 4220, 4221, 4256, and their wages are less than in factory, 4093, 4096, 4103, 4271, 4274—They are farmers' wives in the country and work with their families, 4082, 4095, 4096, 4100-4102, 4200-4202, 4208-4210, and a family of five can earn 39s. per week, 4097-4099, 4242, 4243—Work is sent out by factories to distributing agents, 4093, 4094, 4176, 4249, 4250, 4294, who are not really middlemen since a marked price is paid to worker, 4176, 4216-4219, 4244, 4247, 4248, 4293—Collar-workers in Derry are paid the same piece rates at home as in factory, 4105-4111, 4211, 4212—Condition of Home-workers in country is superior to that in the town, 4144, 4252-4255.

Wages Boards: Witness objects to interference between capital and labour, 4116, 4260, 4288, 4291—Many difficulties would arise from the question of representation, 4125, 4218, 4232, 4233, and the difficulty of fixing minimum rate for all processes, &c., 4120-4122, 4129, 4157-4164, 4179, 4181, 4228, 4229, 4280, 4500, and he foresees difficulties arising from varying wages, &c., in different districts, 4140-4146, 4178, 4230, 4231, 4261-4263—Witness objects also to the term "Trade Council" in the case of a single trade and to the proposals as to the election of Chairmen, &c., 4149-4154—If prices were raised throughout the United Kingdom export trade might be injured, 4234, 4235, 4257.

Sweating: No good employers wish this, 4116-4119, 4165, 4172, 4190, 4191, 4222, and Witness knows little of such trade, 4190-4195, 4265—He objects to the title "Sweated Industry Act," 4163, 4168, 4169, 4197-4199, 4207—The cheapest class of work is naturally done by the very poorly-paid labour, and if that were abolished the industries would die, 4135-4139.

Export and Import Trade: Witness does a large export trade to Europe and South America despite tariffs, 4184-4189—Shirts imported to England from Belgium are made up by sweated industry in London, 4134, 4139.

Derry Linen Trade: General scope of this trade, 4083, 4236—Particulars of wages paid by Witness' firm, 4080, 4086-4092, 4174, 4182, 4183, 4203-4206, 4238, 4239, 4266, 4267, 4271-4285.

Remedial Measures: Witness suggests Arbitration or Conciliation Boards enforcing their decision by pressure from trade unions, 4122-4128.

MUNICIPAL CLOTHING CONTRACTS. See *Buckner*, 2500 *et seq.*; *Clothing Trade*.

N

NEWY, MR. J. G. (*Digest of his Evidence.*)

Is a member of a Birmingham hook and eye firm and gives evidence about home-work in carding, &c., 3134, 3135.

Wages: Are similar throughout Birmingham, foreign competition, not machinery, having so reduced them, that they can only be supplementary, 3159, 3169-3174, 3187-3191, 3205-3209, 3212-3216, 3252-3254, 3292, 3293, 3316, 3318-3324—Home-work and factory rates compared, 3141-3146, 3152, 3162-3167.

Wages Boards: Witness approves of Wages Boards, if Protection were ensured, and of a universal minimum wage for factories, and another for home-work, his objections being the difficulty of finding home-work representatives and of showing novelties on the Board, 3175, 3185, 3186, 3192, 3194-3203, 3222-3224, 3243-3245, 3261-3263, 3300-3309, 3326.

Home-work: There are five hundred Home-workers under Witness' firm, work being usually taken and returned by the women themselves, 3136, 3229, and if home-work decreased many would be thrown on the rates, 3230-3233—There are no deductions, 3260—The hours of work, 3168, 3210, 3211, 3234-3237.

Sweating: Witness denies that he or Americans pay sweated prices, 3273, 3294-3296, and gives particulars of a concocted sweating case, 3210, 3211, 3226-3228.

Export and Import Trade: All Witness' output is subject to foreign competition, so that, to make minimum wage useful, Protection is necessary, 3176-3184, 3191, 3238-3240, 3255, 3256, 3264-3272, 3275-3285, 3297-3299, 3325, 3330, 3331—Witness sells much cheap stuff in Canada and Australia, 3327-3329, 3332, 3333.

Machinery:

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Newey, Mr. J. G.—continued.

Machinery: Witness' firm alone in England uses machinery for this work, forty per cent. of output being so done with slightly increased cost but greater efficiency, 3147-3156, 3160, 3161, 3217, 3220, 3221, 3246-3251, 3274, 3310-3317.

Hook and Eye Carding Trade: Chiefly established at Birmingham, is seasonal and increasing even with foreign competition, 3193, 3225, 3241, 3242, 3257-3259, 3286-3291.

Middlewomen: These are numerous, and take a commission of 1d. on every pack, but most Home-workers deal direct with the masters, 3137-3140.

Child-labour: This is prevalent in factory and home-work, 3162, 3204, 3218, 3219.

NIGHT WORK. Possible prevention of "express" system by nightly removal of home-work by employers, *Douglas*, 48, 49, 63, 64, 126, 127, 233.

Impossibility of this, *Watts*, 2318, 2319, 2397-2401, 2459.

Possible prevention by weekly payments for home-work, *Douglas*, 61-64, 233.

See also *Report*, 54. Also *Children, Employment of*.

NOTTINGHAM. Chamber of Commerce, *Bridgett*, 1522.

See also *Home-workers; Lace Trade; Wages Boards*.

O

ORGANISATION. Difficulty or lack of, among Home-workers, *Smith*, 1089; *Macarthur*, 2245-2248; *Buckner*, 2506, 2507, 2525, 2526, 2573; *Appleton*, 3383, 3385, 3387, 3390-3398, 3406-3408, 3436-3440; *Aves*, 3691, 3692.

Trade Unions desirable, *Douglas*, 76, 105, 234-236, 238, 239.

Small benefit to workers, *Cohen*, 1436-1441, 1477.

See also *Fair Wages Clause; Female Labour; Home-workers; Licensing; Wages; Wages Boards*.

P

PAPER BAG MAKING TRADE. Generally, *Home-workers*, 2793 *et seq.*

PARTICULARS CLAUSE. Lapse of, *Holmes*, 329-331.

"**POCKET-MONEY**" WORKERS. See *Wages*.

POST OFFICE CLOTHING CONTRACTS. Generally, *Fugeman*, 3447.

See also *Inspection; Sweating; Wages; Wages Boards*.

R

REGISTRATION. Objections to present system, *Dilke*, 4039, 4041.

Suggestions towards perfecting, *Howarth*, 474-476.

See also *Licensing; Middlemen*.

S

SANITATION. Satisfactory, amongst Home-workers, *Watts*, 2382-2384; *Lawson*, 3060, 3063.

Unsatisfactory, *Holmes*, 306-309.

Improvement in, *Douglas*, 19-21, 149; *Holmes*, 305-310; *Howarth*, 365-372, 461-468, 476, 477, 508-512, 518-520, 534-536; *Bridgett*, 1535, 1686-1695, 1702; *Dilke*, 3974, 4003, 4038-4041.

Suggested dependence of licences on, *Douglas*, 21, 22, 24, 25, 184, 186.

See also *Report*, 54. Also *Home-workers; Licensing; Wages Boards*.

SCOTTISH COUNCIL FOR WOMEN'S TRADES. Legislation suggested by, *Vynne*, 2731.

SEASONAL TRADES.

Instances: Baby-linen Trade, *Home-workers*, 1955.

Blouse-making Trade, *Smith*, 1106.

Box-making Trade, *Douglas*, 4, 189, 190, 207-209.

Clothing Trade (Leicester), *Smith*, 1106.

Hook and Eye Trade, *Newey*, 3257-3259.

Lace Finishing Trade, *Bridgett*, 1567, 1568, 1579-1588, 1690-1701.

Tailoring Trade, *Levi*, 1186-1191, 1279, 1280, 1328-1330, 1338-1343.

SECTIONISED LABOUR. In Costume-making Trade, *Cohen*, 1392-1395.

See also *Wages*.

SHANN, MR. GEORGE, M.A., F.R.E.S. (*Digest of his Evidence.*)

Represents the National Anti-Sweating League, 551, and was the Organiser, &c., for the Exhibition of Sweated Industries, 554, 612, 640—He has studied conditions in Glasgow and Birmingham, his evidence dealing chiefly with the latter, 551-556, 634, 635, 680-684.

Shann, Mr. George, M.A., F.R.E.S.—continued.

Hook and Eye Carding : About ten thousand women Home-workers are employed in this in Birmingham, 560, 564, 657, 658, 677, 685, 686, although they work 40-60 hours a week, 561, 562, 567, it is impossible to earn a living wage, even when children are employed, 558-568, 630, 631, 643-649, 678, 679, 687—This trade is being introduced into factories and machinery used, 557, 558, 629, 647, 648, which will eventually oust Home-workers, 555-558, 648, 660—Foreign competition and apathy of workers are causes of wage reductions, 650-656.

Box-making : Comparison between machine and hand-work in Birmingham, 569-577, 581, 582, 589, 594, 666, although nearly twice as many working hours at home as in factory, earnings of latter are four times as great as former, 578-587, 591, 599, 601, 603-607, although Witness admits that the figures given are inaccurate, 587, 590, 594-600, 602—The low wages paid to men compel women to take in home-work, 564, 602-606, 608-611—The statistics in "Daily News" Sweated Industries Exhibition were guaranteed by experts, 613-615—The profits to employers are not great on home-work.

Wages Boards : Witness is strongly in favour of these, 620-664, which would, however, stop home-work almost entirely, 623, 670-675, which is extremely desirable, 632, 642, 661-665, 676, 692, 693, although factory rates should be raised, 624-628.

Licensing : Although Witness does not think this is of much importance, it should not be difficult if inspection be in the hands of local authorities, 717-720.

Mantle Making : Witness is unaware that his statistics in regard to this have been challenged, 641.

SHIRT AND COLLAR-MAKERS' COMMITTEE, LONDONDERRY. *Morrish*, 4079.

SHOREDITCH. See *Douglas*.

SMITH, MR. ALFRED. (*Digest of his Evidence.*)

Represents Hart and Levy, Ltd., Clothing Manufacturers, Leicester, 932-935.

Leicester Clothing Trade : The firm chiefly employs factory workers, 1091, 1115, 1146—There are middlemen in the trade, 1050—In certain classes the trade is perennial, 1106—Foreign competition has not affected their trade, 1101, 1102-1104, 1109-1114, but there is a cheap class of imports from Ireland, 1029-1032—Many Home-workers employ children, 1083-1088.

Machinery : Some Home-workers use machines, and in factories there is some power machinery, 1134-1138—Classes of work are largely determined by the amount of machine work necessary, 971, 1062, 1063, 1139-1141, and thus at the probable minimum of Wages Boards average workers could still earn a fair living on cheaper classes, 971-977, 982—There is always a decrease in wages where there is competition between hand and machine work, 1064, 1065.

Home-workers : Witness considers well-regulated Home-workers desirable, 1053, those in Leicester number about one hundred and fifty : 1117, 1118, and are a highly respectable class, 1147, 1154, 1155, earning 12s. to 16s. weekly, 1057, 1116, 1153, 1156, although rates for home-work are usually lower than factory-work and profits greater, 1092-1095, 1148—They are unorganised, 1089—"Pocket-money" and supplementary wage-earners are rare, 1105, 1149, 1150.

Middlemen : They augment sweating, 1049, 1051, and are dispensable, 1120, 1121.

Wages : Rates vary owing to localisation of different classes of work, &c., 1142-1145, and have slightly increased in the last five years, 1100—Wages are based on piece-work, 1058, but middlemen often employ half-day labour, 1152.

Remedial Measures : Witness suggests licensing and registration, increased inspection and Central and District Wages Boards, 936, 937, 939, 1038, which would supersede trade unions, 1078, 1079, 1090—Each employer should obtain a licence to employ home-work, 948, 1033, 1034, 1036, 1037, 1039, 1080, which, together with a schedule of the wages, and a return of his Home-workers and Middlemen, 948, 1044-1047, 1052, 1081, 1082, should be approved by the Board, 940-943, 946-956, 1045, 1047, who should have power to cancel licences, 945, 948, 1035, 1039, 1040—Middlemen should register their Home-workers and wages, 1052, 1124, 1125, and Home-workers should complain direct to District Boards, 944, 1041, 1043, 1048, 1077, 1122, 1123, 1126-1128—Intimidation would not be practised under this system, 1072-1075—Witness insists on the impossibility of fixing minimum wages, 938, 957-959, 979-981, 993, 997-999, 1003-1009, 1042, 1060, 1062, 1079, 1129-1131, 1162, 1163—The stability of a trade in any district would be dependent on the judgment of the Board, 1010-1018, 1022, 1024, 1025, 1066, 1070, 1107, 1108, as is exemplified in the Leicester hosiery trade, 1019-1021, 1026-1028 ; —wages there are above normal, and the tailoring trades permanency is due to their superior work, 1067-1069, 1071—Wages are now successfully arranged between employers and workers, 994-996, 1000, 1001, 1119, 1132, 1133, but a fixed rate would reduce to minimum all superior classes, 960-970, 983-992, 1059, 1061, 1151, 1157-1165—There is a great difference between fixing and controlling wages, 1023, 1055, 1056

—*Witness*

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Smith, Mr. Alfred—continued.

—Witness has not considered the question of nomination of Boards, 1076, but considers adequate representation of Home-workers possible, 1096-1099.

SOMERSET, MRS. See *Home-workers (Witnesses)*.

"**SPECIAL BOARDS.**" See *Wages Boards (Australasian)*.

SUB-LETTING. Prohibition of, *Fugeman*, 3465.
See also *Report*, 55. Also *Sweating*; *Wages*.

SWEATED INDUSTRY BILL. Should only be applicable to certified cases of sweating, *Morrish*, 4163, 4168, 4169, 4197-4199, 4207.
Promotion of, *Dilke*, 3920, 3929 *et seq.*

SWEATING.

Extent: Non-existent or of rare occurrence, *Walker*, 820, 821, 841-853, 885-889, 919-923; *Levi*, 1192, 1206, 1207, 1242; *Watts*, 2334-2338, 2345, 2346, 2365-2373, 2407; *Lawson*, 3080-3082, 3100-3104; *Newey*, 3210, 3211, 3226-3228, 3273, 3294-3296; *Morrish*, 4116-4118, 4165-4172, 4190, 4191, 4222.

Instances of, *Holmes*, 282-286, 289-299; *Howarth*, 427-432, 436-439, 499, 548, 550; *Morrish*, 4192-4195.

Augmented by middlemen, *Smith*, 1049, 1051.

Favoured by local conditions, *Vynne*, 2708, 2709.

Combined municipal and commercial work resulting in sweating, *Buckner*, 2542, 2548, 2570-2572, 2597, 2598.

Importation of sweated goods, *Morrish*, 4134-4139.

Payment of low rates not necessarily sweating, *Aves*, 3707-3712.

See also *Report*, 2-4.

Regulation: Inability of Fair Wages Clause and Wages Boards to remedy sweating, *Fugeman*, 3546, 3588.

Agitation originated by Church workers, *Dilke*, 4001, 4002.

Suggested abolition of low-class work, *Morrish*, 4135-4139.

Abolition of home-work necessary to obviate sweating, *Douglas*, 33, 96-101, 114, 129, 220, 221.

Reduced by Wages Boards and prohibition of Sub-contracting, *Aves*, 3848, 3849, 3882-3884.

Pernicious effects of Sweated Industries Exhibitions, *Vynne*, 2729, 2733, 2757.

"Daily News" Sweated Industries Exhibition, *Shann*, 554.

Report and Recommendations of Select Committee of Legislative Council on working of Wages Boards in Australia, *Aves*, 3733, 3743.

See also *Middlemen*; *Wages*; *Wages Boards*; *Wages Boards (Australasian)*.

SWITZERLAND. See *Legislation, Foreign*.

T

TAILORING TRADE. Amalgamated Society of Tailors, *Buckner*, 2497.

Master Tailors' Improvement Association, *Levi*, 1318.

Generally, *Smith*, 932; *Levi*, 1166; *Buckner*, 2497; *Home-workers*, 2846.

See also *Vynne*, 2708 *et seq.*; *Sweating*; *Wages*; *Wages Boards*.

TRADE UNIONS. See *Organisation*.

TRUCK PAYMENTS. Rare occurrence, *Walker*, 825-827.

See also *Report*, 50, 54. Also *Wages Boards (Australasian)*.

U

UNDERLINEN TRADE. Generally, *Home-workers*, 2782.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. See *Legislation, Foreign*.

UNSKILLED LABOUR. See *Fair Wages Clause*; *Wages*.

V

VOLUNTARY BOARDS. See *Wages Boards*.

VYNNE, MISS. (*Digest of her Evidence.*)

Represents the National Home-workers' League, which has three thousand members, and whose object is the protection of Home-workers, 2704-2707, 2745-2751.

Home-workers: The average general condition of Home-workers is satisfactory, 2753-2756, and the Report of the Chief Sanitary Inspector of Glasgow also shows the sanitary condition of the homes is good, 2716-2720—The majority of Home-workers depend actually on their work for their livelihood, 2714, 2715—They work at home for family and

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Vynne, Miss—continued.

and household reasons (the low rate of infant mortality in Yeovil being largely due to this), 2721-2728, because of the disadvantages of factory life for girls, 2729, and when they are too infirm to leave home, 2730.

Sweating: This exists independently of home-work, only where local conditions favour it, 2708-2709.

Wages Boards: Home-workers are much against legislation, which they find decreases amount of work given out, especially to more unskilled workers, 2707, 2729, 2732, 2733, 2759, 2765, 2772, 2774, this effect is also produced by the Sweated Industries Exhibitions, where only worst classes are shown, 2729, 2733, 2757—The Bill promoted by the Scottish Council on Women's Trades is least objected to, 2730.

Glove Trade: This is very prosperous and fairly paid in Yeovil district, 2710, 2711, 2740, 2741, where the low wages of agricultural labourers necessitate their wives taking home-work, 2735-2739—In Leicester the woollen glove trade is unskilled work done by the old and infirm, 2711-2713.

W

WAGES.

Examples: Baby Linen Trade, *Home-workers*, 1858, 1879, 1883-1886, 1893-1897, 1905, 1921-1926, 1940, 1951.

Ballmaking Trade, *Home-workers*, 2009-2026, 2030-2035, 2102-2111.

Blousemaking Trade, *Smith*, 1057; *Home-workers*, 1788, 1792-1796, 1804-1810, 1818, 1819, 1829, 1832-1841, 1986, 1989-1994.

Boxmaking Trade, *Douglas*, 5-9, 15-18, 66-71, 92, 116-119; *Shann*, 569-611, 625; *Watts*, 2280, 2289-2291.

Costume-making Trade, *Cohen*, 1371-1391, 1413, 1447-1450, 1487-1492, 1505-1508; *Holden*, 3593-3602, 3631.

Hook and Eye Trade, *Shann*, 557-568, 648, 649; *Newey*, 3165-3175, 3212-3214, 3227-3234.

Irish Home Industries, *Walker*, 710, 715, 717, 736, 744, 820, 848, 850, 852.

Lace Trade, *Bridgett*, 1566-1568, 1652-1664; *Appleton*, 3413.

Linen Trade, *Morrish*, 4080, 4086-4099, 4174, 4182, 4183, 4203-4206, 4226, 4238, 4239, 4242, 4243, 4267, 4271-4285.

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