

The COMMISSIONER.—If they are engaged by the week I should say that at the week's end they are entitled to a week's pay.

Mr. LOVE.—If they are off a day, a day's pay is taken off.

The COMMISSIONER.—I mean that if they come in and you don't have work for them that is your look out.

Mr. STRACHAN.—You see now that a multitude of girls are drawn into the business with a view to learn something which will enable them to make their livelihood. They go in with the idea that they are going to learn the trade thoroughly. But each has to take a certain position and goes from there to the machine. She leaves there in a few years perfectly helpless so far as to being able to complete any branch of the work outside of her own department. She should be able to learn, so that in two or three years she could know every department instead of as now being dependent upon one.

The COMMISSIONER.—As I understand it, the tendency of the system is the division of labour. We get experts in one particular line. If you put them through all the trade would they be experts?

Mr. GUROFSKY.—There are men in this city who have been three years in the trade and are not capable of earning \$6 per week. Girls are the same way working three years at the same thing. Advertisements frequently appear for girls to learn coat making. They go and at the end of six months if they inquire when they are going to start to learn the trade they get fired. I don't say that these gentlemen would do it.

Mr. LOVE.—As I said before, I don't think any wholesale man here takes a girl in to learn the trade. You cannot compel that to work. There is no agreement. If I take a girl as apprentice I give her \$1 per week for the first three months. It lies with herself what particular branch she will learn after that. I would not guarantee to learn them a trade.

Mr. O'DONOGHUE.—My object was—in leading this discussion—that seeing that the term apprentice had been used so often as to convey the impression that there was an apprenticeship system—and I wanted to show that there was no system as that term ought to be applied.

The COMMISSIONER.—My object was to know if there was such a thing as overloading the market with apprentices in order to cheapen labour?

Mr. LOVE.—If a girl finishes for me and there is some fault found, or she leaves, she goes somewhere else and gets work in a similar department, thus making way for another.

Mr. FEDDER.—I understand, Mr. Commissioner, that you asked if the market was overcrowded with workers.

The COMMISSIONER.—Yes, but I said—“Is it because of too many apprentices?”

Mr. FEDDER.—It is because there are too many idle working people on the market. Apprentices have also something to do with it. I want to clearly understand from these gentlemen for what purposes they are taking the apprentices on. For favour to the apprentices or to themselves? If there was more labour than labourers it would of course be all right. What has made it necessary to take these apprentices on? One gentleman says he takes an apprentice on at one dollar a week for three months and that the wholesale trade is divisional. Now it does not take three months to learn the simpler branches. When a girl stays over a month she becomes worth two dollars per week. By the end of three months she is surely worth four dollars, if she keeps to one branch. They have more experienced hands in the market knocking at the door for work, but by taking on apprentices the bosses are making money. A girl three months at one branch understands that branch as well as a girl who has been at it three years and she ought to receive the same wages.

Mr. LOVE.—I have taken on apprentices in our sense of the word who have been very good with the needle, and started them with three dollars per week. But those we refer to particularly have just left school, and the majority of them have never had a needle in their hands. Now, for a man to say that a girl just over fourteen who has never had a needle in her hand is worth three dollars per week in three months time is saying that my experience goes for nothing. The great trouble I have is to learn them to sew—to get them so broken in as to know what to do and how to do it.

Mr. FEDDER.—One branch does not take long to learn.