

twelve weeks, average £1 2s. 5½d.; £13 1s. 10d. for thirteen weeks, average £1 0s. 1½d.; £11 0s. 5d. for eleven weeks, average £1 0s. 0½d.; £14 14s. 6d. for thirteen weeks, average £1 2s. 8d. Average, including given holidays—Good Friday, Easter Saturday, Easter Monday, Queen's Birthday—£1 1s. 7d. per week. This, you will notice, includes Easter and the half-holiday given at the time Ladysmith was relieved. We closed last Easter from Thursday night to the following Tuesday morning. Now, I do not think these are poor wages for girls to earn, including occasional absences from other causes.

12. *Mr. Laurenson.*] What are the number of hours worked per week?—Forty-seven and three-quarters.

13. *Mr. Bollard.*] I understand you say that, so far as wages earned are concerned, you are perfectly satisfied to be brought into line with any other part of the colony on a weekly basis?—Yes.

14. It is piece-work you take exception to?—Yes. All manufacturers should have the privilege of paying what they consider a fair rate for any piece-work, provided it secures to the workers a wage equal to the rates fixed by the Arbitration Court or Conciliation Board.

15. *Mr. Tanner.*] You are agreed as to the wages, but you say that the methods of working should not be interfered with?—Yes.

GEORGE HENRY BLACKWELL in attendance and examined. (No. 3.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—George Henry Blackwell.

2. You are managing director of the Kaiapoi Woollen Company, are you not?—I am, Sir; but I am not appearing here in that capacity. I appear here as the representative of the Canterbury Employers' Association.

3. You desire to give evidence in connection with this Bill, do you not?—Yes. The Committee of the Association met and considered the Bill, and as a result they have drawn up their views, a type-written copy of which they have authorised me to submit to the Labour Bills Committee. I have here type-written copies of their recommendations, which I will submit to you.

4. Are these recommendations confined to new matter?—There are one or two general recommendations which are not in the Bill. I may say, Mr. Chairman, that the views of the Canterbury Employers' Association are fully expressed in the type-written copy which I propose to submit to you.

5. Have you anything to say in connection with the matter, or do you simply put these in for the Committee?—There is a clause in the new Bill which we are not at all clear about. I think we have embodied our views fully in the statement in regard to subsection (3) of clause 86, in order to see how far that might meet the case mentioned by the Judge of the Arbitration Court. With regard to subsection (3), "power to extend the award," the Committee were in doubt as to whether that amended clause simply referred to the industrial district or whether it would be made applicable to the whole colony.

6. It is intended to be applicable to the whole colony?—The Committee understood that if the award applied to Wellington it might be extended to Petone, and in other towns in the district.

7. Is there any other point you desire to give information upon?—I should like to emphasise the last clause in the recommendations: "The Canterbury Employers' Association desire to impress upon the Government that they are thoroughly in accord with the principles laid down in the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Any hostility they may have shown in the past was mainly due to the fact that the Act was made to apply to a certain section of the industrial community only. The Government now propose to remove this, and if the Bill now before the House is amended in the directions suggested by the Association they are strongly of opinion that it would be impossible to conceive of a more useful measure, properly administered, that would prove of such immense benefit to all sections of the industrial community; and with this in view the Association urge upon the Government to reconsider their determination not to allow this Act to apply to all workers under the Crown." There is no antagonism now, whatever there may have been in the past. We desire to co-operate in making the present Bill a good, workable measure. Now, as managing director of the Kaiapoi Woollen Company, I should like to say that I interviewed the Committee last year on the same subject, and a remedy was sought to be obtained. I hope the desired amendment will be made, so that the award may be made universal throughout the colony on interchangeable commodities.

Hereupon the witness submitted the following statement in writing to the Committee:—

*Recommendations by the Bills Committee of the Canterbury Employers' Association, re the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill.*

The Parliamentary Bills Committee of the Canterbury Employers' Association have considered the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, at present before the House, and have agreed to make the following recommendations:—

The Committee are of opinion that the Conciliation Boards, as at present constituted, are absolutely useless, and would prefer that no provision should be made for them rather than they should be continued on existing lines.

The Committee desire further to express the opinion that if Boards of Conciliation could be made expert in their constitution good work would be accomplished, and the demands made upon the time of the Courts of Arbitration would be considerably less than at present. A large number of disputes are more or less of a technical character, and ought, therefore, to be dealt with by persons who understand not only the technical terms of the trade but the effect of proposed alterations which might emanate from either party to the dispute.

The Committee suggest that five central Boards of Conciliation should be established—namely, at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Westport. The last-mentioned place, being the centre of a large mining district, and removed by a great distance from Wellington and Christchurch, where mining interests are not specially represented, a Board would be a special convenience to that district.

The Boards should consist of a sufficient number of employers and workers—say twenty-four of each—to ensure that all trades or occupations would be represented. A dispute being lodged with the Registrar in respect to any industry or calling, the Board would then elect from its own members a Special Board, consisting of four persons, together with a permanent Chairman, to deal with this particular dispute, two at least of which should be experts in the trade or calling associated with the reference to the Board.