

25. And you do not see any possible way of granting the holiday as suggested under this Bill—the term holiday, or other provision?—The quarterly holiday?

26. Yes?—I do not raise any strong objection to the quarterly holiday in lieu of the half-holiday, but I do say that I should have the right to fix that with the employee, and that it should be understood to be fixed so that I can arrange the details of my business to fit in with it.

27. If you consider it is desirable that a man should work for seven days in the week in the trade, without having even the option of the Sunday, or some part of the week, do you not think your opinion would be prejudicial to the existence of legislation that covers general industry, where they get a Sunday in the week, and have limited hours of employment?—We are forced into the position of having to keep open for seven days in the week, and under those circumstances we certainly cannot employ extra and special labour to meet one day. Supposing you have got a chef—a cook. You cannot afford to keep two chefs in order to give one a weekly holiday.

28. Do you not think it would be possible to handle the staff so that the employees would be able to get Sunday off?—It is quite possible to do almost anything, but the surrounding circumstances require to be considered.

29. Have you many boarders?—I have a few.

30. Have you a chef?—No, we have a cook.

31. I can see the difficulty with regard to having a responsible man in a very large kitchen, but in the smaller places I do not see the difficulty?—I take it legislation has got to provide generally for the conduct of hotels.

*Mr. Poole:* Yes, but when examinations are taking place it is necessary to try and cover every avenue of information.

32. *Mr. Fraser.*] I do not think the witness gave any evidence with regard to the effect of legislation overriding a decision of the Arbitration Court?—What I said was this: that Mr. Pryor went so fully into all that that it was unnecessary for me to say anything further.

33. You do not think it necessary to say anything?—No, I concur in what he said.

34. *Mr. Glover.*] Did I understand you to say (I may say I know something about this matter myself) that during the period that the employees are not so busily engaged they are actuated by a desire to create a feeling of unrest among the employees?—Very frequently.

WILLIAM JOHN WATERS, Proprietor of the City Hotel, Dunedin, examined. (No. 7.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You wish to give evidence on this Bill?—Yes.

2. Are you a member of the Licensed Victuallers' Association?—Yes.

3. Do you hold any office?—Yes, I am a member of the executive. I will read the following memoranda concerning proposed amendments to "The Shops and Offices Act, 1908," and their probable effect on licensed victuallers in particular: According to the present practice, no employee in a hotel works more than sixty-five hours per week. During a fair proportion of this time the employee is not actually working, but has merely to be on the premises in case any occasion for his services may arise, and, as employees usually reside on the premises, it is evident that, although their hours of employment are nominally sixty-five, they are really, in most cases, very much less. A reduction of hours of employment to sixty per week, and, in the case of females, fifty-six hours, would necessitate an increase in the staff, which, in view of the fact just mentioned, seems unreasonable. In a hotel with, say, sixteen or seventeen of a staff, such a reduction of hours would necessitate the employment of at least three additional hands. This, together with the increase in staff and wages consequent upon the recent arbitration award, means a very considerable increase in the expense of conducting a hotel, and, at the same time, means that there is less accommodation for boarders, room having to be found for the additional hands. If this reduction of hours is proposed with a view to putting New Zealand hours of employment on the same basis as Australian, it should be remembered that the work is heavier there, and, owing to climatic conditions, much more trying; also, as we understand, wages are lower there. The proposal that every employee should have one week's holiday every three months, if carried out, would completely revolutionise hotelkeeping business. To take an illustration, in a fair-sized hotel, an extra cook, and extra kitchen hand; in fact, an extra hand in each of the larger departments of hotel-work, as well as a casual hand or hands, would have to be engaged. This would entail not only the payment of wages for these hands and reduction of the accommodation available for boarders, as mentioned above, but also increased wages for those already employed, in accordance with the scale of wages embodied in the Arbitration Court award. Sixty-five hours are for those employed in the kitchen. My staff there consists of a chef, a second cook, and a third hand. The chef gets £3 5s. per week, the second cook £1 17s. 6d., and the third £1 5s. In order to keep up the efficiency of the staff, if the hours were reduced to sixty hours, it would necessitate another hand being employed in the kitchen. The moment that hand comes into the kitchen, the chef's wages go up from £3 5s. to £3 15s., the second cook goes up from £1 17s. 6d. to £2 5s., and the third remains the same, and there is the extra hand, who would get £1 5s.

4. *Mr. Fraser.*] That is according to the award?—Yes. If the hours were reduced I should have to put on another hand, for which it would cost me, as I have shown, £2 2s. 6d., to give those people reduced hours. In addition to that, of course, is the cost of their keep—that is, 15s. per week, as laid down by the arbitration award. That is the difference it would make to me in the kitchen if the hours were shortened. And the same would apply to an extent to the other branches of the house. That is an instance of how it would work.

5. How much do you say it would cost you extra?—£2 2s. 6d. per week increase in the kitchen alone.

6. Apart from keep?—Yes, that is in addition to the increase of wages that were granted by the arbitration award of 27 to 29 per cent. all round. From a consideration of these facts it will be evident that the proposed amendments would bear very heavily on all classes of hotelkeepers,