

JOHN BEVERIDGE, Proprietor of the Grand Hotel, Wellington, examined. (No. 8.)

Witness: I am a member of the Licensed Victuallers' Association executive. I should like to indorse, Mr. Chairman, what Mr. Pryor has said about legislative action overriding an Arbitration Court award. It is going to be very hard on us, this regulation, if it comes into law. When the Arbitration Court award was made, the Dominion was in a much more prosperous condition than now. We claim that at that time hotel employees had greater consideration than the employees engaged in other industries, in so far as that the concessions they got were very big concessions. At that time, with everything prosperous, we quite conceded that the employees should have a fair share of what was going. At that time the hours were reduced from seventy-two to sixty-five, and the wages were raised from £1 5s. to £1 7s. 6d. They had hours of overtime arranged and overtime rates arranged. We had the hours specified in which they should work, and they had board and lodging allowed them, and altogether they had a very fair award. Since then the conditions have altered very materially, and, if this Bill which it is proposed shall go through now should come into force, it is going to have this effect: that it will absorb to a great extent all the profits that some hotels are making. I say that advisedly. We would therefore ask that the existing state of affairs should be allowed to remain, for these reasons, as I said before: that when the Dominion was in a better position we conceded those reductions, and also for the reason that the cost of living now has risen so much, for this affects us very materially, and now that there is a surcharge it is going to affect us very much more. Further, our profits are cut down in so far as that on every case of spirits there is 8d. put on, and 16s. a hogshead on other things, and that all affects our profits.

The Chairman: Can you not give smaller nips?

Witness: No; unfortunately, we have to hand over the bottle. For these reasons we ask that the existing conditions be allowed to remain—that is, sixty-five hours covering all the conditions of the trade. Now, I am prepared to show from some figures I have here, Mr. Chairman, what it will cost in hotels such as I am conducting if the provisions of this Bill become law. I am taking my own hotel as an example of how the one holiday a week would work. And I may say that these are winter conditions. The summer conditions would result in much heavier charges.

Example if One Whole Holiday in One Week is granted.

The number of employees would be as under:—

	£	s.	d.
7 kitchen hands	15	15	0
4 pantry hands	5	5	0
9 dining-room hands	14	10	0
5 hall staff	4	10	0
6 usefals and night-porters	6	15	0
6 housemaids and linen-maid	4	15	0
6 barmaids	9	15	0
3 clerks	4	0	0
1 barmaid	1	15	0
1 storeman	2	7	6
48 total staff, at a weekly wage of	69	7	6
Average weekly wage per head	1	4	8
Additional number of employees necessary			7
Additional cost per week, 7 at £1 4s. 8.	8	12	8
Additional cost per year—			
Wages, 52 weeks at £8 12s. 8d. per week	448	18	8
Board and residence, 7 staff at 15s. per week for 52 weeks	273	0	0
Total	721	18	8

If term holidays be granted—say, seven days every three months—this means that for every eleven months' work each member of the staff receives twelve months' pay, viz.:—

	£	s.	d.
4 weeks' wages to 48 on staff, at £4 18s. 8d. per month	236	16	0
4 weeks' board and lodging at £3 per month	144	0	0
Plus Wages to relieving staff	£236	16	0
Board and lodging to ditto	144	0	0
	380	16	0
Total	761	12	0

No man runs his business with more hands than he requires. If it takes forty-eight hands to run my business, and a whole holiday is to take effect—that is, a six-day week instead of a seven-day week—I must of necessity, to keep up the efficiency, augment the staff to the extent of seven more persons. If that is done, and the number of extra employees that I shall have to take on being seven to keep up the efficiency of the establishment, the additional cost of the seven, at £1 4s. 8d. per week, will work out at £8 12s. 8d. per week. So that the cost for the year will