

21. Do you mean, then, that ordinary profit in such a risky business would not be considered a good profit—what might be considered a good profit in ordinary business would not be so considered in yours because of its inherently risky nature?—Yes, a proprietor of another business would naturally be satisfied with a lower profit than in ours. Even that profit would not be a profit on the capital invested in a steady business. I mean to say that the profits I may make under this new arrangement would not be considered in a settled business, even where they have twenty or thirty years to go, without risk of being forced to close up.

22. If the provisions of this Bill become law, the profits will be decreased very much?—There will be no profits. In many cases there will be none left. I would rather be a worker than an hotel-proprietor.

23. *Mr. Poole.*] Do you derive more profits from the bar than from the accommodation at your house?—I have had no profit from the house. I am on the debit side of the ledger as regards the house; and I do not think any hotel in this or any city can show a profit.

24. Are you aware that local option is not directed against your accommodation-house, but against your bar?—Yes.

*Mr. Poole:* I just wanted that to be understood.

JAMES GODBER, Restaurant-keeper and Confectioner, Wellington, examined. (No. 9.)

*Witness:* I do not know why it was necessary to put at the end of clause 2 “and also a shop carried on in conjunction with a restaurant,” because I consider shops like the ones I occupy are restaurants, and, although I am not of a legal mind, still, I think it is considered to be so, especially as I have the authority of some of the leading members of the Labour Department in making a statement to that effect.

*The Chairman:* You object to those words?

*Witness:* No; it merely makes assurance doubly sure, so I think it is just as well that they should be inserted, because then there certainly cannot be any doubt at all about it.

With regard to clause 5, I am glad that Mr. McLaren is here. He raised the question of twelve hours being a long time for any employee to be worked in connection with restaurants. But he must know that you can only work them in that way once or twice in any one week. You must give them proportionate hours—shorter on other days. The reason twelve hours is necessary is because on our very busy days—Saturday, for instance, is always a very busy day—it requires the whole of our staff to compete with the business of that day—in fact, if it were not for the business of that day we should get no profits for the rest of the week, and therefore we want to have the privilege of working the assistants for twelve hours on the one day, or perhaps on the day before a holiday—before Christmas Day and New Year’s Eve. We do not wish to infringe on the fifty-six-hour week, but we wish to have the word “twelve” inserted in the Bill instead of “ten.” The other clauses have been dealt with by the other speakers.

I just wish to refer to clause 8. You heard Mr. Beveridge state just now that he has thirteen hands walk off on Mondays, and so many on Tuesday, and so on, and it will naturally occur to your minds that an alteration as regards the half-holiday is necessary. It is impossible to say when the half-holiday is to be fixed, because the half-holidays are altered every week in our business, and it is altogether unnecessary and unworkable, this clause 8. It is impossible for us to comply with these conditions. It would require as much assistance as could be given by those who have been retrenched from the public service of the colony.

Mrs. EMMA SPILLER, Waitangi Boardinghouse, Wellington, examined. (No. 10.)

*Witness:* I have been working under the Arbitration Court award for two years, losing money the whole time. I had to increase wages to about £3 per week. Now, if they bring in the Bill I am sure I shall have to go out of it.

(Mr. Palmer, by permission of the Chairman, asked the witness the following questions.)

1. How many boarders can you accommodate?—I think about fifty just now—fifty to sixty, as a rule. And my staff, as a rule, numbers ten, but it is at present eight.

2. You will not be able to carry on if this proposed Bill becomes law?—Oh, no! I could not. Business has resulted in much less profit than it did previously.

3. The conditions under which you are working would not permit of any further restrictions?—No. If there were any further restrictions I could not possibly keep it up.

4. *The Chairman.*] Have you had a conversation with other boardinghouse-keepers on the subject?—Yes, with a great many of those in Wellington who are in a large way.

5. And you express their views?—Yes.

6. Have any of them gone bankrupt?—Yes, the Albemarle has. The Columbia has changed hands four times.

7. *Mr. Palmer.*] Then the boardinghouse business in Wellington is in a deplorable state?—Yes, it is in a deplorable state.

8. *A member.*] You do not suggest, do you, that the present state of affairs was brought about by the law?—No, but there is no doubt about the position at present. I give my staff good hours. Why do they not protect us by seeing that the persons we employ are competent before they are allowed to come into the house? I got six cooks in a week, and none of them were competent; but you have got to pay them the money all the same.

*The Chairman:* You had better write to Mr. Pryor about that.

9. *Mr. Poole.*] Can you estimate the increased cost of running a boardinghouse now and before the Arbitration Court award?—Yes; my wages come to £3 a week more since the award.

10. Do you feel inclined to blame the award more than the general depression in trade for the present condition?—Yes, the depression is not so great a factor.