

a difference in wages and the cost of keep of £340 a year. I can safely say that my business is not one able to stand such an extra charge as that. We have a business to carry on without any security about it, because it might end at the next election, and it is not fair to cripple us to such an extent, and that is what I think this Bill would do.

2. *Mr. Bollard.*] I understood you to say it is not impossible to carry out the provisions of this Bill with regard to the servants, but the expense would be so great that you would have to close up?—That is so. We have passed through exceptionally quiet times in the hotel business for some time past, and if the business does not improve there are many of us who will not be able to pay our way, and if you pass a Bill like this we shall not be able to stand it.

3. Can you not "pass it on"?—No, that is out of the question, clearly. People, after staying with us for a day or two, always ask for a reduction.

4. *Mr. McLaren.*] What hours a week are the housemaids on duty at the present time?—By taking it daily we can get at it better. They start about half past 6 in the morning and work until half past 2. During that time they have breakfast and dinner. In the afternoon one stays on and the other goes off. I have two.

5. With regard to the one that stays on after half past 2, to what hour does she continue?—Until 6 o'clock, and then she goes and has her tea and finishes for the evening. The other then comes on and sits down and perhaps reads or sews until 10 o'clock; but she may be called to get a can of water or something of that kind. They each get every second Sunday off.

6. How long has your night-porter been employed with you?—He has been two years acting as day-porter and now nine months as night-porter.

7. Are these men changed very often?—No, not very often. All my employees have been with me a good space of time.

8. You have a fair knowledge of the conditions in hotels generally?—Yes.

9. Do men in this class of employment move about to any extent?—So far as concerns myself, no. My chef has been with me four years.

10. I speak generally?—I cannot say, but friends that I know keep their employees a good length of time.

11. You said that the passing of the Bill would mean an increase in the number of your staff, the financial burden of which you could not bear?—That is so.

12. Do employees in your trade have any consideration given to them—do you share the profits with them at all?—No. If prohibition were carried in Wellington at next election I should have no profits at all, and they would have to go without their wages.

13. Are you not asking them to share your losses when you ask for certain conditions to be restricted?—I am asking that the restrictions be left as they are. My employees, I think, would answer that they are perfectly satisfied with the way they are treated, if they were asked.

14. *Mr. Fisher.*] You said that your housemaid was employed from 6.30 a.m. till half past 2 in the afternoon?—Yes.

15. And that when one was off from that time the other one would be employed from 6.30 a.m. to 6 at night?—Yes, including the time for the three meals, when it is her turn; but she only does a little reading and sewing, except for a call occasionally.

16. Still, she is continuously under your orders?—Yes, but there is no arduous employment about it. She has practically finished work at half past 2.

17. Can you tell me, roughly, how many guests you have staying with you during the year?—No. My house has gone down to six resident boarders. At other times it rose to between thirty and thirty-five, and it clearly shows that the servants we have have not much to do.

18. You have considered the Sunday Labour Bill, and you consider it would mean the employment of three additional assistants and would amount to £340 a year?—Yes.

19. Have you no chance of passing that on to your guests?—I charge 6s. a head per day now, and they would not stand it. They would go to the private hotels.

20. Is not the real cause of the trouble due to the fact that you are paying too much rent?—If you get it down to bed-rock I suppose that is so.

21. But you would not have to pay this increase; the landlord would have to pay it?—I have a lease now for five years, and, if I cannot get something out of it, what is the use of it to me?

SYDNEY KIRKCALDIE examined. (No. 22.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are a partner of the firm of—?—Director of the firm of Kirkcaldie and Stains (Limited), and I also come as a representative of the Employers' Association. In the first place I may say that it is felt by the Employers' Federation that this Shops and Offices Bill as brought down now, being so distinctly at variance with the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, requires more than ordinary notice. The bringing-forward of such a Bill as this can only be taken as evidence that the Arbitration Act has failed in its intention. This Bill is evidently promoted to secure for a certain section of the community different conditions of labour from those the Arbitration Court has already definitely decided upon. We feel that if this sort of thing is allowed to continue, and if employers who enter into recognised obligations under the Arbitration Court have to submit themselves to all the provisions which Parliament thrusts upon them overriding the Arbitration Court's decisions, we shall never know where we are. We are quite prepared to accept either one or the other—either Parliament or the Act—but we cannot have both. That is manifest; otherwise we come back to this position: that labour may use the Arbitration Act for what it is worth, taking all the advantages they can get, and then, having obtained the maximum under that Act and not being satisfied, they can then appeal to Parliament. We suggest that Parliament should adopt one course or the other—it should either stick to the Act,