

are worked differently from European laundries. We rely on people who bring their clothes to the laundry before we have any work to do, and we must keep open to allow them to do so. We have no depots like the European laundries to gather their clothes.

16. How about the sanitary conditions about the Chinese shops here?—Several of the Chinese laundries are asphalted and concreted, and the sanitary conditions are very satisfactory

17. You have been here over twenty years?—Yes.

18. And you know the conditions of the Chinese laundries as well as those of the Europeans?—Yes.

19. Are the Chinese worse than European places, or are your conditions in any way dangerous to the community in regard to health?—Some of our laundries are far cleaner than those of the Europeans, and, as far as I can understand, the sanitary arrangements are satisfactory

20. Give one or two facts. In what way are they as good or as healthy as the European places?—I can speak about my own laundry. The Inspector says it is as clean as any European laundry.

21. Could you tell the Committee here why the Chinese take up the laundry-work, and why they do not get to any other occupation?—When they come here first they are very poor, and they have not got sufficient funds to go in for gardens or fruit-shops, they must get into some business, and consequently start a laundry

22. As I understand, in your petition to the House you ask for three things—first, fifty-four hours per week, which would be about nine per day, and really but a little more than the Bill provides for. Why do you want the fifty-four hours?—Because sometimes we have to start late, and if we are compelled to work merely the forty-eight hours we should be unable to carry on.

23. Is that all you have to say about that?—In regard to the 7 o'clock, that would be impossible in our case: people do not bring in their clothes until 8 o'clock or a little later; and if we have to close at 7 we shall have nothing to do.

24. You want your shops to be closed at 9 o'clock on ordinary nights and 10 o'clock on a Saturday night? Why do you want such a privilege?—People do not come in for their clothing until night-time, especially on Saturday nights, and it is for the convenience of customers.

25. Why do you ask that the wages-book should be kept in Chinese, considering that you are in an English country?—We do not understand how to write English, and we cannot get any one to do it for us. We are able to keep it in Chinese.

WILLIAM PRYOR, Secretary, Employers' Federation, examined. (No. 3.)

*Witness.* I am dealing with the Bill generally, but perhaps it might be for the convenience of our Chinese friends here if I just deal with the laundry question first. With regard to clause 3, dealing with laundries, we say that if it is the intention or desire of the Government to regulate the work in Chinese laundries and to restrict the hours, the clause as drafted will not do it. Evidently the desire of the drafters of the clause has been to make the same conditions applicable to European as well as Chinese laundries, and in order to get some restrictions on the operations in Chinese laundries, further restrictions have been placed upon European laundries than are apparent under the present Factories Act, which controls them now. We say, first of all, that it would be manifestly unfair—and we are sure it is not the intention of the Government or the Committee—to place further restrictions on the Europeans unless the Bill has the desired effect in the other direction. We further say that unless Parliament can meet our objections, and make the clause quite effective as regards Chinese laundries, the clause should not be included at all. We consider that no further restrictions should be placed on European laundries. Competition from Chinese laundries is a very serious matter as far as European laundries are concerned. There can be no question about that, because, notwithstanding Mr Tong's surprising evidence about the laundry in Grey Street, in Auckland, the fact remains that European laundries are run on factory lines in a great majority of cases. There may be some exceptions, but very few: you may have the exception of a woman taking in washing, and that kind of thing. And by reason of the operation of the law, and the reason of having some method, as distinct from our friends' want of method, the hours are from 8 until 5 on ordinary week-days, and 1 o'clock on Saturdays. Mr. Hwang will probably reply that there is the question of the depots and the delivery-carts. Now, I submit to you that to suggest such a thing is very ridiculous. There may be an exceptional case where it has occurred, but to suggest that it was a regular thing to have depots for the receipt of laundry-work and carts for its delivery going till all hours at night appears to me to be quite ridiculous. My point is that the agencies are shop agencies, and if they are employing labour they can only employ it for fifty-two hours a week, and in many cases are compelled to shut down by the operation of the law. As far as drivers are concerned, there is no section of workers throughout the Dominion more controlled by Arbitration Court awards. They are confined to 47 or 47½ hours, and if any work is done over that time they have overtime rates, and the employers will not pay those rates if they can get out of it. So that you can see there is not much in this point that has been made. Turning now to clause 3, subsection (1), 'In every laundry in which two or more persons (whether employees or not) are engaged the following provisions shall apply': Now, the evidence we have heard here so far shows that there are very few Chinese laundries employing labour—that the great majority are either places where there is one man working for himself or two working in partnership. We are inclined to think (Mr Hwang will not take it offensively, I am sure) that if this Bill goes through, there will be a change in the shops where two or more are employed. I very much misjudge the cleverness of our friends if they could not get outside that. Where two or more are employed now, the immediate effect would be that the two would not be employed or the two would not be in partnership very soon after it came into operation. In Auckland, Mr Tong said, six or seven laundries employed labour, and I think that may