

7. How many cattle are slaughtered there in a year?—12,801 head of cattle, 1,956 calves, 119,904 sheep and lambs, and 4,110 pigs. That was for the year 1910-11.

8. And the increase in wages was only to fifteen men?—I have the authority of the secretary of the union for that.

9. *Mr. Fairbairn.*] The increase in wages represents about a farthing a carcase increase in price?—Yes. The retail butchers' assistants have received no increase in wages at all.

10. *Mr. Veitch.*] Can you give us an estimate of the increase there has been in the selling-price of meat?—I could not say definitely, but I believe that the price has doubled during that period. I am not going to say that the retail butchers have reaped a profit. I do not know.

11. *Mr. Fairbairn.*] Did you say that there has been any increase in the wages of members of the Grocers' Assistants' Union?—Yes, 5s. a week. About ten years ago they were receiving £2 a week—that is, those over the age of twenty-one. About four years ago they received an increase of 5s. a week, but the age was raised to twenty-three years.

12. Did they shorten the hours?—No, the hours come under the Shops and Offices Act.

13. How many assistants would an average grocer employ, taking a moderate business?—I could not say. I should say there would be about sixty or seventy assistants in Dunedin in the union.

14. How many grocers are there?—I could not say. A large number employ no labour at all.

15. What is about the greatest number of assistants in any grocery establishment here?—I should think about seven or eight.

16. It does not follow that they are all getting the minimum wage?—No.

17. *The Chairman.*] We will now pass on to the next question?—I stated that the bakers have had no increase during the last ten years, but I believe an increase was granted outside the award. I do not know whether that has been loyally abided by by the employers. There has been an increase to the lower-paid men. The next subject is the building trade. I might say, first, that carters or drivers play a part in the carriage of goods. During the last ten years they have had an increase of about 2s. a week.

18. That would add to the cost of distribution?—Yes, slightly.

19. *Mr. Robertson.*] What is a carter's wage?—Under the present award they are receiving, where a stableman is kept, £2 7s. a week for driving and attending to two horses, and £2 3s. for one horse. Where no stableman is kept they get £2 8s. and £2 4s. That is for men in constant employment. There are other drivers who are not in constant employment—who lose time through wet weather and holidays. They receive, where a stableman is kept, £2 9s. for two horses, and £2 5s. for one horse; and where no stableman is kept, £2 10s. and £2 6s. That is the position at the present time. Previous to that the wages were £2 6s. and £2 2s. for constant hands. Taking it all round, the increase would be about 2s. a man. The carpenters during the last nine years have received an increase equal to 1s. 10d. per week, or $\frac{1}{2}$ d. an hour. They received that $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in 1911. Up to then it was 1s. 4d. Painters have had no increase during the last ten years. Plasterers have had no increase, and bricklayers have had no increase. The plumbers during the same period received an increase in the case of those who passed a certain examination. Only a small number would qualify in that way. They received an increase of 2d. an hour. It is quite recently that they got that increase.

20. *Mr. Veitch.*] About what proportion of the total number would that cover?—I could not say, but it would be very small. In the furniture trade the workers have received no increase during that period. I cannot think of any others that would affect the cost of living. Those cases I have taken out of the Books of Awards. The increases which have been given would make hardly any difference in the cost of the articles. There are other unions which have got substantial increases, but there has been no extra charge made to the public. In some cases the charges to the public have been reduced.

21. *Mr. Fairbairn.*] We had an instance of that in the case of Westport coal: can you give us any others?—There are the tramway employees.

22. But that is a municipal concern?—That is an argument in favour of the further extension of the principle of municipalizing and of nationalizing industries. Then there are the hotel employees, restaurant and tea-room employees: they have all during the past two or three years received substantial increases in wages, but there has been no extra charge to the public that I know of. Barmaids are getting as high as £2 a week now. Barmen's wages have gone up considerably. Waitresses' wages have just gone up by over 50 per cent., but none of the increased charge has been transferred to the public.

23. *The Chairman.*] Is it a common opinion among working-men that the cost of living has risen?—Yes. I may say that I have been for fifteen years directly associated with the labour movement in Dunedin. I have taken part in the formation of about 75 per cent. of the unions in existence in Dunedin to-day. I come into close contact with the members of all those unions. It is the opinion of the members that the cost of living is steadily going up. I have only lived in two houses in Dunedin. The house I am living in at present I have been in for between fourteen and fifteen years. I paid 11s. 6d. a week rent when I entered the house, and I am paying 15s. a week now.

24. Is the quality improving by age?—All I have received in return has been a built-in copper, washing-troughs, and a bath fixed in the washhouse, and improved sanitary conveniences. That is all I have received for the increase of rent by 3s. 6d. a week. I estimate that the improvements represent 1s. a week.

25. *Mr. Fairbairn.*] What would you estimate the value of the property at?—I have been trying to purchase it. £450 is what they asked, and they came down to £430.