

4. *Mr. Davey.*] I have a copy of the statement you made to Mr. Massey : have you anything new to add to that ?—I do not think so, only that the matter is urgent so far as Dunedin is concerned, because we are faced with a new award which will stand for three years if made.

5. *Mr. Clark.*] Have you the right to a permit from the Inspector of Factories if you pay overtime ?—We have the right to apply, but not to demand one.

6. Has it ever been refused ?—Frequently refused. I will just give you one instance. An Inspector in Auckland, when a case was brought before him, stated that a carter, if he were at a distance of a mile or two from his stable, found his time was up, it was his duty not to finish the work of delivery, but to take the balance of his goods back to the stable and finish the delivery next morning.

7. *Mr. Glover.*] Supposing you keep your people working up to 6 o'clock in the evening, do you think that a reasonable time ?—You take the conditions under which a carter works ; he is subject to weather-conditions ; he has a certain amount of work to do ; he gets a load out during a certain part of the day which under ordinary conditions would allow him to get back in good time ; but say it comes on wet, his work is done under very unfavourable conditions, and it takes him very much longer. But according to the verdict of the Labour Department, when a man has worked up till the ordinary time it is his duty to leave the work undone until next day, notwithstanding that the employer would recognize that he was entitled to overtime for the work done. Our point is that the discretion lies entirely with the Inspector, who is not acquainted with the conditions, to say whether the work is special work or not.

8. *Mr. Okey.*] If the man came back half an hour late, would you be liable to a fine ?—It is a breach of the award.

9. And if you were continually going to the Inspectors they would not give you permits ?—Our experience has been that they resent being asked for permits.

10. You may expect a man to be back, but if he is a quarter of an hour late would you have to get a permit ?—That is the position, and it really constitutes to our mind an absurdity. The Inspector will tell you, supposing that circumstances arise under which you cannot ask for a permit that night, that if you post an application for a permit it will be all right, and we really get a permit from the Inspector to work our man the night before it is granted.

11. *Mr. Clark.*] Has he ever refused in such a case ?—I cannot say he has.

12. *Mr. Okey.*] You are really in the hands of an Inspector ?—Yes.

13. Have any of your assistants complained of the request you are making, that you should have the sole right to say whether they should come back at night and work overtime ?—I think most of them would regard it as a privilege, especially married men. They do not mind coming back a few nights and earning money in the shape of overtime. We do not want anything for nothing, and they recognize it.

GEORGE HEALE examined. (No. 14.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Representing ?—The Empire Hotel, Wellington. We employ a staff of thirty-eight people. I have just come along to answer any questions you may wish to put to me. I am not here to say anything particularly one way or the other. I think I have very fair views with regard to the position of employee and employer. I know what the proposed Bill will cost us if passed : it will cost us over £500 a year, and from the amount of money supposed to be made by the Empire Hotel, at any rate, I do not think we can possibly meet the expense and keep going. I do not think there is any profit at all in the business. The little profit made in the bars goes to maintain the house for the welfare of the public. Ours is a commercial house, and most of our customers would be opposed to an increase in the tariff, and if you increased it by 2s. 6d. a day they would be very much affected.

2. *Mr. Okey.*] What number of a staff do you employ ?—Thirty-eight.

3. Have you got room in your hotel for the additional number of hands you would have to keep on under this Bill ?—No, a great many sleep out now. We would like to provide rooms for them, but we cannot, and have to pay a great deal of money for their outside keep.

4. You say that your house is mainly kept for commercial travellers ?—Yes, it is a commercial house.

5. Have you any families residing there ?—Yes.

6. Do you find that class of trade increasing ?—Many people would be glad to come along, but we cannot take them in at the amount they want to pay.

7. An increase in the tariff would drive that class of trade away altogether ?—They would have no chance. We could not take them in.

8. Are your employees dissatisfied ?—I never heard of one being dissatisfied. I have never had a complaint.

9. Have you heard of the Bill being discussed amongst your employees ?—No.

10. Do you think they are aware that this Bill is before the House ?—Some may be, but I do not think so. I have never heard anything about it. I think they are all very well satisfied. Mr. Carey could bear me out when I say that there has been no complaint from any one. They have never come to me from the union to make complaints. We have been looked upon as a happy family for the last four years.

11. Do you think the Arbitration Court, which is composed of experts able to take evidence, is the best tribunal to deal with a question like this, without anybody coming to Parliament to get really behind the Court ?—Yes, I think the Arbitration Court would be more fitted to deal with this question.

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