

17. *Mr. Veitch.*] That is governed by the award, is it not?—Yes.

18. But is it not a fact that that award goes out of existence if you got other legislation?—It would now, because really it has expired, but we are working under it until superseded by a fresh award.

19. Is there not a clause that takes it out of operation?—No. It has a protective clause at present. In Auckland we are supposed to work sixty-five hours a week, but I can assure you we do not. We cannot see that we should be compelled to do a certain thing which we do voluntarily because the exigencies of the trade do not permit us. The internal arrangements are so peculiar and are not identical with any other trade.

20. Then there is not a clause in the award that you are working under providing that if fresh legislation is brought in with regard to service conditions that the award will go out of existence?—In our present award there is a clause safeguarding that particular position.

21. Does it say you go back to freedom of contract?—No; it protects us in the case of legislation being passed.

22. If fresh legislation is carried it will mean you will go back to freedom of contract?—Not so far as wages are concerned. The point raised was whether by increasing the number of hands in the kitchen the wages of the others would automatically increase.

23. The award provides for the wages, and you admit the award will go out of existence if this Bill passes?—Only so far as the hours are concerned, but not the wages.

24. *Mr. Long.*] You heard the evidence given by Mr. Nordon?—Yes.

25. Do you agree with it?—Not in its entirety.

26. You heard him say that if this Bill comes into operation it strikes at the efficiency of management in hotels: do you agree with him in that?—I really do not know what conditions exist in Christchurch. Personally I should not think it would apply to Auckland.

27. You are all working under the one Licensing Act?—Quite so.

28. Boiled down, is not the whole matter a question of pounds shillings and pence?—Not necessarily.

29. Is it not a matter of cost, according to the statements you have put in?—It is a matter of cost in a way, but it is not narrowed to pounds shillings and pence.

30. Is not that your chief objection?—That is one of the objections. The other objection is that we want to enjoy a holiday as well as anybody else by allowing us to shut the whole place down.

31. You know that is absurd. Have you got any members of your association who employ three or less hands?—Yes.

32. Do they agree that there should be no exemptions?—They say there should be no exemptions whatsoever, and that everybody should be included.

33. And the men who would have the right of claiming exemption do not want the exemption?—Quite so. They are fighting for a principle.

34. How long ago is it since your association met and discussed the question of increased tariffs during exhibition time?—It would be three or four months ago.

35. And did you not distinctly decide then that there should be an increase in the tariff?—It was decided to increase the tariff owing to the increased cost of commodities.

36. For how long?—They did not say for how long—I presume during exhibition time.

37. And do you think you will have a decreased tariff after the exhibition is over?—I am not prepared to say. I could not say what they intend doing.

38. How much is the proposed increase?—They proposed to increase it by 1s. per day, but it has not yet been done. They could not do it—people would not stand it. On the other hand, they are asking for reduction.

39. *Mr. Grenfell.*] You said there were certain people in Auckland who do not desire the exemption?—Yes.

40. Was it not because they recognized that they would be boycotted by the workers if they endeavoured to work them seven days a week while others worked them six days?—Quite so. The position would be that any one having a hotel where they employed three or less assistants could not get any one to work for them because of the extra day per week as compared with another hotel where they would only work six days. The man employing three or less assistants, to my mind, would be boycotted.

FRIDAY, 29TH AUGUST, 1913.

JOHN HOWARD HINTON examined. (No. 31.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A master grocer in business in Dunedin.

2. Do you represent any association?—We represent the Master Grocers' Associations of New Zealand. This would be really a Dominion deputation were it not for the fact that we have no representatives from Auckland, but all the other principal centres are represented.

3. Will you make a statement to the Committee?—Well, gentlemen, as an association we have been considering the proposed Shops and Offices Bill, and while we recognize that there are a good many improvements, such as those which were suggested at our last deputation before this Committee, there are quite a number which we desire to have slightly amended. The first point is in regard to the wages-book. We are quite satisfied that the provision in regard to the signing by the employees as well as the employer for the weekly wage is a safeguard both for us and for the employee, and we desire to see that incorporated in the Act when it is passed. That is clause 4. On the other hand, we feel that it is really not necessary that we should be called upon to keep our wages-books for two years, because the Act specifies that any action which is to be taken in