

4. *Mr. Anderson.*] The Bill allows a quarter of an hour's grace: do you think it is a fair thing to leave the door open for that quarter-hour?—No. So far as we are concerned in Dunedin it is not done.

5. Do you shut your door at the hour?—Yes.

6. Do I understand that this quarter-hour's grace is in order to serve the customers inside the shop?—To serve the customers inside the door, and to square things up.

7. If the employees work that quarter-hour do they work more than the fifty-two hours a week?—If it became a regular thing I take it we should have to give them time off so as to make the time worked come within the fifty-two hours, but it is a thing that is not done except in very exceptional cases. It might not be done twice in a year.

8. Do you gauge your employees' wages on fifty-two hours a week?—Yes.

9. And if they worked this extra quarter-hour would that be more than the fifty-two hours?—Yes, it would, I think.

10. Would it, in your opinion and in the opinion of your association, be a fair thing to work your employees this extra quarter-hour without extra pay?—We do not wish to do so, but we want to be saved from prosecution on every occasion when in cases of emergency we may have to do so.

11. Would you be prepared for your employees to count up all these quarter-hours that they work during the week, and pay them for them at the end of the week?—Quite prepared.

12. *Mr. Okey.*] That quarter-hour, I take it, is not supposed to be paid for: it is a kind of give-and-take between employer and employee?—I should say so.

13. If a man works a quarter-hour it is not entered in the book really?—No.

14. If a man is a quarter of an hour late in the morning do you not deduct a quarter-hour's pay?—No. If a man is off sick for a day we do not deduct anything. A man may be off the best part of a week. I do not know anybody in Dunedin that deducts for that. Why should an employee not be prepared to have a little give-and-take? If you pin us down to what is suggested no doubt we shall have to deduct. That will become the custom.

15. *Mr. Pryor.*] Prior to this 1911 Act coming into force you were working under the provisions of an Arbitration Court award, were you not?—Yes.

16. And it was that that controlled the hours of work?—Yes.

17. You had several different awards in Dunedin, did you not?—Yes.

18. You always had the right to work your hands overtime on payment of overtime rates?—Yes.

19. The Act came into force and took that right away from you, excepting in special circumstances and with the consent of the Inspector?—Yes.

20. The exigencies of your business make it absolutely impossible at times for you to get the consent of the Inspector?—Yes, it is a perfect farce.

21. As a matter of fact, under the present Act employers are absolutely compelled to break the law—they have no means of getting out of it or getting away from it?—That is so, if your business requires it.

22. And you ask now that the law should be so altered as to make it practicable, and you are quite prepared to pay overtime rates for work done?—Yes.

DAVID MAIN examined. (No. 36.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A grocer.

2. Where?—At Christchurch.

3. Will you state your views as briefly as possible, avoiding repetition of what has already been said?—I represent the Christchurch master grocers. With your permission I will just run through my notes. Commencing with clause 4, subclause (3), keeping book for two years: we consider this to be an unnecessary stipulation, as the Arbitration Act provides that action should be taken in six months, which should be a reasonable stipulation in this clause. As you are aware, we in Christchurch are now closing on Saturday afternoon. Clause 5, subclause (5), under "dairy-produce seller" we wish you to strike out "eggs and butter," as they are not extremely perishable, and as these form a large part of a grocer's stock. In the same clause, under "pork-butcher," we suggest that this should only cover fresh pork and fresh small-goods, as pork-butchers sell a lot of the component parts of a grocer's stock, such as tea, pickles, cheese, eggs, butter, &c. We contend that if this clause goes through as printed and is made law it will be an inducement for grocers to open sectional shops covering the articles under these two headings. I may say that at the present time there is a shop being started under those conditions in Christchurch. Clause 8, subclause (3), overtime for stocktaking and special work: we agree with Mr. Hinton and consider that there should be no restriction upon overtime. Where there is an award governing the industry it should be no more restricted than in the case, say, of a brick-layer or an engineer, who can work any overtime provided he gets paid for it. I should like to say, with regard to this clause 8, that there seems to be nothing outside this clause to make it clear that delivery outside the hours is not an offence if overtime is paid. We consider this of importance on account of breakdowns or before or after holidays. Those employing outside carts can deliver at any time, and we think we should have the right to do that provided overtime is paid. Clause 12, subclause (2), regarding the half-holiday: we do not think it is right to exempt New Brighton and Sumner. We object to this as not fair to city employers, who have to pay higher wages than in those two seaside boroughs. We would suggest that a ten-mile radius from the Chief Post-office, Christchurch, should be made to operate, under uniform conditions as to half-holiday and hours, where wages are fixed by awards and where Saturday is the