

30. Are not the wages you pay award rates?—Yes, I pay union wages. But whether they are in the union or not I could not tell you.

31. Are your employees divided then—some members of the union and some not?—I really could not tell you.

32. Is it not possible that if this Bill became law every one would suffer alike?—Only the boardinghouse-keepers and private-hotel keepers would be the sufferers. They would all be sufferers, every one alike.

33. Would it not be possible that all of them would have to raise their tariff to meet the extra expense?—But would the public pay it?

34. Would they not have to?—Then they would give up travelling. If you only knew how we have to battle sometimes to get our money from the different people you would not suggest that. I tell you that we in private hotels could unfold some tales. With bad debts and one thing and another we could not do it.

35. Do you think it possible that a sympathetic landlord would reduce your rent?—I am certain he could not. I am at the lowest figure now.

36. I suppose landlords are not very sympathetic?—They are never sympathetic.

37. *Hon. Mr. Massey*] Where is your place of business?—At the corner of Cuba Street and Ghuznee Street.

38. What is the size of the house—how many rooms?—I think there are sixty-four bedrooms altogether.

39. You mentioned that the price of certain commodities had gone up within the last few weeks?—Yes.

40. Will you give the Committee some idea of the articles you refer to?—Meat has gone up in price, milk has gone up, and butter has gone up.

41. *Mr. Davey*] Has bread gone up lately?—No, not just lately. There has been a big increase in meat. My butcher's bill now is enormous. And where I used to get 5 per cent. discount I only get $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Mrs. ELIZABETH DAVIES, Hotel Federal, Christchurch, examined. (No. 2.)

1. *The Chairman*.] We will now hear your objections to the Bill. What is it you want to speak on?—I want to speak on the clause providing for the whole day off. I think it is absolutely impossible to give it. We cannot do it. I think the increase in wages will cost me £250 a year more than I am paying now, and it takes me all my time to pay my wages bill now. In view of my tariff and the heavy rent I have to pay I absolutely cannot do what is asked. I have a staff of eighteen or nineteen, and they all get a very fair wage, and they are all quite satisfied. I treat them well, and they have stayed with me for years. Last year it cost me £400 more for the upkeep of my staff than it did the previous year, on account of the increase in the cost of living and the increase in wages, and that is a very large sum for a private hotel.

2. *Hon. Mr. Massey*.] How many hands did you say you have?—From seventeen to twenty. The number varies. When we are busy I take on extra help. I cannot see how the six days a week is going to work. It will disorganize everything. They are thoroughly satisfied now. I think they get a very fair thing. They are off every day very shortly after 2 o'clock till 5 and half past 5 and a quarter to 6, and as soon as dinner is over at night they are away again, and they do not come in till 10 o'clock or 11. They come in just when they like, and you dare not dictate to them nowadays. An employer cannot say that his soul is his own; he simply has to do the best he can. I do not say that all are quite as bad, but the majority of them are; they want their own way. The private houses cannot get help at all. But for the good hours we give we could not get labour. I know there has been a bad slump in New Zealand; there has been nothing doing whatever this winter. The year before last I had about £32 to pay in income-tax; last year I had £3, and this year I have not any. The money is not in the country, and you cannot do the business. I do not want to do any injustice to my staff, but I want to do justice to myself and my family, which I have to support, and it takes me all my time to do it. If the people who come here to agitate and talk to you only had the task of running our places for a year or a couple of years they would not come here. We do not treat our staff unkindly; they do not agitate. I do not think that one-third of the employees in New Zealand know anything about this Bill: they do not understand it. Ever since we have been in Wellington we have been visiting the private hotels, and we find that the employers do not know anything about it. I think it is an absolute shame when they are in such ignorance about it. I think it is quite an injustice to a wonderful country like New Zealand. It means that we ought to close down the whole Dominion, I think, and give these people a whole year's holiday on full pay. As for waiters, I would rather employ waitresses any time, because waitresses are always more conscientious. And female chefs are more conscientious than men. As far as men chefs are concerned I have nearly been driven mad with them: they are never satisfied; you give them a good wage, and they not only want that, but they want to sell everything they can—everything they think they are entitled to. I have my paper here, signed by my staff quite voluntarily. [Document produced.]

3. *Mr. Okey*.] Do you give your hands any general holiday?—Yes; in fact, if they come and ask for a few days I always give them leave.

4. You do not think your employees are asking for this?—I am sure they are not.

5. They are quite satisfied?—They are. Before I left my girls said they did not expect it—that they are doing very well.