

to the Conciliation Council and get the employers to agree that wages shall be paid weekly or fortnightly, and we go to the Court to get that agreement made into an award of the Court, and Mr. Justice Sim turns round and says, "What have you got this in here for? I cannot allow you to put anything in here that is in the Shops and Offices Act." We say to him, "We are in this position: you tell us that you interpret the Shops and Offices Act to mean that an employer commits a breach unless he pays weekly or fortnightly. The Labour Department tell us that the Crown Law Office's opinion is that these people do not commit a breach, and we are between the devil and the deep blue sea." The Labour Department on the one hand administer the clause according to their reading of it, and Mr. Justice Sim sticks to his reading and refuses to have a clause put into the award of the Court, although the employers agree to it. We think it is unfair and unreasonable, and can be altered without doing any injustice to the other side.

41. *Mr. Clark.*] You say that Kirkealdie and Stains pay every three weeks?—Yes.

42. Supposing a man starts on the 1st of the month: his wages would be due on the 14th?—Yes.

43. And they take another seven days?—Yes.

44. It would be the 21st when he got paid?—Yes.

45. When would he get the next payment?—They take it as a fortnight, and then they say that between each fortnight they have fourteen days' grace. Take the question you have asked me: the first fortnight would be to the 14th; then seven days' grace. After that seven days another fortnight, and then seven days' grace.

46. *Mr. Veitch.*] It would be three weeks' wages at one time?—Three weeks' wages at one time.

47. *Mr. Davey.*] They always pay three weeks?—Yes.

48. Then they can do it?—According to the Labour Department they can. This is what we ask with regard to clause 11: wages shall be paid weekly or fortnightly, as agreed upon in writing, and that subclause (d) be deleted altogether.

49. You do not want to delete the penalty altogether?—We want something put in here that will not allow them to evade the provision requiring payment at not more than fortnightly intervals. We leave it to the Committee to make it so that no hardship will be inflicted on the employer or the employee, but that we shall get our wages weekly or fortnightly, and that there shall be no getting over it.

50. *Hon. Mr. Massey.*] Are the employees as a whole satisfied with fortnightly payments?—Yes, employees and employers. The D.I.C., which is a big house, pay all their hands weekly. There is no hardship on the employers. We submit that it is fair that Kirkealdie and Stains should be asked to pay fortnightly.

51. *Mr. Anderson.*] Why do not all of them pay weekly?—Because the Legislature allows them to do what they like. If you put a clause in providing that they shall pay weekly, they will pay weekly without any bother. As long as ever this thing goes on they will not do it. What I have just explained proves that some employers will take advantage of anything that is in the Act.

52. Some employers?—Yes, exactly.

53. *Mr. Davey.*] Are there any other houses that pay once a week besides the D.I.C.?—The Aro House pay their staff half one week and half another. Veitch and Allan pay once a week, I think. George and Kersley pay fortnightly. We wish to ask the Committee to insert a clause to prevent employers from holding any wages in hand.

54. How do you mean? Holding wages in hand would be avoided if they paid weekly, would it not?—Yes. I have explained the Kirkealdie and Stains incident—how they get over the fortnightly payment. Other employers get over it in precisely the same manner. A man starts on the 1st of the month and works till the 14th, but he does not get paid till the 21st. Then he receives a fortnight's salary—that is, pay from the 1st to the 14th. Pay for the week from the 14th to the 21st is kept in hand. They keep a week's wages in hand.

55. They always have a week's pay in hand?—Yes.

56. *Mr. Hindmarsh.*] If you allow an employer seven days' grace he will always have a week's pay in hand?—Well, make it weekly, and that will settle the whole matter. It does not matter what you put in so long as you insert something to provide that no employer shall be entitled to keep any of his assistants' wages. Then he will not be able to do it, because the Department will see to it then. We have perfect faith in the Department so long as the thing is plain. We object to an assistant working and a week's wages being kept in hand all the time. When I was in George and Kersley's they started a new system of paying, and they kept three days' pay in hand. With regard to clause 14, subclause (2), we consider that 5 per cent. of the electors should be ample, and we think that all the words after "persons" in the sixth line should be deleted and these words added: "whose names are on the main and supplementary rolls which are to be used at the election at which it is proposed to hold the poll." A clear provision of this description is absolutely necessary to avoid any misunderstanding such as occurred here this year. We object to any proposal which will further hamper the obtaining of the required number of signatures, which at the present time is quite difficult enough to secure. I did a good deal in connection with it the last time, when we were defeated. We secured seven thousand signatures. This question is wrapped up with the Municipal Corporations Act. There was the old roll. The old roll had thirty-three thousand names on it, and off that old roll they struck seven thousand electors, and the Mayor certified to that roll as being the new roll for that coming election. Now, that had seven thousand names struck off it for some reason or other. That was the roll that the seven thousand signatures that we put in as affidavits demanding a poll were checked off, and we submit that there was a big majority of those people who signed our petition asking for a poll to be taken. We enrolled about three or four thousand people for the municipal election here last year. Is it not a fair proposition that if a man signs his signature to an enrolment form