

15. Supposing the difference was made up by the employers of this country increasing the wages by 5s. a week to meet the situation, would you suggest that if butter came down next year that wages should come down also?—Yes, I do. That is only fair. It could be called a butter bonus.

16. Taking into consideration the position of the worker to-day—and that is what we are giving our attention to primarily—if the price of butter was kept down at a low price for this season as suggested by you, do you suggest that everybody should have the full benefits of the butter at the same price?—That is a matter which would take more than a dull-witted man like myself to answer.

17. I do not think you are dull-witted?—I have not got the knowledge of members of Parliament. I am speaking for a certain class of the community.

18. I am only asking you the question whether you think it should be done or otherwise?—If I had my way and could find means of carrying it into effect I should certainly charge you gentlemen the extra 5s. a week.

19. Supposing the object was to relieve the unskilled labourer or working-man who only, as you say, averages £3 a week, what would you say to a recommendation for the introduction of a ration ticket to enable the worker to get butter at the cheaper price?—I really do not know that I can think very clearly on that matter. I do not think I would care about using a ration ticket. A ration ticket is revolting—it is too much like charity.

20. I am only asking you the question?—I would not like to give an answer offhand. I would not commit myself to any answer on the point. It is somewhat humiliating, and I think your object ought to be to raise the status of humanity and not to lower it.

21. It is not a suggestion from the Committee. We want to get over the difficulty the best way we can. If butter has got to be kept down for the man with a family, we have got to consider the position of the people as a whole?—Yes, probably.

22. *Mr. Hockly.*] In regard to the average consumption of butter, you have told us your own experience, and you will agree that your family is fairly heavy on butter?—I do not know; I expect we are. We are heavy because we do not eat much butcher's meat.

23. Would you not consider that a more reasonable estimate of the consumption of butter by the average family of five would be more like 3 lb.?—Yes; but I have already pointed out that I am speaking for a certain class. That certain class, the poorer they are usually the larger the families. The unskilled worker, the man who is usually at the bottom of the ladder, has an aptitude to get a larger family than the man with independent means. I think the reason of it is that they used to go to church very regularly, and that the parson used to tell them to keep the cradle full; but in the case of those who had plenty he never told them the same thing. The worker had enormous families—criminally high; and, assuming there were only five of us, it would be a fair estimate that the amount of butter consumed by that family was 5 lb. Butter is the staple food for that family, and must not the navy's boy eat as much as the M.P.'s boy?

24. *The Chairman.*] The M.P.'s cannot afford 1 lb. per week per head?—No, because his digestive organs are impaired by high living.

25. *Mr. Hawken.*] You think there are two solutions, and one is to raise the wages of the workers?—Yes.

26. The other is to keep down the price?—Well, I do not know that I would put that forward as a solution, but only as a suggestion for you gentlemen to consider.

27. You think the country labourer is well paid?—Relatively very much better paid than the wharf lumper, assuming that those figures are correct at £250 per cow.

28. If you lower the price you give the farmer less for his produce?—Yes.

29. If you raise the wages the town employer must pay?—Yes.

30. Do you think it is a fair thing to ask the man who pay his men well to forgo portion of his profit in order that the man who does not pay his men well should get his men for less?—I should not think so.

31. That is the position. In effect you say that the country farmer should sell his produce at less in order that the town employer should pay his men less or get them cheaply?—Pardon me. I am afraid I have been quite misunderstood in this matter. I only stated facts which ought to be considered in arriving at your decision. What remedy is to be brought about I do not presume to suggest. How the matter is to be met I would not dare to suggest to you. I take it for granted that you fully recognize the main questions which I have brought forward. The gravity of the situation has had the effect of making the men desperate. I say this sincerely, gentlemen, and I have a better opportunity of seeing the average worker than you have. I say that things are becoming very, very grave, and when a man becomes desperate he ceases to be reasonable, and does things and thinks afterwards. It takes me all my time to make both ends meet, and I am sure my salary is twice what the average labourer gets.

32. *Mr. Poland.*] You say your earnings are double what the ordinary labour averages in Wellington, and yet it takes you all your time to make both ends meet?—Yes.

33. What do you suggest the ordinary labourer does?—I am glad you put the question. The unskilled labourer, together with his wife and family, are just subject to the same ailments as my wife and family. I have a wife who has had an ulcerated leg for twenty years. I am now paying £4 10s. a week for her to be cured by a specialist, which, thank Heaven, he is doing. If I was only getting £3 a week, what would happen to that wife of mine? Could I do that? I have spent thousands of pounds paying licensed quacks to cure her, and they have failed. Each left her worse than his predecessor. Now she is becoming as well as ever, and that woman is fifteen years younger than I am. You put yourself in this position, that you had a wife, and the circumstances were such that you could not send her to where you knew she would be cured: you would not be too jolly. In what position would the labourer be who gets £3 a week under such circumstances?

34. You say you get double the wages of the ordinary labourer?—Yes, I get £6 a week.

35. And you can only make both ends meet now?—Yes.

36. How can the man with £3 a week make both ends meet?—That is the gravity of the situation.