

industrial award which will have the effect of seriously depreciating our property and prejudicially affecting the interests of a large number of workpeople. We have in those three centres something like fifteen hundred hands employed in the clothing manufacturing industry. In Auckland I fancy there are altogether about five hundred, of whom only a small percentage belong to the union. The last return makes it 66 only. At the present time we find that these fifteen hundred employes are seriously affected by the action of what is, at any rate, only a small minority of the workers in another part of the colony. It has been found in the boot trade that this state of things obtained for many years, and most strenuous efforts have been made by which finally a uniformity "log" has been secured. I may say that when this matter was before the Conciliation Board in Dunedin, about twelve months ago, it was then adjourned for three months to endeavour to secure amended legislation. The Dunedin Arbitration Court found there was the same difficulty in the way. May I refer to the finding of that Court?

10. I think it is well known what it is. I do not think there is any need to refer to that matter here?—When we came before the Arbitration Court, the Court practically took up the same position as the Conciliation Board. The Court said it could not deal with this in a manner that would not inflict injustice upon one side or another, and we practically left the matter as the Conciliation Board did in Dunedin a year ago.

11. *Mr. Arnold.*] I take it you want an award that will be applicable to all parts of the colony?—We only ask that the Court may be given power—which it evidently lacks at present—to make awards that will be universal throughout the colony. We deplore the want of power at present to make awards applicable throughout the colony. So far as my evidence is concerned I wish it confined to the statement—the broad principle—that in a colony like this, with only a mere handful of people, where the facilities for interchange are so great, where industries are concerned in which these goods are interchangeable the Court should have power to make the conditions of labour and the payment of labour uniform throughout the colony.

12. *Mr. Bolland.*] I should like to ask the witness, Mr. Chairman, whether he considers the conditions in Auckland—the existing conditions—the same as in other parts of the colony?—So far as I can gather, and I have gone very fully into the matter, I think the conditions are very similar indeed. We led technical evidence in the Arbitration Court in which it was not elicited that the conditions varied very greatly. In one or two minor details the methods were different. I do not think that it has a very great bearing upon the broad principle which we wish to affirm.

13. Are you prepared to say that the employes do not earn as much money in Auckland as in any other part of the colony?—According to the Government returns they seem to earn about the same. I think if there is a difference they earn less money in Auckland than in the South. Of course, one considerable matter in which we are handicapped is the disparity in the hours of labour, and that must be considered in comparing wages earned by the operatives in this trade, at all events in Auckland and the rest of the colony. In Auckland they work forty-eight hours in the factories, and in the South they only work forty-five hours.

14. *The Chairman.*] Have you anything further to say—any other evidence you wish to give?—No, sir, I think that is all.

Mr. F. M. KING in attendance and examined. (No. 2.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your name, please?—F. M. King.

2. You are manager of the clothing factory in Auckland?—Yes, manager of Mr. G. H. Powley's Cambridge Clothing Factory in Auckland.

3. You desire to give evidence in connection with this Bill?—Yes, sir.

4. The evidence we are prepared to receive will be upon any new matter brought forward in this Bill—the interpretation of worker, &c., section 85, where the powers of the Arbitration Court are increased, and section 86, where power is proposed to be given to the Court to make inter-provincial awards. If upon any of these points you desire to give evidence, please do so?—In regard to clause 86, the fight about placing this clause in the Act has been caused to a great extent by the condition of things in the clothing trade in New Zealand. Christchurch, Dunedin, and Wellington all work under similar methods, but in Auckland we have altogether different methods. Messrs. A. Clarke and Sons' factory was started by Mr. Holle, who came from Melbourne, while I have been brought up to the trade in England, and have travelled throughout the whole of America, and have introduced into Auckland an altogether different system of manufacture. I do not believe that if a new system is introduced it should have the effect of reducing the wages of the individual worker. I think, and I shall be able to prove to you, gentlemen, that we pay at least as high wages per week as are paid to the workers in other parts of the colony, but that with our different system of manufacture we are able to produce our work at a little less cost. Now, I have here copies of the *Otago Daily Times* of last year, in which Mr. Hallenstein stated before the Conciliation Board that Dunedin, Christchurch, and Wellington were twenty-six years behind Auckland in the clothing trade. If this Act is brought into force to make us come into line with the southern manufacturers, then it necessarily means that Auckland must be forced back twenty-six years.

5. *Mr. Collins.*] Do you mean by that, if you are compelled to pay the same rates of wages as in Christchurch and Dunedin, it will compel you to alter your method of working?—The rate per week, I agree, should be as high, but the piece-rate should not necessarily be the same, and that is the position we take up. The Court should have the power of saying that the rate per week shall be the same, but not have the power of saying "you shall produce your goods in such and such a method." Now, it is all very well for the southern manufacturers to say that the Auckland manufacturers have an advantage, but the fact of it is that the southern manufacturers have to a large extent an advantage over the Auckland manufacturers. For instance, take our firm. We manufacture for wholesale warehouses, but in Christchurch and Wellington they take the wool