

4. Will you kindly confine your evidence to any clauses in the Bill to which you object—to any new matter contained in this Bill?—Well, gentlemen, I was hurriedly called away from Auckland. Since I have been in Wellington I have embodied my views in a written statement which I have here, and it will not take me many minutes to read it to the Committee, if you will allow me. The subject matter, I think, bears upon the question. I have, however, confined myself to answering the questions and disproving the statements made by witnesses before the Arbitration Court in Dunedin.

5. I do not know that that can be taken as evidence here?—I contend that the evidence before the Judge in Dunedin requires to be disproved.

6. Not here.

7. *Mr. Lewis.*] Does it bear upon this colonial question?—If the Committee will listen while I read this statement, they will get from it a very good idea of what I wish to state, and will be able to form a much more concise opinion on the matter.

8. *Mr. Arnold.*] Yes, if all reference to the Arbitration Court is cut out.—If you wish to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion you must have a false statement disproved. I contend that I am in a position to contradict some of the remarks that were made by some of the witnesses before the Arbitration Court, and show you their statements are utterly wrong and misleading.

9. *Mr. Tanner.*] I think you should leave out all reference to the Arbitration Court.—In connection with the matter I may say I read a newspaper report, and I found a great many things that were not correct in it. Therefore I wish to give my views on the subject, and they are contained in this. The Judge of the Arbitration Court has been influenced by the evidence given. As far as I can see, the Judge has had one-sided evidence, and we wish to defend ourselves. We do not wish this amendment to be passed.

10. *The Chairman.*] I want you to show reason why. I understand your objection is to the power granted to the Court to make a colonial award?—My contention is this: We have a different and a much more up-to-date method of manufacture in Auckland. We do not wish to be compelled to manufacture under an antiquated system like they have in the South.

11. This amendment deals with all trades where goods are interchangeable. The clothing trade is only one trade among many in the broad principle contained here.—My evidence has to do with my particular clothing trade, and the clothing trade is, I contend the point upon which this amendment will move. I say certain charges are made against the Auckland people which should be disproved.

12. *Mr. Morrison.*] The whole charge seems to be that they are paid lower wages than in the South?—I contend that we can make a garment up more quickly and with less work than they do in the South. The work, although it is put together more quickly, cannot be so good as garments made by a lot of hand-work; but if the southern people have antiquated methods of doing their work it is no reason why we should be compelled to adopt them.

The statement referred to by witness was then read by him as follows:—

As given in the evidence, it is proved by statistics that the earnings of the Auckland workers are equal, or almost so, to those of the southern workers. It has been said that the ground is being cut under the southerners' feet. We contend that the time should shortly arrive when the Auckland trade shall cease to be monopolised by the southerners. The people of our district must be employed, otherwise the Government will feel the effects of it. It has also been stated that the difference in the rate between the North and South workers comprises a trader's profit; but I venture to suggest that few would be satisfied with such a rate. Those who supply the goods from the factory to the wearer would require more than the cost of the making and trimming of the whole garment for profit. Statements of this kind can only be considered nonsense. Why is it necessary to make a universal log, when the girls earn as much in the North as in the South, but by a different method, and general satisfaction prevails from employer to employé? My own hands could not make anything like the same money working by the antiquated southern method—in fact, they would require to be retaught, and under such conditions would never earn the wages they are getting now. It is also stated in the evidence "that all trade experience teaches that trade must eventually run along the lines of least resistance." The lines of resistance, I venture to say, must not have been very strong in Queen Street, considering that about one-half of the clothing sold there is made in Christchurch and Dunedin—principally Christchurch.

As for food and rent being cheaper in Auckland than elsewhere, I should decline to use that as an argument to further our cause. Mr. Hercus says he is prepared to prove that Auckland workers earn satisfactory wages under this log. Where, then, I ask, is the grievance?

As for sixty-six people dominating two thousand, they (the sixty-six), if the figures be correct, voice the whole of the Auckland workers, who ask not to dominate but to be allowed to work in their own way.

Referring to girls being inadequately paid—cases, as in the South, where girls have worked for three or four years at the rate of 3s. 6d. per week—I am happy to say that I have never had any such case in my factory; but I can, on the other hand, give instances of girls who have become in a few months a fully-paid piece-worker, and earning £1 per week. If close inquiry was made, it might be found that some of the southerners produce garments at less cost than we of the North. For instance, one skilled coat-hand might have one dozen apprentices in different stages, and keep them on low wages for, say, two years. Possibly, after a few weeks, some of the smart ones could almost make a coat. The result of such a method is that the coats, &c., would be turned out for next to nothing. I heartily condemn and have never practised such a method. It has been stated that the Auckland work is inferior, both in trimming and workmanship, to that of the South; but, as we cater for the aforesaid gumdiggers, &c., does it not go to prove that more of it can be done in a given time?

That is the whole matter. I think you will find that a great many of the arguments in connection with this question have been answered. Some of the people in the South learnt their business in the South; I came from London, and my colleague, Mr. King, also came from London and America, and we have thus gained ideas that have enabled us to turn out garments much quicker than they do in the South. For instance, in the South, when a garment is given to a girl to be made, she has to cut the sleeve-linings to fit the coat and the holes for the pockets, &c.; while the method we adopt is that all that sort of thing is done before the garment is given to the girl; the pocket mouths are cut, and we can do twenty coats at one time. Now, this is only one instance to show that our methods are labour-saving. I have machines that sew on buttons, tack the bottoms of trousers, &c. I contend that you cannot put us on the same footing as the southern people. We have no objection to their making their garments in the same way, but we certainly decline to go back to an antiquated method that should have ceased twenty years ago. The southern people