

(the employers) give certain credit to customers, and the customers make the practice of having such rushes of trade by holding back their orders. So the mind of our Council is that the exemptions should be made to apply to the conditions of the trade and not to the industries. With regard to the half-holiday, we do not ask payment for the men for work they do not do; we simply ask for payment for what they do. At the same time we think the hours should be limited to forty-four per week. Regarding the question as to whether Government employes should come under the labour laws, the opinion expressed by Mr. Naughton is his own personal opinion, of course. My own opinion on that point is exactly opposite.

215. *Mr. Hardy.*] Instead of the Eight Hours Bill would not the Trades and Labour Council approve of a seven-and-a-half hours Bill, so that the people of the country would know it is a seven-and-a-half hours Bill?—If the increased productive power with the improved machinery necessitates provisions for distribution of profits, I should say we should go not simply for a seven-and-a-half hours but for a six-hours Bill. I fail to see why the increased profits should go to the employers as a whole.

Mr. H. A. HURRELL examined. (No. 37.)

216. *The Chairman.*] Do you represent the coachbuilding trade, Mr. Hurrell?—Yes.

217. Kindly let us know, then, how this Factories Act will affect your trade?—We think that it will affect our trade very disastrously in almost every way. The Act seems to be loaded down with grievous conditions—such as keeping a correct record of every employé in your establishment, the work that he does, the ages, &c.—and it seems to me in a trade that does such a variety of work as coachbuilders do, in any shape or form, or of any dimensions, it would require quite a staff of clerks to keep the record. The work in my own department is changing almost every hour of the day. And, then, we look upon this as a very serious addition to the cost of running the factory. We also object to the hours. In our trade the men are employed their full time. They lose no time through the condition of the weather. In addition to that, in the winter-time, when work is slack, they are kept on at full time making stock, which has to be held and interest paid on it until it is sold; and for that and many other reasons we think that in our particular business the hours of work should be forty-eight per week. The employment of females and young persons does not affect us very much. With regard to the overtime rates, we have not much to say about them, as we are really working under an award that practically covers these rates of wages.

218. *The Chairman.*] You claim that you would not be affected by the overtime clause in this Bill?—It is time and a quarter for the first two hours, and time and a half afterwards. Well, we are working under those conditions at the present time. The payment for holidays is a thing we very strongly object to.

219. You have heard that the workers themselves do not want that?—But, it is contemplated by this Act, sir.

220. That is quite true?—It is only fair I should say that this is the matter that has engaged the attention of the Employers' Association, and is regarded as probably the most objectionable of all the clauses in the Bill. In our line I believe it will make a tremendous difference in the percentage of cost of running a factory. That I believe is, so far as I know the mind of the masters, really the most objectionable of all the clauses. We look upon the Act as a whole as a most grievous imposition upon the trade that we represent. Before leaving the question of overtime, Mr. Chairman, I understand it has been asked this morning, Why do not masters extend their facilities in their businesses? I would like to point out to the Committee that it is contemplated Acts of this kind that destroy the spirit of enterprise in masters altogether, and will probably have a tendency to decrease rather than extend the factories and finance that will enable the masters to cope with a rush of work when it comes along. I think the result of appeals of this kind is to defeat their own ends to a certain extent. The ground that I intended to speak upon has been very much covered by evidence that has been given, and by that which has been drawn out by different members of the Committee. I therefore shall not occupy your time further, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. R. BLACK examined. (No. 38.)

221. *The Chairman.*] Do you indorse what has been said by Mr. Hurrell, Mr. Black?—Yes; everything he has said I can agree to. The payment for the holidays in our factory alone means £112 a year to us, and what do we get in return for it? And not only that, but we have not only to compete one against the other, but against the men, and for this reason: they take work in some cases from people in the town and do it on Saturday afternoons, Sundays, and in the evenings. Such as painting-work and things like that are done in the cabmen's back yards, and we have a lot to compete with; and if we have to pay for holidays we will have to "sack" either three or four of our men.

222. *Mr. Arnold.*] I think, Mr. Hurrell, your trade is working under an award of the Arbitration Court, is it not?—Yes.

223. And you are fairly satisfied with the award that has been made—it is working satisfactorily?—I think so, on the whole.

224. In your opinion, is that a better mode of fixing the various differences in connection with your trade?—Yes, it is far better. The only objection we have is that we should like to see the award made general throughout the colony, instead of the districts. In our trade it only covers Wellington and the Lower Hutt.

225. Since then the awards down South have been made similar to yours: there was one in Dunedin a week ago?—That will be the first award, I think, after the one in Wellington.

226. There is a tendency, as far as the Court is concerned, to make the awards general?—What we complain most about our own one is that we are bound by the award of the Arbitration Court at Wellington, and yet a man at the Upper Hutt can run a factory on any lines he likes.