

bring their emoluments up to what we are getting at present in order to equalise things. It is a common-sense view to take of the matter—that, if a man's work was worth so-much before the Act was passed, the banks will not pay more for it afterwards. They will certainly put men on at smaller salaries if they have got to pay overtime. We would much prefer that our salaries be left as they are, and that we be not paid overtime. The reports of the overtime worked that we hear are greatly exaggerated. Because there is a light in a bank it does not necessarily mean that the staff are back. One man may be back, or it may be that one of the men is back writing a private letter. We are allowed the privilege of going to the office and writing private correspondence. I myself have heard people say "Oh, I was passing the bank last night and saw a light there. The banks are always working at night." But that is not the case. We do a small amount of overtime, but we all feel that it is not sufficient to call for legislative interference, and our petition shows that it is the almost unanimous wish of the staff that we should be exempt from the provisions of the Act.

Statement of C. T. CALLIS, of the Bank of Australasia. (No. 101.)

*Witness* : I have nothing to add to what has been stated, except that the bank-clerks do not require any legislation to curtail the night-work. They are treated very well by their employers, and the overtime that is done is done willingly, and is quite necessary.

146. *Right Hon. R. J. Seddon* (to Mr. Horne).] Supposing the banks do make any change—do not reduce the pay or put on these juniors; is there any objection to the existing conditions?—We have no objection to the existing state of affairs continuing.

147. It is for fear of changes which would be detrimental to your interests that you are advocating the change?—That is so. You said "the existing state of things." We are not complying with the Act at present. By "the existing state of things" I mean that obtaining before the Act was passed.

148. My question was a very clear one. The "existing state of things" is the state of things to-day. If I had meant as things formerly were I should have said so?—I beg your pardon. My answer, then, was wrong. We are not satisfied with the existing state of things.

149. If the banks were to make no change, as regard putting on juniors or interfering with your present privileges, you would have no objection to the existing state of things?—We should have no objection to the existing state of things obtaining before the Act was passed.

*Mr. Callis* : Excuse me. We have no guarantee that the banks would go on as they are going.

150. *Right Hon. R. J. Seddon* (to Mr. Horne).] It is because of the feeling that the banks may do this that you would prefer not to run the risk?—No, we have every confidence in our employers.

151. But you have just told us that you have no confidence in them—you have told us that the banks would in their own interests put on juniors and pay the juniors overtime. Did you not say that?

*Mr. Revell* : I think that was in my evidence.

152. *Right Hon. R. J. Seddon* (to Mr. Horne).] You heard that stated?—Yes.

153. Is it not for fear of that that you would prefer to go back to the old state of things?—That is so. We fear that this will introduce a new element—overtime—which is inimical to our interests, whether we receive overtime-pay or whether our juniors receive overtime-pay.

154. Then it is for fear that the institutions will do this that you come to ask Parliament to exempt you from the operation of the Act?—For fear of that, in conjunction with other things—that is, that certain privileges which we now enjoy will be stopped.

155. That is what I ask. You fear that the banks will be exacting with regard to sick-pay, holidays, &c., if this overtime-pay is exacted from them?—We have no guarantee, but we do fear it.

156. And having that fear causes you to move in the direction of being exempted from the Act?—Yes; but "fear" is rather a severe word, in this case, if I am at liberty to say so.

157. This is what you say in your petition: "That the Act will alter the relations at present existing between employer and employee, to the detriment of the latter, as many of the benefits now enjoyed by officers, such as occasional special holidays, full pay while on leave, and pay while absent from duty through sickness, will probably cease or be curtailed." You have said so?—Yes.

158. Do you adhere to that?—We do.

159. You not only fear it there, but you have made the statement, have you not?—Very good.

160. So that the word "fear" was not too strong a term to use, when you have made the statement and committed yourselves in writing to it. Have you had the slightest indication from the banks or the managers that the institutions are going to stop your privileges?—No, we have had no intimation of it.

161. Have you had any intimation that they will employ juniors and get the cheaper men to work if they have to pay overtime?—No. This petition has originated entirely with the rank and file. We have not discussed the matter with our senior officials. We do not know what they will do or what they will not do. As I have stated, when we sent the circular memorandum round we put in parenthesis "chiefs excluded."

162. Very well. Suppose they did nothing, and they were satisfied to allow the existing state of things to continue and to pay you for overtime: Under the circumstances would you refuse to take it?—Personally I would refuse to take it—most decidedly. I would try in some way to evade the Act, perhaps by making the bank a present of the money. I would probably take advice.

163. Do you think that your philanthropy and great interest in the institution will go right through the service, and that they will all refuse the extra pay for overtime? Do you ask this Committee to believe that where gentlemen, who are not overpaid— By the way, do you think the bank-clerks are overpaid?—Most decidedly on the contrary; they are underpaid.

164. Do you think the rest of the clerks in the banks would refuse to take this little extra emolument?—No, I certainly think they would take it. All the same they would not like it.