

165. Do you not think that from the increased profits which the banks are making and the bonuses they are paying, they could well afford to pay this little extra amount to the clerks? Do you think it would stop the dividends or bonuses?—Which bank are you referring to?

166. Which bank do you belong to?—The Bank of New Zealand.

167. Do you think, in view of the Bank of New Zealand's profits last year, which amounted to over £200,000, that the payment of a few extra pounds to the clerks for overtime would "burst the show"?—I do not think it would "burst the show," but, as regards profits, they are soaked into the soil of New Zealand. It is a very big question to ask me, all the same.

168. But the money is there is it not? I suppose you do not say the profits are fictitious?—No. But what I refer to is the Assets Realisation Board.

169. The profits are there all the same, are they not, whatever is done with them?—Yes.

170. What difference do you think it would make in the course of a year? The net profits last year were about £250,000, I think. How much difference do you think it would make in the case of your bank if they had to pay this overtime?—I could not possibly give you an answer to that question.

171. Do you think it would cost a couple of thousand pounds?—I have not the remotest idea. It would take a considerable amount of working-out.

172. Do you not think it a reasonable question to put and to expect you to be in a position to answer?—If you gave me a week I should be able to give you a definite answer.

173. How many clerks have you?—In New Zealand there are about eight or nine hundred, I should say—that is, the rank and file.

174. Take it at a thousand. What would the overtime come to, taking the condition of things that has existed in the past?—It would not come to so very much, if you took the *quid pro quo*—that is, getting away at half past 4 and working undertime. It would amount to very little, perhaps.

175. Well, since the Act has been in operation, you have known the overtime, I suppose, that has been made. What do you think it would come to—say, in any office that you do know? What office are you in?—The local branch—the Lambton Quay branch.

176. Take that office. What do you think it would amount to per month or per week in that branch, supposing the overtime was paid?—What rate would it be?

*Right Hon. R. J. Seddon*: Whatever is fixed by the Act.

*Mr. H. S. Hammond*: In our office it would average about an hour per clerk every week.

177. *Right Hon. R. J. Seddon* (to *Mr. Hammond*).] How many clerks have you got?—About twenty-five.

178. How much would the hour a week amount to?—It would be about twenty-five hours a week.

179. What would the clerks get per hour? What is the average of their salaries?—About £2 10s. a week.

180. Say they got 2s. an hour. That would be £2 10s. a week for the office?—Yes; but then we often get off at half past 4. That would balance that hour.

181. At all events, as far as your office is concerned, suppose the clerks were given 2s. an hour each for overtime and they worked only an hour a week overtime, that would be £2 10s. a week for the office?—Yes, but it would be only about 2s. a week for each clerk, and, in the course of a year, that would be only about £5; and for that it is hardly worth risking the privileges which we now get.

182. But, on the other hand, it would not mean much to the bank if they had to pay it?—No, but the risk is that they might stop the existing privileges.

183. Do you think they would, in the face of its costing them so little?—I do not know their intentions at all, but we do not like to run the risk of their doing so. The amount of money that we should get for the overtime would not amount to an appreciable sum in the course of a year, and we run a very big risk.

184. (To *Mr. Horne*.) What number of clerks have you in your branch?—It varies from thirty-two to thirty-five. The overtime worked in this branch is very little.

185. Would the overtime worked average an hour per clerk per week?—Yes, it would average about that.

186. It would not have a very appreciable effect upon the big profit, would it, if that is all the overtime that is worked?—No, I should not think it would.

187. In other words, it is like a storm in a teapot. There is not much in it whether you keep the Act as it is, or whether you alter it. If there is so little overtime worked and such a small amount to be paid, why should the banks make this material alteration which you fear?—It is not altogether the overtime-pay. When our work is done at half past 4 we get away. The privileges go against the overtime.

188. And you consider it an unwarrantable interference with the liberty of the subject by the Legislature?—Yes, Sir. As I stated when I first spoke, the business is very different from that of other institutions. The work does not flow evenly.

189. These legislators who have been passing legislation for your good, as they thought—you do not thank them for it?—No.

*Other members of the deputation*: No, they were mistaken.

190. *Mr. Alison* (to *Mr. Horne*).] Are you of opinion that there should be any restriction as to the hours which bank employees should work at night, say?—On behalf of our institution, I think not. I would like you to ask that question of some other representative of one of the banks. The reason why I say this is because I am of opinion that the Bank of New Zealand clerks are better treated than the clerks of any other bank. Some of the other banks run their offices very short-handed—I know it for a fact—and it is necessary for them to do more overtime than we do in the Bank of New Zealand, right through