

191. Speaking for yourself, what do you say? Do you consider there should be any restriction as to the hours bank-clerks should be employed at night?—We do not want it.

192. You do not ask for it?—No.

193. Did any of the employees of any of the banks, as far as you know, ask for the legislation to which you are now objecting?—No, not that I am aware of.

194. Are you convinced, from your knowledge of the working of the bank's business, that the employees generally are satisfied to be exempted?—Yes. When I quoted the number of the signatures to the petition, 732, I omitted to say that we have forty-five against it. Seven hundred and thirty-two signed the petition and forty-five refused. We did not ask the names. We just asked the numbers in each town, and that is the result.

195. Is the Committee to understand that the conditions under which the employees of banks have been and are now working are, in your opinion, more favourable in the interests of the employees than they would be under the provisions of the Shops and Offices Act?—Yes.

196. Has the Shops and Offices Act been enforced as far as the banks are concerned?—Not as far as the Bank of New Zealand is concerned.

197. Has it been enforced with respect to any other banks, as far as you know?

*Mr. Revell*: We are not allowed to go back to work any more than is absolutely necessary. There is a case pending against our Nelson office. An information was laid, and the decision went against the bank, but they are appealing, and pending the final decision very little is being done to enforce the provisions of the Act.

198. Since the Act has been passed, have the hours been minimised—the working-hours at night?—No, they have not really, because we did not do overtime before when it was not absolutely necessary; and inquiries are made now as to when we are back at night. The amount of overtime that we do has not been really minimised. The clerks often go to work early in the morning to avoid the night-work.

199. (To *Mr. Horne*.) Is it essential that a certain number of the employees should be employed at night to enable the business of the bank to be carried on?—For that day?

200. Yes?—It depends on how busy they are. I should say Yes.

201. Because they do work at night?—They do.

202. Can that be obviated?—No.

203. You have given us the number of hours that, in your opinion, the bank-clerks work overtime as being about one hour a week each?—That is taking it right through. Some may not do any for weeks.

*Mr. Callis*: Some do not do any at all.

204. (To *Mr. Callis*.) I would like to ask you the question that *Mr. Horne* did not answer. It was this: Are you of opinion that there should be any restrictions as to the hours the employees in banks should be employed at night?—I do not think there should be. At our bank we are never asked to work at night.

205. (To *Mr. Revell*.) I will ask you the question?—In my opinion, the work we do is absolutely necessary. We are never called back on any small excuse. It is always something very necessary when we do go back. So we do our work willingly. We see that it has to be done. We take it as part of the contract—part of the agreement we made when we joined the bank, that we should get the work through, and if it means working an hour or two, or even four or five hours of a night, we do it willingly.

206. (To the deputation.) Is *Mr. Horne* representing you when he gives expression to a statement. Does that represent the opinion of the whole of you?—

*Mr. Horne*: Yes.

207. *The Chairman*.] I take it that the deputation represent, as they said, the whole of the colony?—

*Members of deputation*: Yes.

208. *Mr. Davey* (to *Mr. Horne*).] Did I understand you to say that the petition originated amongst the rank and file of the clerks in Wellington?—Yes.

209. When that petition was sent out, what instructions were given, say, to Christchurch? What instructions were given or suggestions made as to what should be done with it?—I attached a communication to the petition, as far as I remember, headed up "Circular memorandum." It stated that the rank and file of the bank clerks of this city had held a meeting, chiefs excluded, on such-and-such a date—I cannot give you the exact date—and discussed the Shops and Offices Act, with a view to taking action.

210. Why did you exclude assistant accountants and those above that position?—Just to try to show that we were getting the true opinion of the rank and file, because they might be frightened to get up and speak at the meeting if their chiefs were there.

211. You would not include an assistant accountant as one of the rank and file?—No. Of course, there is no assistant accountant in some of the offices. It is only in the big offices that we have an assistant accountant.

212. Was any pressure brought to bear by those in authority over the rank and file to sign this petition?—Not as far as I am aware.

213. You never heard of any?—No.

214. Not in any part of the colony?—Not that I know of.

215. What was the method of sending the petition round?—We just posted it.

216. Take your own bank. What was the method of getting it signed?—I took it round myself. At the meeting in Wellington we appointed a Committee of one representative from each bank. I took the petition after it had left the printer's hands and handed it in to the men appointed from each bank, and they, I presume, took it round to the staff and asked them to sign it.

217. None of you took it round at the behest of the managers?—No.

218. No pressure was brought to bear?—No, I am certain on that point. We are very strong on that. We never discussed the petition with the managers.