

making mistakes of a shilling, say, if they got perhaps 10s. in overtime for doing it. There are plenty of drones who are not much good in a bank.

246. May I assume that there are clerks in Wellington who would like to come back for the sake of earning a couple of shillings and chance losing their employment?—They might come back for a whole night and make 10s.

247. There was some allusion made to a Nelson bank-manager who was fined for not paying overtime?

*Mr. Revell*: He was fined for not allowing the Inspector to see the overtime-book. It was a test case to see if the banks were under the Act. It was decided in the Court that they were, and the manager was fined 1s. I believe the bank is appealing against the decision, and if the appeal goes with it it will be decided that the banks are exempt from the provisions of the Act. It is in case the appeal goes against the banks that we are making this objection now, so as to make assurance doubly sure.

248. *Mr. Barber.*] I understand the deputation's desire for exemption from the provisions of the Act is because of the small amount of overtime they would earn, which would only amount to 2s. an hour and would not compensate them for the loss of the privileges they enjoy at the present time?—That entails an element between us.

249. You are afraid that if paid for overtime the banks will do what the drapers are doing—deduct the ten days' annual holiday and not give sick-pay, and so on, and that the amount paid you for overtime will not compensate you for that loss?—That is one reason.

250. *Mr. Callis* mentioned that. Is that not your object?

*Mr. Callis*: Yes; and another object is that our employers and ourselves are in perfect harmony at present and the proposed change might disturb that harmony.

251. And therefore that harmony you enjoy, together with certain privileges, are worth more than the amount of overtime you would earn?—Yes.

252. *Mr. Ell* (to *Mr. Horne*).] What is your position?—General ledger-keeper.

253. Have you any clerks under your control or direction?—I am general ledger-keeper and check the officers. That is, I examine the books every day and see that they are kept in proper order.

254. So that you occupy a responsible and leading position?—Yes.

255. According to what you say you are not an ordinary rank-and-file clerk?—No.

256. Who drew up the first petition?—*Mr. Menteath*, in 1901. We drew up the reasons which we framed from the 1901 petition.

257. Who asked *Mr. Menteath* to draw up the petition and made communication direct to him in 1901?—I could not say personally. The petition of 1901 was taken up by the whole of the banks, managers included, and I presume from that that it came from one of the higher officials.

258. You cannot say it came direct from the managers?—No.

259. And you cannot say it did not?—No, I cannot.

260. Who circulated the petition in the bank—how was it taken round?—It was posted to the banks throughout the colony by the correspondence clerk. I circulated it for Wellington City.

261. With regard to friction between the higher officials and the clerks, is there any sign of friction up to the present?—No.

262. No sign of it whatever?

*The deputation, unanimously*: No.

*Mr. Revell*: It is all pending the decision in this case.

263. There is perfect harmony between you and the manager?—Yes, we have taken no notice of the Act at all so far.

264. Do you keep an overtime-book?—We do in the Bank of New Zealand. We go on working just as if no Act had been passed.

265. Has an Inspector examined that book?—He has never been called upon to do so.

*Mr. Revell*: This case in Nelson was pending, and as that was so nothing was done.

266. Do you not think it is desirable to check overtime if it can be done without causing friction?—Yes.

267. If the payment of overtime is not enforced, but an overtime-book is kept, do you think that is likely to create any friction?—It would not.

268. And you think it would be a reasonable way of providing a check against overtime?—Yes. That is what we are asking.

269. You do not seriously intend to convey the impression that a clerk would make a mistake for the purpose of getting overtime-pay?—No.

270. You are asking for exemption, I understand?—Yes.

271. There is a clause in the Shops and Offices Act which provides that "The shop or office shall be kept in a cleanly state, and free from any smell or leakage arising from any drain, privy, or other nuisance," that where members of both sexes are employed there shall be separate privy accommodation for each sex so as to insure privacy, that the shop or office shall not be overcrowded, and shall be ventilated in such manner as to provide a sufficient supply of fresh air. Do you consider these provisions desirable for the health of those concerned?—Decidedly.

272. So far as those provisions are concerned you do not desire exemption?—No.

A deputation of insurance clerks representing insurance offices in New Zealand, numbering sixty, attended the Committee.

*The Chairman*: We understand you have come this morning for the purpose of giving evidence in connection with the Shops and Offices Act as affecting your own particular calling. I shall ask the insurance clerks to speak first, and afterwards those who represent the merchants' offices. I presume you have your own speakers prepared. While we consider it desirable you should make the fullest statements possible, I have to ask that you do not repeat each other more than is unavoidable. The time of the Committee is limited, and your own business is no doubt awaiting your supervision.