

accommodation was for two men, and we had two rooms. One was used as a sleeping-room and the other as a sitting-room. The latter room had a fireplace in it. The place was healthy and clean. It was not a very old place, and was good enough. Even in that there was a little drawback, because when the wind blew in a particular direction the chimney smoked through the place not being high enough. There are other small people who supply good accommodation, but I have only heard of these.

24. The instance you have given is the only place you can speak of from your own personal knowledge?—Yes.

25. And if similar accommodation were provided on all the small farms the workers would be satisfied?—I think they would.

26. Did the place appear to be a very costly one?—No.

27. What was the area of the farm—roughly?—About 300 acres. In another place I worked at—it was not quite so large a farm, and it was nearer to Christchurch—the accommodation provided was in the original house erected on the place. The farmer, I think, rented the land and had a good new house put up, and his old house was used as a store-room—the bottom of it. It was very dilapidated, and a box was put up to stop the wind coming in. The fireplace was blocked up, and we slept in the loft. I had to put up a bag tent to keep a candle alight at night to read by. That was in the Riccarton district.

28. Many small farmers do provide decent accommodation for their men, do they not?—A great many of them do. The accommodation on the small farms is better, I think, as a rule, than on the big ones.

29. And your opinion is that if the small farmers can provide good accommodation there is no reason why all the farmers should not do so?—Yes.

30. And you think the men have a right to claim that they shall be decently and wholesomely housed?—Yes. We think that no other working-people are treated like we are.

31. Clause 3 of the Bill says, "The Governor may from time to time appoint Inspectors under this Act, and define the districts over which they shall respectively exercise supervision, or may assign the duty of such supervision, within such area as he directs, to any Inspector appointed under the Factories Act." Is that satisfactory—giving power to appoint Inspectors?—Yes.

32. And the Bill provides a penalty for obstructing any Inspector?—We do not think the Inspectors, if they are appointed as under the Shearers' Accommodation Act, would be satisfactory.

33. Clause 4 says, "For the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act, every Inspector shall have the right of ingress and egress to and from any land or place on or in which any agricultural labourer is employed; and every person who obstructs any Inspector in the exercise of his duty, or refuses him ingress or egress, is liable to a fine not exceeding twenty pounds." Do you approve of that?—I think that is quite necessary.

34. So you think that in some particulars the Bill is all right?—Yes; but we think the last clause, in reference to a "sufficient waterproof tent," would enable any employer, if the Inspector objected to the accommodation, to put up a tent, and we object to tents.

35. *Mr. Poole.*] In connection with Mr. Withell's house at Brookside, was that house erected purposely for the accommodation of the men, or was it a former building in which Mr. Withell lived?—I think it was erected specially for the men. It was not old enough to be his former house.

36. Do you know of any cases where men when drunk and disorderly have wilfully damaged property and upset the arrangements made for them by their employers, who therefore say it is no good doing anything for them, because they do not appreciate it?—I think in some cases such things do happen; but the great majority of the workers are not that class of men. There may be one in a camp like that, and we think it is the duty of the employer to dismiss such a man, instead of making all the others suffer.

37. You would advocate the punishment of such men, although recognised members of the labourers' organization, for not maintaining order in the home?—Yes, I would.

38. With regard to the tents, of course, you understand the tent is not to be used at the homestead?—Yes.

39. Sometimes the men are called upon to do some clearing or ploughing, and for convenience they have to camp out for a day or two, or are away from the homestead where it is impossible to erect a building or take a travelling whare. Do you not think that in the summer-time a waterproof tent would supply comfort enough for a night or two?—For a night or two, yes, so long as they are not permanent residences.

40. Are you and your fellow-workers under the impression that the tent is suggested as an accommodation-house at the homestead?—No; but we are under the impression that if the accommodation was not considered sufficient according to the Inspector the employer could say, "Very well, I will put up a tent."

41. I think they have a wrong idea about this proposal respecting a tent, because, as far as we understand it, the tent has nothing to do with the accommodation at the homestead?—I do not know what the intention was: we only went by the Bill.

42. *The Chairman.*] Read clause 11.—"For the purpose of this Act, accommodation shall be deemed to be sufficient if it consists of (a) a sufficient waterproof tent; or (b) a building, portable or otherwise, containing two hundred and forty cubic feet of air-space for each person to be accommodated therein." We fail to see anything in that to stop a man erecting a tent if the house he has is considered dirty and filthy.

43. *Mr. Poole.*] On sight, of course, the clause is pretty ambiguous, but I do not think with the evidence we have had before us it was ever intended that this clause would make it possible for any man to erect a tent for the accommodation of his men near the homestead. But you are aware that at times men have to go away from the farm, and have to sleep on straw?—There are such cases; but we think that where men have to work horses, if they are only away for a week, a tent is not sufficient.