

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

TUESDAY, 11TH OCTOBER, 1910

WILLIAM TONG examined. (No. 1.)

- 1 *The Chairman.*] Where do you reside?—Auckland.
- 2 Do you represent the Chinese laundrymen here this morning?—Yes.
3. You have read this Factories Bill?—Yes.
4. And you know the views of the Chinese laundrymen on this Bill?—I do, sir
5. Will you tell us what they are?—The Chinese laundry business in Auckland is mostly a small business, which is conducted chiefly by one or two men. Their work starts about 7 in the morning, and then they do their washing. They mostly rely on the weather for drying purposes, but when it is not favourable they hang them in the drying-room, and have to wait for four and a half or five hours before the clothes get dry.
- The Chinese Consul (Yung-liang Hwang):* Can I ask him questions, Mr Chairman, to lead him up to what he might forget?
- The Chairman* Yes.
6. *The Chinese Consul.*] That is all their work?—Yes.
- 7 Tell the Committee how they wash their clothes and iron them?—With their hands. No machinery is used for the purposes of washing.
8. Supposing 100 pieces of laundry are sent to the Chinese, how many hours does it take to finish that job?—Some considerable time. They can only iron about three and a half shirts per hour. After the shirts are starched, if the man is a quick ironer he may do four.
- 9 Have the Chinese partners in most cases?—Most of them are partners. Very few of them employ men. When they come here they are very poor, and, of course, they get a friend or partner and start business, because they have not got sufficient funds to start themselves.
10. How many are usually in a shop?—In Auckland mostly two, but a lot have only one.
- 11 Are there four?—I do not think there are four in Auckland.
- 12 They are mostly partners—not like European laundry factories, which employ many hands and women. They are all partners?—Yes; they do their washing three times a week, and also iron three times a week, and while the clothes are getting dry they are idle and do nothing. When they have not sufficient clothes to wash, they are generally late, and that causes them to work late hours at night.
13. How do they charge?—Their prices are higher than those of European laundries.
14. I have a price-list here from one of the Wellington shops [handed in]. Is that correct?—That is the price-list.
15. *Mr Poole.* Is that the same as Wellington prices?
- The Chairman* This is Louis Lock's.
16. *Mr Poole* Having seen that, I wish to know are these prices identical with Auckland prices?—I believe there is a slight difference. The shirts are 5d. there and 6d. here. In regard to collars, some charge 2d. and some 1½d.
- 17 *The Chinese Consul* ] How do European laundries collect their clothes and deliver them?—The European laundries have depots throughout the city and suburbs where they collect their clothes for the laundry, and they can collect them at any hour up to 11 o'clock at night.
18. Is the collecting included in the eight hours they work?—I do not know. Of course, there are all sorts of businesses included in these depots.
- 19 How do the Chinese laundries collect their clothes?—The Chinese rely on people bringing clothing to the laundry, they do not go out collecting.
20. *Mr Poole* Do they not go out?—I only know of one in Auckland who goes to boarding-houses.
- 21 *The Chinese Consul.*] About what wages do they get in a Chinese laundry?—Some get £1 15s. a week—an especially good ironer about £2 a week. Of course, others who are just learning simply get £1 or £1 5s. until they get to be able to iron properly.
- 22 Are their meals included in the wages?—No, they get their meals free.
23. Could you give the Committee some idea as to whether the number of Chinese in Auckland is increasing or decreasing?—They are not increasing, they are decreasing.
24. *The Chairman.*] That is, the number of Chinese laundrymen?—Yes. Since the amending Act came into force there has been a decrease.
25. *The Chinese Consul.*] Do you know there are small European shops?—Yes, several.
26. A case of a man with his wife or daughter?—Yes.
- 27 Is there any difference between the laundry-work carried on by the Chinese and by the husband's wives or daughters?—No difference as far as I know. I see them working in the European laundries at all hours of the night.
28. Is there a number in the shop a greater or smaller average than the Chinese?—The number is just the same.
- 29 A European man carries on a shop. He must have a wife or daughter to help him. The number of working persons in the European laundry is virtually a little larger than the number of Chinese men?—I have not been in a European laundry very much. Of course, I do not know how many women work there.