

1910.
NEW ZEALAND

LABOUR BILLS COMMITTEE
FACTORIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

(REPORT OF ON THE) TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

(MR. ARNOLD, CHAIRMAN.)

Report brought up 2nd November, 1910, and ordered to be printed.

ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

THURSDAY, THE 7TH DAY OF JULY, 1910.

Ordered, "That a Committee be appointed, consisting of ten members, to whom shall be referred Bills more particularly referring to labour; three to be a quorum: the Committee to consist of Mr. Arnold, Mr. Bollard, Mr. Fraser, Mr. Glover, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Luke, Mr. McLaren, Mr. Poole, Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward, and the mover."—(Hon. Mr. MILLAR.)

WEDNESDAY, THE 5TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1910.

Ordered, "That the Factories Act Amendment Bill be referred to the Labour Bills Committee."—(Hon. Mr. MILLAR.)

REPORT.

I AM directed to report that the Labour Bills Committee, to whom was referred the above-mentioned Bill, have the honour to report that they have taken evidence thereon and carefully considered the same, and recommend that it be allowed to proceed with the amendments as shown on the copy attached hereto.

2nd November, 1910.

J F ARNOLD,
Chairman.

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.

30. Do the Chinese really work, as some people say, at midnight, or all night?—Oh, no!
31. Give some idea as to when they begin and when they stop?—Sometimes, when they have extra clothes in, they work a little later, but they do not start until very late, and they cannot do anything until the clothes are dry. Then they gather them in and starch them, and do not begin to iron them until very late at nights.
32. So their work is irregular, and not methodical?—That is so.
33. It is for no definite period?—No.
34. *The Chairman.*] Is there anything more you wish to say?—No.
35. *Mr William Pryor (Secretary, Employers' Federation).*] Can you give us any idea of the number in Auckland?—I think there are about thirty-three laundries there.
36. How many are registered as employers?—I cannot say.
37. Can you give us some idea as to how many laundries there are in which there is only the employer—neither a partner nor an employee?—I think there are only about six or seven employing labour
38. And the rest consist of only one or two?—Partners.
39. Do I understand you to say that a majority or a large number consist of shops where there is only the owner?—Yes.
40. I want approximately the number in which there is only one, and no partner?—There are several, but I cannot give the exact number
41. Would that apply to half of them?—About eight or nine, I should think.
42. What position would these persons be in under the Bill?—I might explain that during the time licenses have been issued several may have been working there, and some have gone home to China. They do not work very long—not more than two or three years.
43. The Bill as drafted at present says “in every laundry where two or more are engaged.” This will not touch them?—Yes.
44. What will the result be where at present two are engaged in partnership, and this Bill says “two or more are employed”?—I think you will have to close up at 7 every night.
45. Would not the effect be that they would split up, and register as separate owners?—I do not think so.
46. Would they not do that rather than come under the restrictions of the Bill?—I do not think so.
47. You think that where there are only two persons they will prefer to carry on under these restrictions?—If it comes on they must abide by the law.
48. Regarding the hours: You gave the Committee the idea the hours are not very long, after all?—Not the working-hours.
49. At Shortland Street, as you go up to the Grand Hotel?—There are only two in that laundry, and generally it is carried on by only one.
50. Recently I was some weeks there, and I noticed that place open at 9 o'clock in the morning, and I was frequently out until 9.30 or 10 at nights, and it was open then. Would that be a regular thing, or exceptional?—They open very late, because they rely on people to bring their clothes there. They do not go out collecting.
51. Are there any especial sanitary arrangements in connection with a Chinese laundry?—The Inspector inspects them, and he feels satisfied.
52. As a general rule, have they got concrete floors?—Generally concrete, but in a lot of old wooden buildings they are wooden floors.
53. *Mr Fraser*] When he said that the wages were £1 15s. to £2 per week, did that tally with the fact of them being partners?—I mean, those who are employed there.
54. How many are generally employed?—Just about one.
55. Is there never four?—Not in Auckland.
56. Including the employee?—There are not four. There are only six or seven laundries there employing labour
57. *Mr Poole*] The Chinese laundries there find competition very keen with the machine laundries?—Well, this last year they have been very slack. Of course, I do not know how the European laundries feel. The lot are complaining.
58. Is the Chinese laundry business increasing?—They are decreasing. There has been a considerable falling-off. In Ponsonby there have been three Chinese shops closed down.
59. You do not consider that people are having less washing done?—No; the Chinese are getting less to do.
60. *Mr. Luke.*] You say that Chinese are not increasing in Auckland?—No.
61. Is there any proper system to see that their wages are paid, or are they on the boarding-house system?—The men receive their wages weekly.
62. There is no collusion between the proprietor and the men?—No, sir
63. It is a straight-out deal?—Yes.
64. Could they not carry on their business and conform to the same hours as the European?—I do not see how they could. If they had machinery it would be different, but to do it by hand is impossible. The trouble is the drying. They have to wait about five hours for things to dry, while if they had machinery the work would go on without any stoppage.
65. You reckon it is on a par with family laundry-work?—Just the same.
66. Do you not think you ought to conform—to bring up the sanitary arrangements and the flooring to the level of the European?—Everything is done to the satisfaction of the Inspector. If he wishes anything done it is done. I think, every month he goes through the laundries and sees that all the sanitary arrangements are right. He is perfectly satisfied, and I think he is the best person to judge.

67. You think there should not be any more interference with your factory than with a European laundry?—The Chinese do not complain of interference.

68. There is no cutting of prices?—No, the Chinese have all the one price.

69. You feel, however, that you could not carry on within the prescribed hours of the Act?—I am quite sure of it.

70. *Mr McLaren.*] You say they generally start at 7?—They generally light the copper-boiler, and start washing the clothes.

71. How many hours does it take to get through the washing?—About two hours, but, of course, it largely depends upon the quantity of clothing they have got to wash. Sometimes they have only about ten shirts on a Monday morning, and that would not take long.

72. The average is about two hours?—Yes.

73. And five hours drying?—Yes. The stoves are very small, and they are used mostly for heating the irons for the ironing.

74. Does it mean they start the heaviest part late in the afternoon?—Yes.

75. And what hours do they work into the night?—Some of them work until 10. Where there is only one man working he is struggling to make a living, and naturally his hours are longer.

76. In these laundries where they employ labour, are they the larger laundries?—A little larger. Of course, if there were not a little more trade in the case of the others they could not carry on. They are in different streets, and some are busier than others.

77. Up to what hour at night do they continue?—Some close very early and some close a little later.

78. Are there any European laundries in Auckland run by one person?—Yes, there is one in Grey Street open till all hours of the night.

79. Do they employ labour?—Yes, there are three girls. I think, just near the Town Hall. I do not know their names.

80. Are these fitting hours for women to be employed—until midnight?—I do not think so, in the case of women.

81. Is there any special reason why the Chinese laundries should be exempted from these restrictions with regard to hours?—The Chinese have to keep open to suit people who attend work of different classes, and they must wait until these people come home. They do not bring their clothes down until 7 or 8 o'clock, and they must get enough to carry on business.

82. How do the European laundries get over it?—They have depots throughout the city and suburbs, and send around carts. After the clothes are washed they are delivered. There are fruit-shops, booksellers' establishments, and all sorts of businesses which are used as depots for these factories.

83. Is it not possible for the Chinese to make the same conditions?—No. They have not got the amount of money that European laundries have, to engage all these shopkeepers to act for them.

84. *The Chairman.*] With regard to the European laundry in Grey Street, do you say that you have seen the girls working late at night?—Yes, at all hours.

85. Of course, they can get permits to work overtime?—The shop is lit up, and the work is going on inside.

86. Frequently?—Yes.

87. *Mr Fraser*] Are you a practical laundryman yourself?—No, I am an interpreter, but I do a lot of work for the people in that business.

LOUIS LOCK examined. (No. 2.)

1. *The Chinese Consul.*] Could you give some idea as to the number of men and shops in Wellington?—There are thirty-two shops and laundries in Wellington.

2. How many men, roughly speaking?—About sixty-nine—I think sixty-two now.

3. How many shops are there in which there are four men employed?—Only one.

4. How many have three?—I think about six.

5. And the rest have one or two?—Yes.

6. How many have two, roughly speaking?—I think, seven or eight have two in Wellington.

7. Has the number of Chinese laundrymen been increasing during, say, the last two years?—Getting less. In my laundry, where I have always employed five men, now I have only got three.

8. Is there any reason for the number decreasing?—There is not enough work there; the work is decreasing.

9. Are the Chinese laundrymen in Wellington partners?—I think most of them are partners.

10. How many have got employees?—About three or four, where wages-men are employed.

11. Do you charge less or more than the Europeans?—Here is the price-list [handed in].

12. Is this the list that applies to all the Chinese laundries in Wellington?—Every shop has got the same price—6d. for a shirt, and 2d. for a collar.

13. What kind of laundry-work do you get, mostly—collars, cuffs, table-linen, dining-room linen, or bedroom linen?—Mostly soft shirts and collars, from people who are living on their wages.

14. From whom do you get clothes to wash? What class of people? Hotels, boardinghouses, or factories?—Chiefly from people who bring their clothes to be washed to the laundries—mostly working-people.

15. Can you tell the Committee why this Bill will affect you very much—if all the Chinese and European laundries are treated in the same way? The European laundries have eight hours and three quarters a day, and you also get the same amount of time? Are you satisfied from your own experience that there are any reasons why this should not apply to the Chinese?—Our laundries

are worked differently from European laundries. We rely on people who bring their clothes to the laundry before we have any work to do, and we must keep open to allow them to do so. We have no depots like the European laundries to gather their clothes.

16. How about the sanitary conditions about the Chinese shops here?—Several of the Chinese laundries are asphalted and concreted, and the sanitary conditions are very satisfactory

17. You have been here over twenty years?—Yes.

18. And you know the conditions of the Chinese laundries as well as those of the Europeans?—Yes.

19. Are the Chinese worse than European places, or are your conditions in any way dangerous to the community in regard to health?—Some of our laundries are far cleaner than those of the Europeans, and, as far as I can understand, the sanitary arrangements are satisfactory

20. Give one or two facts. In what way are they as good or as healthy as the European places?—I can speak about my own laundry. The Inspector says it is as clean as any European laundry.

21. Could you tell the Committee here why the Chinese take up the laundry-work, and why they do not get to any other occupation?—When they come here first they are very poor, and they have not got sufficient funds to go in for gardens or fruit-shops, they must get into some business, and consequently start a laundry

22. As I understand, in your petition to the House you ask for three things—first, fifty-four hours per week, which would be about nine per day, and really but a little more than the Bill provides for. Why do you want the fifty-four hours?—Because sometimes we have to start late, and if we are compelled to work merely the forty-eight hours we should be unable to carry on.

23. Is that all you have to say about that?—In regard to the 7 o'clock, that would be impossible in our case: people do not bring in their clothes until 8 o'clock or a little later; and if we have to close at 7 we shall have nothing to do.

24. You want your shops to be closed at 9 o'clock on ordinary nights and 10 o'clock on a Saturday night? Why do you want such a privilege?—People do not come in for their clothing until night-time, especially on Saturday nights, and it is for the convenience of customers.

25. Why do you ask that the wages-book should be kept in Chinese, considering that you are in an English country?—We do not understand how to write English, and we cannot get any one to do it for us. We are able to keep it in Chinese.

WILLIAM PRYOR, Secretary, Employers' Federation, examined. (No. 3.)

Witness. I am dealing with the Bill generally, but perhaps it might be for the convenience of our Chinese friends here if I just deal with the laundry question first. With regard to clause 3, dealing with laundries, we say that if it is the intention or desire of the Government to regulate the work in Chinese laundries and to restrict the hours, the clause as drafted will not do it. Evidently the desire of the drafters of the clause has been to make the same conditions applicable to European as well as Chinese laundries, and in order to get some restrictions on the operations in Chinese laundries, further restrictions have been placed upon European laundries than are apparent under the present Factories Act, which controls them now. We say, first of all, that it would be manifestly unfair—and we are sure it is not the intention of the Government or the Committee—to place further restrictions on the Europeans unless the Bill has the desired effect in the other direction. We further say that unless Parliament can meet our objections, and make the clause quite effective as regards Chinese laundries, the clause should not be included at all. We consider that no further restrictions should be placed on European laundries. Competition from Chinese laundries is a very serious matter as far as European laundries are concerned. There can be no question about that, because, notwithstanding Mr Tong's surprising evidence about the laundry in Grey Street, in Auckland, the fact remains that European laundries are run on factory lines in a great majority of cases. There may be some exceptions, but very few: you may have the exception of a woman taking in washing, and that kind of thing. And by reason of the operation of the law, and the reason of having some method, as distinct from our friends' want of method, the hours are from 8 until 5 on ordinary week-days, and 1 o'clock on Saturdays. Mr. Hwang will probably reply that there is the question of the depots and the delivery-carts. Now, I submit to you that to suggest such a thing is very ridiculous. There may be an exceptional case where it has occurred, but to suggest that it was a regular thing to have depots for the receipt of laundry-work and carts for its delivery going till all hours at night appears to me to be quite ridiculous. My point is that the agencies are shop agencies, and if they are employing labour they can only employ it for fifty-two hours a week, and in many cases are compelled to shut down by the operation of the law. As far as drivers are concerned, there is no section of workers throughout the Dominion more controlled by Arbitration Court awards. They are confined to 47 or 47½ hours, and if any work is done over that time they have overtime rates, and the employers will not pay those rates if they can get out of it. So that you can see there is not much in this point that has been made. Turning now to clause 3, subsection (1), 'In every laundry in which two or more persons (whether employees or not) are engaged the following provisions shall apply': Now, the evidence we have heard here so far shows that there are very few Chinese laundries employing labour—that the great majority are either places where there is one man working for himself or two working in partnership. We are inclined to think (Mr Hwang will not take it offensively, I am sure) that if this Bill goes through, there will be a change in the shops where two or more are employed. I very much misjudge the cleverness of our friends if they could not get outside that. Where two or more are employed now, the immediate effect would be that the two would not be employed or the two would not be in partnership very soon after it came into operation. In Auckland, Mr Tong said, six or seven laundries employed labour, and I think that may

be taken to mean that there are six or seven employees. It would be generally an employer and one employee. We have the figures for Wellington City for the last year, which show that, while there were thirty-three Chinese laundries, there were thirty-nine European laundries, further, that there were forty-three Chinese employers in thirty-three laundries, and quite a number of two together

The Chinese Consul: Not including the suburbs?

Witness: Not including the suburbs. We find that the Chinese employees number twenty-one, and the European employees 274. Now, so far as legislation concerning employees is concerned, you can see that it is going to have a pretty considerable effect upon the European employers against the twenty-one Chinese. Another effect I see will come from the operation of the Bill will be that I am afraid quite a number of the twenty-one Chinese will promptly become partners in the concerns.

Mr. Fraser: That does not affect them under the Bill.

Witness: I mean, single employers on their own now. I would point out in connection with Mr. Lock's evidence that he stated there were thirty-two laundries, one with 4, six with 3, and seven or eight with 2 employees—that is, fifteen that would be affected by the Bill. If our contention is right, these seven or eight would soon cease to be affected. That would leave seventeen that would not be affected by the clause at all. I am desirous of making the point that the clause will not have the effect that it is drafted to fulfil. I have got the further point that European employers should not be subjected to further restrictions than now

Mr. Fraser: What are the hours at present?

Witness: The hours of work mentioned in subclause (b) are the same as under the Factories Act—forty-eight for adult males, and forty-five for women and boys. Where, however, the restriction comes in, and a serious one—at the present time it is not necessary to get permits for adult workers to work overtime. They are not restricted to the limited hours as in the case of boys and women, but this Bill makes it necessary that they should be restricted the same as women and boys are now. That does not obtain in any other Act at present.

The Chairman: Could you give the proportion of male workers?

Witness: I could not: the great majority are female workers, and there can be no question about that. Laundry-workers are female workers. Mr. Tong mentioned the case where a husband and wife worked the laundry. The Bill does not propose to alter that. It provides that where a husband and wife are engaged in it the Bill does not apply

The Chairman: His point was that they had to compete with that.

Witness: The competition would be, from the Chinese point of view, still worse than at present. The Chinese would be restricted, while there would be a free hand given to husband and wife. I have not got a copy of the West Australian Factories Act—it deals with the laundries there; but we say that the only way—if Chinese laundries are going to be dealt with, and if their hours are going to be restricted—is to say that there shall be certain hours for them irrespective of whether they are partners or individual employers. The West Australian Acts, I think, reads that no laundry in which Chinese or Asiatics are employed should be open before 8 in the morning or after 5 in the afternoon. Whether the Committee or Parliament would take those drastic measures is a matter for their consideration. We say that this clause will not do it, and we are satisfied that it will not deal effectively with the hours in the laundries; and we say that it will be quite unfair and absolutely unjust to put further restrictions on the Europeans. That is the only justification for the clause. With regard to sanitary conditions, I did not mean to suggest that the conditions were insanitary only in Chinese laundries. There is no question that we could bring evidence that there are Chinese laundries in which the conditions are not what they could be, and they could bring the same evidence in regard to some of the smaller of the European laundries. We, however, do say that there should be strict sanitary conditions, such as concrete floors for the purpose of getting rid of washing-suds, and that that is not done. It is necessary for the health of the neighbourhood, as well as of all those whose clothes are going into these places. I should like particularly that you should note an exemption we desire if the clause is made law. We ask that it should not apply to those engaged in lighting fires, getting up steam, cleaning the premises, or employed at machinery. Until steam is got up, the bulk of the workers cannot commence work. It would mean really the engine-drivers and firemen in the steam laundries, and they are pretty well all covered by the engine-drivers' awards. The cleaning of premises is an absolute necessity, and must be done after hours, and there is provision here that no work should be done after these hours. Then, of course, it is necessary in the interests of employers and employees alike that if repairs are necessary the stoppage of work should be for as short a time as is possible, and that the repairs should be done in other than working-hours. I will not take up your time further on this clause.

1 *The Chinese Consul*.] In what ways are the Chinese laundrymen working on the same lines as a European factory?—I think I said, somewhat on the lines of the small factory, where there is a husband and wife—not on the lines of our large steam laundries. I meant that a small factory run by a woman, or by a woman and a man, was pretty much on the same footing.

2. Will you give us one or two points as to the competition?—I will leave details of that kind to Mr. Wills. I do say, however, that any one who has ever been near a Chinese laundry will recognize that it is a very serious item in regard to competition with that class of trade.

3. The Chinese think the other way about—that it will give the European more chances, and give them less?—First of all, if the Bill were to go through such as it is, and the conditions were to remain as they are, then the question in regard to where two or more are employed in a Chinese laundry will be affected. If I were in a Chinese laundry in partnership with another, I should simply say, "You had better get out, and get a place of your own. If you do not we shall come under the law." So far as European laundries are concerned, they have no advantage under

the Bill at all: the conditions are practically the same, with the exception that there are these restrictions for male employees and some others regarding exceeding the hours of work. They suffer restrictions under the Bill, and say, "If the clause is going to deal effectively with Chinese laundries, we are prepared to suffer; but it will not do that, and we are not prepared to suffer that."

4. The disadvantage on the Chinese side is that they have to close their shops at a certain hour, and cannot receive their delivery of washing. That would hinder their customers, and the customers will have to send their washing to the European laundry, to the advantage of your side and the disadvantage of the Chinese?—Well, let us work it out: Take Mr Lock's statement—He said there was one Chinese laundry with four employees, and six with two. Supposing they cannot get clear of it, they are only seven, but the other eight, with two working, will be in a great majority of cases two partners. They can quietly engage separate rooms for their work, so that the Bill will affect only seven, and five will get clear of it. I suppose that in stating this I am showing our friends the way to dodge it.

5. *Mr Fraser*] If it did have a place, it would mean increased expenditure in the matter of rental and appliances?—Probably that would be the cheaper Mr Lock has told us that it is a business that does not require any expenditure of capital.

6. *The Chinese Consul.*] Do the European laundries receive and deliver stuff before 8 in the morning and after 5 in the afternoon?—If the carriers do it, they are restricted to 47½ working-hours under the award, and they have to be paid overtime. If shops are kept open for the purpose of receiving or delivering, they are restricted by the Shops and Offices Bill to fifty-two hours.

7 Do you think if hours are prescribed they will be as severe to the Chinese as to the Europeans?—I should be afraid to stand up and say the hours of work should be increased. We are not asking for any increase in the working-hours.

8. But the hours of delivery and receiving are not limited?—You are putting aside the carriers.

9. Where drivers are employed to deliver?—They are restricted to 47½ hours right throughout the Dominion

10. Do they deliver after 5 o'clock?—They may, but they can only work 47½ hours throughout the week under their award.

11. What about working until 10.30 on Saturday night?—That may be, but if a man's time has gone over 47½ hours, then there is time and a half for it. Then, in regard to the depots, where people bring their stuff and go for it, they are controlled to a greater or lesser extent by the Shops and Offices Act. If there is going to be any legislation as far as the Chinese are concerned, the same will have to be provided for Europeans.

12 You state that the Chinese will treat their employees as partners what difference will that make?—I am only saying what I think I would do myself, and I am perfectly satisfied that if I were engaged in the business, if there were two engaged in partnership there would be another room taken for the second. That could be worked quite easily

13. They cannot do that because it will mean more expense?—A little more business will make up the increased expenditure.

14. If they remain as they do at present it does not make a difference, because the law states "where there are more than two employed"?—That is so.

15 If the Chinese have two or three working together, it is a factory, and they have to observe factory-hours. If they have a woman with them that place will be exempted?—Not unless there are two or three there.

16. The point is that if there are two Chinese working together, that is a factory, and they will have to observe the law?—That is so.

17 They would not split partnership?—Mr Lock has stated in his evidence that there are fifteen laundries in which there are two or more engaged, but then there are seventeen outside the Bill. The majority would still be outside it. My point is still strong

18. *Mr McLaren.*] Do you represent all the European laundrymen in the city?—I have been appointed by the Employers' Federation to represent the laundry people of the Dominion.

19 What authority have you?—We represent a large number of those who are engaged in the industry

20. The people who waited on the Minister?—I have nothing to do with that.

21 Have you authority to represent the employees in European laundries?—No.

22 *The Chinese Consul.*] In the European factories most of the employees are girls?—It is to a large extent female employment, but there are a considerable number of male employees.

23. Therefore this will put the Chinese on the same footing as the weaker sex?—It is doing the same so far as the European men are concerned; but, although there are forty-eight hours provided for for the man, when you make the women's working-time forty-five hours, you cannot have the one without the other

24. Is fifty-four hours too long for the Chinese?—I suppose if you gave Europeans the same privileges we should be satisfied; but we say, whatever is given to the Chinese should be given to the Europeans right throughout.

WILLIAM PRYOR further examined. (No. 4.)

Witness Taking the Bill generally, and omitting clause 3, in regard to section 2, subsection (c), we ask to insert the word "usually" before the word "employed." We ask in regard to subsection (3) to have the words "during ordinary working-hours" inserted after the word "time" in line 21, making it read, "The Inspector may at any time during ordinary working-hours require the occupier to verify the entries in the said book in such manner and form as may

be prescribed by regulations." We have no difficulty at all with regard to that matter in the larger centres and where there are regular Inspectors, but the difficulty would be in the smaller centres, where perhaps there is an officious gentleman who might deem he had the right to walk in at any time, and it is not necessary that he should have that right. The clause, apart from the laundry clause, to which the great objection is taken is section 4—in regard to the branding of certain articles as having been made in New Zealand. We ask that that clause be deleted altogether.

Mr Luke With all its subsections?

Witness The whole thing. It is just as well to say what we want to point out, and there is no use in beating about the bush. We say that the requirements would be found to be impracticable in some cases, and would be found to have exactly the opposite effect to what is intended. We take it that the intention is to encourage and increase the sale of those New-Zealand-made articles, and to foster a patriotic feeling in connection with those articles. The clause provides that they should be branded as "made in New Zealand." There is no question that in connection with some of the goods mentioned you are going to destroy the sale to a very serious extent, and, as a matter of fact, hurt both the employers and the workers. Mr Hannah is here to speak in regard to the boot trade. With regard to clothing and textile goods, the woollen people, while they have not got the same objection as the boot people, and while they do advertise their business largely as New Zealand goods—but in wools New Zealand has made a name for herself, and it would not do any harm. I do not want to go through all the details of this clause, but we submit that if they have a parcel of hosiery with a label on, that would not be sufficient to meet the requirements. What good is this proposed enactment going to do? The man who buys a pair of socks or the woman who buys a pair of stockings does not look at the label on the parcel. If it is going to have any effect the brand would have to be woven in, and that would increase the cost of production; and we consider that it is neither practicable nor necessary so far as we are concerned. I have consulted with Mr Donne, and I got Mr Scott in Dunedin to get hold of the Mosgiel people, and I found that to enable the brand to be inserted on the selvaige, it would mean the importing of very expensive machinery, while they inform me that the output was not sufficient to warrant that. They advertise their goods, and if it were commercially practicable the woollen people would be glad to do it in regard to rugs and worsted articles, but in some cases it would be impracticable, and compliance in other cases would not be effective. With regard to clothing, there are many men who are wearing suits of New Zealand stuff, but think they are wearing imported goods, and if they were to be told that definitely when buying their clothing they would want the imported goods. Then, in regard to canned and preserved foods for human consumption, I do not know how that is practicable. The brand would have to be embossed on the tins, and I question whether it is good business—from the point of view of increasing the demand for New-Zealand-made articles—that this should be enforced. This is already done in many cases. Even if the brand "Made in New Zealand" is desirable, the time has not come in New Zealand when such a law should be put into operation. We are not yet sufficiently educated, and I am perfectly satisfied that if it is put into operation it is going to have a very ill effect upon the industries dealt with under the clause, and from every point of view. If it is deemed desirable that legislation of some sort should be made, then we should suggest that the simple expedient adopted by England, Victoria, and other countries, of insisting that the imported article should bear the mark of the manufacturing country, should be adopted here. In that way you would get the same advantage that is now sought for. Where it is policy to brand New Zealand articles by the manufacturers, they will very soon find it out, and make it a business proposal. I have nothing further with regard to the main clauses. Coming to the schedule, I desire to draw attention to the proposed amendment to section 27 of the principal Act. That amendment is restricting the powers of Inspector regarding the granting of permits to young boys and girls. The proposal is that all the words of paragraph (a) after the word "authorization" shall be omitted, and the words "shall be given only in the case of boys over thirteen years of age who are the holders of certificates of exemption as prescribed by regulations under the authority of paragraph (e) of section one hundred and fifty of the Education Act, 1908" Provided that no boy or girl whose employment is so authorized shall be employed in any workroom in which machinery is used" shall be inserted in lieu thereof. That means that a permit will not be given under any circumstances to a boy under sixteen who is not the holder of an examination certificate that he has passed the Fourth Standard and it is proposed to make it the Fifth Standard. We suggest that permission should be given to grant permits to boys who have not passed either the Fourth or Fifth Standard. We only ask for discretionary power for the Inspector. You are doing an absolute cruelty to those who cannot pass the Fourth Standard, but yet are able to work in factories. I had a case in Dunedin of a young fellow of twenty-two who was able to work, but had never been able to pass the Second Standard. He had not the mental power to do it. There are many others who from circumstances beyond their own control have not had the opportunities of passing the Fourth or Fifth Standard. Why should they be prevented from getting employment? We say, do not make it open to all, but give the discretionary power. The request is a reasonable one, I submit, from a humanitarian point of view. The proviso in this clause, as proposed in the amendment, is going to prevent these boys from going into a boot-factory, a clothing-factory, or any factory where machinery is used at all. I am not asking that he should be put on the machinery, but he may be there getting some acquaintance with the surroundings, so that he could get work on the machines when he is sixteen, and we ask that provision should be made to give the Inspector the discretionary power to grant permits in exceptional cases to persons under sixteen who have not passed the Fourth Standard. We also ask that the proviso should be altered to permit boys and girls so authorized to be employed in workrooms where machinery is used, so long as they are not employed on the machine. In regard to section 32 of the principal Act, a proposed amend-

ment (aa) provides "No deduction shall be made from the wages of any boy or any woman under eighteen years of age except for time lost through the worker's illness or default, or on account of the temporary closing of the factory for cleaning or repairing the machinery." I am asking that there should be inserted after "on account of," in the fourth line of the paragraph, the words "slackness of trade or." If you passed the proposed amendment to the clause you would be doing a very great wrong to all parties concerned. First of all you are going to compel an employer to pay for work that is not done. I submit that when industries are struggling under a heavy burden, any additional burden should not be imposed. In trades which are seasonable the busy season is the harvest time for both the employer and the worker. The one has the business to control, and the other has the work to do, and every hour that the employees work beyond the forty-five hours they get overtime. You say by this provision that the employer shall not only pay overtime during the busy season, but he shall pay for the time when he has not got work for his employees, and has not got the money to pay them with. We admit that there is a fairness in paying overtime rates for overtime work, but say that it is not fair to compel us to pay for time that is not worked at all. If this is insisted upon, it is going to have a very ill effect upon the workers. Take, again, the seasonable trades: The employer during slack times is going to pick out those who are the best, and dismiss all the others; because, after all, you can put that clause in, but cannot prevent a man from dismissing those who are engaged on a weekly wage. It will mean there will be a few chosen hands kept on, while the others are simply going to their work in the busy season, and have none at all the other time. It is going to be a little awkward for the employer, because when the busy time comes he is going to have some difficulty in getting his hands together; but it will throw the workers out of employment during the slack periods. In regard to the proposed amendment to section 38, subsection (3), we propose that the subsection should be deleted, as it will compel payment for other than statutory holidays. Subsection (3) seems to us as if it will compel payment for all holidays, statutory or otherwise. It applies to every boy under eighteen years of age and women under twenty-one years, and apprentices who are paid by time wages. It is not quite clear to us, but I think we are not very far wrong in supposing that it means payment for every holiday that may be proclaimed by the Governor, Mayor, or Chairman of any tinpot Road Board or Borough Council. You are going to let the employers into all this sort of thing. Mr. Hannah will tell you that it would mean £70 each holiday to him alone if these are to be paid for, and you do not know where it is going to lead. I have tried to express my views shortly on these matters, and I will leave it there. Mr. Hannah will speak in regard to section 4 and other matters.

PHILIP WILLS (representing P. Wills and Sons) examined. (No. 5.)

1 *The Chairman.*] Do you represent every laundryman in the city?—Two other steam laundries—Mr. Naismith, of Hopper Street, and Mr. Morris, of Daniel Street.

2. You have heard Mr. Pryor's statements: do you agree with what he has said?—Yes.

3. Is there anything you wish to add?—There is one thing in clause 3, "in every laundry in which two or more persons (whether employees or not) are engaged the following provisions shall apply": we think that every place where laundry-work is carried on for hire or reward should be deemed a factory.

4. It is, under the present law?—This says, two or more persons.

5. That is for a special purpose, but nevertheless it is a "factory" under the Factories Act. It provides for every laundry, whether they receive payment or not?—I mean, as far as this clause here is concerned. We consider that every laundry where work is done for hire or reward should come under the Factories Act, and that the whole building where the work is carried on should be deemed a "factory." I know the Inspectors here have had a difficulty in finding this out. With regard to those Chinese laundries, it is a very easy matter for them, if two are working together, to go singly; and there is nothing in the Act to prevent them that I can see. Then, with regard to those restrictions that are proposed at present, we are allowed to work provided the men are paid the overtime rates. We should not object to getting a permit, because we have to get one for the sake of the females and young lads. In our factory there are twelve men and a lad employed, and sixty-odd females. I am not in it myself, but, counting my own sons, there is a total of fifteen men. In the case of Mr. Naismith, he employs over fifty hands altogether. In the case of Mr. Morris, he does not employ so many. It is not a steam laundry, and there are no males there but himself. We do not want anything extra for the Chinamen, but we want them to come under the same laws and regulations as we are under. We do not want any extension of hours whatever—they are quite long enough—but we do not see why they should be privileged any more than we are, and consider that a Bill such as this would be giving a privilege to Chinamen and be barring Europeans. We want the cleaners and the men who get steam up to be allowed to work outside the specified hours. We have to employ a man to sweep up the place after the others have gone on Saturday afternoon, and of course the machinery must be looked after.

6. *The Chinese Consul.*] The Chinese do not ask to be given more privileges than the Europeans, but do you not think that the Chinese have the same right to ask the same privilege of the household?—Certainly not. A household is not under the Factories Act.

7. What is a "factory"?—It is usually a place where two or more are employed.

8. The Chinese simply ask to be treated equally with the small laundry places where there is a man and his wife or daughter; so that they have not asked for more privileges than they give to you?—You were asking to start at 7 in the morning and work until all hours of the night.

9. Do not Europeans do the same? I have heard of a small one where there are lines out until 12 o'clock at night?—I think, in justice to himself, he should lay an information before the Inspector. There is one other point, as representing the employers: if they are allowed to keep

open until 7, our hands go out at 5, and why should the Chinese be allowed these two hours extra. The males in the large establishments cannot work after the females, and the Chinamen are doing female work chiefly

10. *Mr. Fraser*] You said that you would wish to see a definition of "factory" for laundry purposes—that it should be "Every person who takes in washing for payment"—Every place.

11. How would that affect married women who took it into their own homes?—It could not affect them at all. The registration is not a hardship.

12. I was going to show you that what you were asking for has a wider effect than you think. You wanted this provision that every place where either male or female took in washing for payment should be deemed a "factory"?—Yes.

13. That would cause a married woman to be subject to all those hours and disabilities. Is that what you want?—I do not consider that, but I do not see why they should not be restricted from working in their own homes the same as those in a factory. I think it is far healthier to work in a large factory than in little stuffy rooms in their own houses.

14. It would affect women taking washing into their own homes?—To the extent of 1s. per year.

15. But it would affect them?—I do not see that we can legislate for one without the other.

16. *Mr. Luke*.] How do your wages compare with the wages stated by Mr. Tong—some £1 15s. a week, and good ironers £2?—There are none of our people under £2—and after forty-eight hours there is overtime.

17. I asked Mr. Tong whether he reckoned the Chinese were on the same footing as the European wife and daughter. Do you think that there should be any difference?—I think they should be all the same.

18. You think that the home should be subject to the Factories Act so long as they take in laundry-work for hire?—Certainly I think so.

19. Do you think there is any advantage in using machinery against Chinamen?—It is certainly an advantage.

20. But it has other disabilities with it?—Yes, of course.

21. Has your experience been that the nature of the competition from Chinamen is harmful?—As far as we are concerned it has not had much effect, but in the smaller places they feel it very severely.

22. You say there ought to be exemptions? What do you claim?—In regard to lighting fires, getting up steam, and cleaning the place.

23. And not be paid for as overtime?—Oh! to be paid for as overtime, but exempted from this clause. A laundry wants to be kept clean.

24. *Mr. McLaren*.] With regard to cleaners and firemen, you do not ask that they should be employed for a greater total number of hours per week than the others?—No. I suppose a sweeper should be half or three-quarters of an hour longer, but, as for the others, it takes about an hour.

25. *Mr. Hardy*] In regard to this list that has been put in: Do your prices compare favourably with this: "White shirts, 6d.; collared shirts, 7d."?—We do not charge 7d. for collared shirts.

26. You issue a price-list?—Yes.

27. Is there an agreement amongst the laundrymen generally as to their price?—No.

28. Is there any combination in the trade?—No.

29. You ask for certain exemptions in regard to firemen and cleaners. Would you not make an exemption for the poor woman with a starving family?—I do not think that she would have any fires to keep up.

30. Supposing you had not been a man in large employment—that Providence had not favoured you, and that you had left a wife with some children, would you like her to be brought under this clause?—I think that might be left to the Inspectors.

31. *Mr. Luke*] Are not your people now exempt from cleaning out the factory?—The Act as it stands does not apply to males over eighteen years of age.

32. The only exemption now is in regard to getting up steam?—They can work the men.

33. So, is there an allowance for the engineer?—Yes.

34. You want the same provision for the man who cleans out the factory?—But not for so long a time.

35. *The Chinese Consul*.] How many agencies do you employ?—One. I believe that is all.

36. Does he deliver after the shop-hours?—I do not know the hours, but he does it for a commission.

WILLIAM PRYOR, Secretary of the Employers' Federation, further examined. (No. 6.)

Witness: I wish to refer to a point I omitted when speaking before the Committee the other day, and which is, that if branding is made compulsory, tweeds and other stuff brought in under this clause would have to be branded, when made into suits of clothes, &c., "Made in New Zealand," while, as a matter of fact, the material was not made in New Zealand. This material might be shoddy, and do some harm. I am speaking of made-up stuff, and I was asked particularly to bring this matter forward.

ROBERT HANNAH, boot-merchant, Wellington, examined. (No. 7.)

Witness: The first part I wish to deal with is the stamping of colonially manufactured boots and shoes. I have no hesitation in saying that the sale of the upper grades, in which we are endeavouring to compete with the imported article, would be affected by 50 per cent.

Mr. Luke You mean the better classes of goods?

Witness Yes, in which at present we are endeavouring to compete with the imported article. We have gone to some considerable expense in importing lasts, and in all our imports that is our first consideration. We select the most up-to-date goods, and copy them if possible. By branding them as having been made in New Zealand the sale would be affected, I can safely say, to the extent which I have mentioned. When I say so, I do not mean that we are deceiving the public. We do not sell them as imported goods, in keeping the general stock which we keep on our hands, and a good many purchase them under the impression that they are imported goods. I might say that this opinion is universally indorsed by the trade in New Zealand. The next part I have to deal with is touching section 38, regarding the holidays. I hope that the Legislature will not impose any further restrictions on manufacturers in the shape of increasing the holidays on which payment is to be received, and from which they receive no remuneration. At the present time I can honestly say that I do not think there is a boot-manufacturer in New Zealand making money, or holding his own for the past eighteen months, owing principally to the increased price of material and the restrictions imposed by Parliament in regard to labour. According to the reading of this section I take it that all youths and women under twenty-one will have to be paid for Christmas holidays, and so forth, outside the statutory holidays. If that be the case, of course it would inflict a very considerable hardship on boot-manufacturers. I do not know that I have much further to say on the matter, nor do I know that that is the intention of this paragraph here. If that be the case I think you will find that the trade will object to it very strongly, and rightly so too.

1 *Mr Fraser*] What about the slackness of trade?—I cannot say that that affects me to the extent to which it affects the trade in general. So far as we are concerned, our people work from January to January. At the same time, it would affect 75 per cent. of the trade.

2 *Mr Luke.*] It would affect you if you had not so many branch establishments?—That is so.

3 You say that the upper grades of the trade would be affected. I suppose that is the class that people are very critical about, and in regard to which they have a prejudice against colonial goods?—That is so.

4. And you think that the statutory holidays should be paid for?—We have no objection to that, but to increasing them.

5. Assuming that any of your apprentices were away—say, in the case of a short illness—and you had not paid them, would you expect them to make up that time?—According to our apprenticeship indentures, but I do not think that we have two apprentices in the place.

6. *Mr McLaren.*] Have you many customers who ask for colonial goods?—Not outside the heavy makes. Of course, it is known that that class of stuff is not imported. I can indorse Mr Pryor's statement with regard to clothing departments. I know a man here holding a very good position who went to a tailor and expected an English worsted suit. The man showed him colonial worsted, and it was very good. He made up the suit, and the customer found out afterwards that it was colonial, and he never went back to the tailor again. He thought that English worsted was better for keeping its shape and made up better.

7 *Mr Hardy*] How do you account for the people demanding imported instead of colonial-made goods?—Because they have got an idea that the imported is better-fitting and better workmanship.

8. Have we not got as good workmen here?—Yes.

9 As good plant and machinery?—As good plant as in any part of the world to-day.

10. Is your trade increasing?—When I push it.

11 It is not going far behind?—No.

12. Is it because you have not been making as good articles that the people ask to have imported?—No; it is because the general public have a tendency to appreciate the imported article.

13. Is it the want of loyalty to one's country?—I can only speak for myself.

14. Is it your opinion that the manufacturers in New Zealand have been making as good boots as the imported?—They have, and to-day there is stuff here equally as good as there is to be found in any part of the world.

15. Do you think there is better?—No; you might pick out a few equal, but not better. If you wish, I can give you the names, but I do not think it would be right, it would be only advertising them.

16. Then, you are of opinion that you make as good boots here as you import?—Yes.

17 But you have not got the public to believe so?—That is so.

18. Is it because you have been making shoddy and putting it on the markets?—It is just the reverse.

19. Is it that there has been a demand for good stuff, and you have been giving them shoddy?—No. I know that at one time we could not import stuff of a low-enough grade; now we cannot give that stuff away.

20. There is an advertisement in to-day's paper where there is a firm advertising boots made in America, and some in England under certain brands?—No doubt.

21 If you could supply good stuff, would it not pay you better to do so?—Yes.

22. Would it not be better to hand it down as "Hannah's best"?—We have been endeavouring to do that for a long time. For your information I might tell you that at one time we had a very loyal Premier and a very loyal Attorney-General. These two gentlemen came in, and I served them myself. They wanted colonial goods, and I certainly showed them good stuff as well as imported stuff. The Premier took three pairs of the imported, and the Attorney-General two; so there is your loyalty. I might say that another point I think it would be very interesting to know is what a holiday means to me. I would give you the accurate figures.

THURSDAY, 13TH OCTOBER, 1910.

ROBERT HANNAH further examined. (No. 8.)

1 *Mr Hardy*] When you were last before the Committee we were discussing the question of the branding of boots. Are you authorized to appear for the Wellington merchants and for the manufacturers?—No, I am not; I am representing leather

2. Is it within your knowledge that some of the boot-manufacturers still continue marking their boots with their own brand?—We all do that.

3. Well, does the brand bear the name of your firm?—No.

4. When I speak of your own brand I speak of the distinguishing brand of the firm that is known to the public?—Well, all brands are known to the public. For instance, our brand is known to the public.

5. But is it a brand that is intended to disguise the fact that it is made in New Zealand, or is it plainly your own brand—your own name?—No, our brand is “G.”

6. And what is the reason for your branding your best good with “G” instead of with the name which is so honoured in New Zealand?—Well, I am glad to hear you say that, but we do not brand the best goods “G.” In fact, we found that affected the sale, and we have had to leave that off.

7. What do you brand them, as English or American?—No, we give them different names, keeping as near as possible with the imported brand.

8. You do not intend to deceive the public in any way, do you?—No, we are not deceiving the public.

9. But you are surely not ashamed of your own good name?—No, not personally

10. Would it not advertise your goods if you put your own good name on them?—No.

11. It would not advertise your goods?—No, it might advertise the name, but it would not increase the sale of the goods. That is our weak point.

12. That is what I want to get at, because we want to help the trade as much as we can?—Yes.

13. Is it with the object of palming off New Zealand goods as American or English that you do that?—No, I do not know that you can look at it in that light. If our customers ask for an American boot, of course we supply it, and if they ask for an English boot we supply it; but if they do not ask for either, of course, we certainly put our own first.

14. You believe in what you make yourself?—Yes, certainly

15. But you have not sufficient confidence in what you make yourself to enable you to brand them?—No, it is not the want of confidence on our part, but it is the want of confidence on the part of the public. That is the distinction.

16. Do you not think that New-Zealand-made boots are quite equal to those coming from the older countries?—Yes, I have said so when I was here before.

17. You distinctly think that?—Yes.

18. And yet you have lost faith in your own trade?—No, I have not; but the public has.

19. Can you tell me why the public has?—No. I can judge for myself, but I cannot judge for you

20. But it is not for me, it is for the Committee?—Yes, but we have to put it in that light. That is about the closest form in which I can give you a reply

21. Is it on account of the cutting of trade that the grades have been so reduced—that they have become very poor, and that people have been dissatisfied with them?—No, it is not. I do not think that has anything to do with it. I suppose there is 60 per cent.—probably I might go further, and take a greater percentage, but it is as well to keep within the bounds—of the purchasing public who have an idea that the imported article is better than the locally made article. I presume you can speak from experience on that point.

22. Do you not know as a fact that customers come to you—that is, wholesale customers, and ask specially for your own brands that you have made a name for?—A certain class of goods.

23. For instance, the old French-calf boots that were so much in vogue some years ago?—That is as dead as Julius Cæsar

24. I know that other makes have come in?—Yes.

25. Did they not give great satisfaction for some time?—Yes.

26. And were splendid goods?—Yes.

27. And were made by yourself and others?—Yes.

28. And other goods have come in and put them out?—Yes.

29. At other times the American boots had the run?—Yes.

30. Are there as many American boots imported as there were?—No, they are a dead-letter

31. The English boots have largely supplanted them?—Yes, more than supplanted them.

32. Is it in consequence of the preferential tariff?—Yes; there is no doubt about that.

33. The 11 per cent. made all the difference?—The 12½ per cent.

34. And that has put the American goods out of the market?—Yes.

35. Do you know if many American boots are on the market in England just now?—Well, no. I think they have in the wholesale. The Americans have opened shops in the principal parts of England, and I think that is the principal consumption for American goods.

36. Do you think England is able to make a boot for its own trade?—Undoubtedly

37. And can they make goods to suit our market here?—Well, with a little instruction they can.

38. They can carry out what you want?—Yes.

39. Do you know of some firms that still continue to put the firm's name on their best goods?—Do you mean locally?

40. Yes?—No, I do not.

- 41 Do you know the firm of Suckling Bros., of Christchurch?—Yes.
- 42 Do you know that "S.B." is still the brand put on their best boots?—But does that indicate their name, or is it their trade-mark?
- 43 The name is almost as well known in Christchurch as Hannah is in Wellington and in the North Island?—I did not know that it referred particularly to Suckling Bros., but I have not come in contact with their goods. I question whether I have seen a pair of their boots for years, even in my travels.
- 44 Is it within your knowledge that some of the old-fashioned firms that make really good boots and have made a name for themselves—that they still continue to brand their boots with the name of the firm?—That may be, but, of course, with certain lines.
- 45 For good goods?—Well, I do not think you will find many extensive manufacturers doing so.
- 46 Is it not a fact that some manufacturers are very large importers?—That is so. Unfortunately we are compelled to import.
- 47 And is there not a danger of the one coming into conflict with the other—that is, the importing and the manufacturing?—Not the slightest.
- 48 You only import what suits you, and make up what suits you?—We do not import what suits us, but import what we are compelled to import.
- 49 But there must be profits out of those goods?—Of course, you are putting a very important question—probably more important than you really imagine. Now, I went to some considerable expense in erecting a new factory.
- 50 I know it is a splendid factory?—I had it made up to date, and I was under the impression that we could reduce our imports by at least one-half. We have the facilities for turning out the work—labour, and so forth; but the quantity of labour, and suitable labour, is not procurable in the colonies. Now, this year we have had to cable on three different occasions, and no later than last Monday, for stuff that we could manufacture well in the colonies; and that was owing to the deficiency of labour.
- 51 Is that owing to the scarcity of hands?—Yes.
- 52 You cannot get hands?—We cannot get suitable hands. I do not think there is labour of any description available.
- 53 How do you account for the scarcity of hands?—Of course, you can account for it in more ways than one. Apprentices, of course, have been wiped off the sheet.
- 54 Does the working bootmaker earn sufficient money to induce him to put his boy into the trade?—I do not know of any other trade, taking it on the whole, that will earn more money than the bootmakers are and have been doing for years past.
- 55 That is the ordinary man employed by the manufacturers?—Yes.
- 56 What is the rate of wages in a factory?—Well, the rate will run from £2 10s. to £4 10s., and, of course, exceptional hands will get £5.
- 57 That would be when you are working at full time?—Well, we always work at full time.
- 58 But do the ordinary manufacturers that have not got shops—are they able to work at full time?—No, they are not.
- 59 Then their men are placed at a disadvantage as compared with yours?—They are, but at the same time it does not pay them to shift to take up a position with me, or with men who are able to work full time. They have their homes and their families, and, of course, there is a considerable expense in the men shifting with their families if it is merely temporary employment.
- 60 Is it generally known that the rate of wages you pay is so good?—Oh! that is the trade, I am not referring to myself.
- 61 There is a difference between you and the ordinary trade in that you can keep your men on always?—Yes.
- 62 You have already told us that your men do well because your men can be employed at full time?—I think that is the first consideration a man should take up—namely, permanent employment. That is the question that both employee and employer should give consideration to.
- 63 But some manufacturers are not so favourably situated as you are?—Yes; there is nothing so annoying to a manufacturer as not to be able to work full time.
- 64 What is the average rate of wages for a bootmaker in New Zealand, do you think?—I think, if you take the average rate it would be £3—about £150 a year. I think they will average that for permanent work. Of course, I was not speaking of permanent or not permanent.
- 65 Reverting to branding, you are perfectly satisfied that if you were to brand your boots made in New Zealand with your own name, or with the name of your firm, the sales would go down?—Decidedly.
- 66 And after making such splendid stuff all these years people still really do not believe in it?—Not in the higher-graded goods. Of course, trade has been pretty well turned upside down for the past ten years. At one time the purchasing public in New Zealand went in for wear and weight; now they go in for lightness and appearance.
- 67 You do not know anything about woollen materials?—No.
- 68 Do you know good tweeds are made in New Zealand?—I do.
- 69 And you think it would be wise to brand them?—We are ruled by the public.
- 70 Would it surprise you to know that I asked at one time for an imported piece of material to have an overcoat made with, and that I was given a piece of Roslyn instead, and that I was told it would last as long as a piece from Home?—Probably it would.
- 71 I obtained it ten years ago, and the material is as good now as the day I got it?—They were dealing with you honestly.

72 Would it not improve all that material if it were branded, and it were generally known it had kept its colour for ten years?—If we had to take ten years to find out an item like that, we might be over the bridge.

73. Is it not a fact that New Zealand turns out a tremendous amount of shoddy stuff in order to meet shoddy manufactured stuff that is imported?—It would not pay New Zealand manufacturers to manufacture it.

74. Would you not manufacture shoddy stuff to sell to firemen and others?—No.

75. Is it not split?—Yes, but the soles are of solid leather, and I could show you split that would wear equal to the best tanned grade kip.

76. That is well loaded?—Yes.

77 *Mr Luke.*] Is Dominion-tanned leather largely in use in boot-factories?—Yes.

78. Not exclusively?—No.

79. Does it compare favourably with the imported leather?—Yes.

80. There is an impression abroad that Dominion-tanned leather is not given sufficient time in the seasoning?—Of course, that depends to a great extent on the time it is given in the pits.

81 Taken as a whole there is no market for Dominion leather?—There is very little leather exported now

82. Are boots never stamped showing whether they are imported from Germany, America, or Britain?—No there is only a declaration on the invoice.

83. As a matter of fact, it is not compulsory to stamp?—No.

84. Do you not think it would be wise of our Legislature to first of all bring about the stamping of the imported article before interfering with the system we have in this Dominion at the present time?—Might I be permitted to ask a question. What is the idea of wishing the colonial article to be branded? This is a general question.

85. *Mr Hardy*] Like prime Canterbury When you make a name for anything I think you can afford to brand it. When you have ideals and live up to them, you can live by them?—If you wish to increase the demand for colonial-manufactured goods, we cannot give them to you.

86. *Mr Luke.*] You have no desire for any brand or system at all?—No.

87 You have had a very large experience as a business man, so I will ask you if you find a similar prejudice against other of the Dominion's manufactures than in the boot trade?—I cannot say, in fact, I have not sufficient knowledge.

88. You say suitable labour is not available?—I have a demand to-day for from 1,500 to 2,000 pairs of boots per week more than I am able to turn out.

89 Is that brought about by a lack of desire on the part of our young people to learn that particular trade as against other trades?—I have been endeavouring to solve that mystery for a long time, but up to the present I have not been able to do so.

90. As far as wages are concerned, you do not think there is any disability; the trade is attractive enough?—Yes, and the hours are certainly not prohibitive.

91 Is piecework being worked now?—No; day-wages.

92 You said in answer to *Mr Hardy* that the greater proportion of imports from America had ceased largely since the preferential tariff?—Yes.

93. *Mr Fraser*] You said something about a limited number of apprentices: do you attribute the limitation in number to the scarcity of trained hands?—Decidedly At one time we were making labour ourselves.

94. Is that being done now?—No, we do not do it.

95. Is that the rule throughout the Dominion?—I think it is general.

96. If that is to be the case, what is to be the future of the boot trade—that is, when the present workmen die out?—We shall have to depend on imported labour

97. I understand you to say that you cannot obtain, although you desire to do so, sufficient suitable labour for your business?—No. For the first time for a long period I had a telegram on Saturday last from two benchmen in which they offered their services. It is the first application I have had voluntarily for probably twelve months. Unfortunately we could not take them on—which very much disappointed me. My manager said we were overmanned—that is, we were turning out all the uppers we could with the machinists we had. The one branch is necessarily linked with the other

98. You were undermanned in regard to other parts?—Yes.

99. Were the undermanned parts parts in which you employed skilled labour?—Yes.

100. *Mr Poole.*] Do you consider there is a general prejudice against locally made stuff, *Mr Hannah*?—Yes, against certain grades. For instance, it is known that in regard to heavier stuff no such class of goods is imported. We can beat the world, and have done for many years, with heavy stuff suitable for the requirements of the country Another thing I might mention is that for every ten miles one travels in New Zealand one requires a different class of stuff.

101 You made reference to the increasing demand for British goods as against American? Yes.

102. Along with the preferential tariff, do you not think that the bringing of British methods up to date had something to do with the increased demand in the Dominion?—It had everything to do with it.

103 Apart from the difficulty in securing labour, and the increased cost, do you think that the other conditions are similar conditions for producing a first-class article?—Yes. There is the

same machinery, the same methods in every respect; the only difference being that the hours of work in New Zealand are shorter

104. The wages are higher?—Yes. That is a well-known fact.

105. Has the export of hides got much to do with the cost of material?—Everything to do with it.

106. There is nothing for a New Zealand manufacturer to be ashamed of in allowing the brand "New Zealand" to be placed upon the Dominion's goods?—I am very sorry to say I do not think so. Of course, one has to speak from experience, and if it were known that one did not import I have no hesitation in saying that one's business would fall off very considerably, with a particular falling-off in the number of lady customers.

107. Therefore, for the purpose of carrying on a satisfactory trade you do not think it would be wise, in the interests of the trade, to brand locally made goods?—Certainly not. Our instructions to our salesmen for some years have been to put our own stuff forward.

108. *Mr McLaren.*] Has the amount of imported goods increased in greater proportion to the production?—No, I would not say that. I have no hesitation in saying, and I say it feelingly, that every manufacturer in New Zealand has the sole aim and intention to push colonial manufactures.

109. The importation of goods that could be made in the colonies is being well sustained?—Yes.

110. How do the profits on the sales of imported goods compare with those on the locally manufactured goods?—There is the same basis for the two.

111. There is no difference?—Not on the whole, because we work on a certain percentage. All our stuff is marked in plain figures.

112. The profit on one class is not higher than on the other?—Except in the high-grade evening shoes, and we do not do much in regard to them in the colony

113. What are the minimum award rates of pay?—Forty-five shillings. I think from the last returns it was shown that there were only some seven or eight working in New Zealand at that rate, and that class of man does not pay the manufacturer

114. You mentioned men receiving £4 10s. are they foremen?—They are experts on machines.

Witness You were talking of imposing further restrictions on holidays, and I have here some information regarding the matter. Every holiday costs my firm £45 0s. 2d., not taking into account heads of departments, that is simply for labour paid. Taking heads of departments, foremen, rents, and so forth, also, it means from £60 to £70 a day

115. *Mr Fraser*] How many of these days have you in a year?—I am afraid I cannot tell you exactly, but there are probably about seven or eight. I can stand by the figures I have just given you.

116. *The Chairman.*] Did you say you paid the whole of your men for these holidays?—No.

117. Simply the apprentices, foremen, and shop-assistants?—Yes.

118. And it works out to the amount stated?—Yes.

APPENDIX.

Wellington Trades and Labour Council, Cuba Street, Wellington, 13th October, 1910.

DEAR SIR,—

By direction of above Council I am instructed to inform you that my Council approves of the main provisions in amending Bill to Factories Act. We did not deem it necessary to give evidence on the Bill, as anything that is for the better conditions of the workers we are in accord with. There is only one thing we should like to have inserted, and that is, in regard to label "Made in New Zealand," that the name of the factory where the article was made should also appear on the label.

I remain, &c.,

FREDK. REYLING,

Secretary

Mr Arnold, Chairman, Labour Bills Committee.

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