

position. Influential men in the wholesale trade have said that the demand of the workers was a fair thing and that it was not in the interests of the licensees to refuse it—that they themselves would advise the licensees to give way. I feel certain that if there is a hotelkeeper in the position that Mr. Clark suggests—and I do not think there is—the trade will come to his rescue.

20. *Mr. Okey.*] With regard to smaller places where they only keep one cook, such as coffee-palaces: how would you arrange in those cases?—If a place is so small that it only keeps one cook, the employer there is just as much a wages-man as the cook, and the employer should get a day off and so should the cook.

21. The employer may not be able to cook?—Oh, yes, he will. If the place is so small that it only needs one hand to cook, the employer can do it. What happens is this; so much of the meal can be prepared on the previous day; the cook could prepare all that could not be done by the employer.

JOHN BEVERIDGE, President, Licensed Victuallers Association of New Zealand, made a statement and was examined. (No. 2.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Will you place your views before us?—I am going to take the liberty of asking you to postpone further consideration of this question till a day next week. My reason for asking that is, first, because of the late distribution of the Bill, and because of the ambiguity contained in the drafting. I do not think the Legislature quite recognizes the seriousness of this Bill and how it is going to affect the licensees of the whole of this Dominion. I take it that it is not the intention of the Legislature to place a hardship on any section, either employers or workers, but if this Bill is put on the statute-book it is going to create a very serious embarrassment and place a very serious hardship on the licensees of New Zealand. That being so, I ask that consideration of this Bill be postponed till a further date, so that we can get better evidence and go better into the question than we have been able to do up to the present. This matter requires evidence from Auckland, Dunedin, and Christchurch, and it is a thing that we cannot deal with lightly. I am not prepared now to advance any evidence, but, in justification of what I am asking and to point out the seriousness of the position to the hotelkeepers if this Bill goes through, I should like to give you a concrete instance of what the effect will be. This instance is only one of many. Take the position of the Grand Hotel, Wellington, of which I am the unfortunate proprietor. I employ a staff of from forty-six to fifty hands. If this Bill goes through I shall be restricted to a six-days week. That means to say that on Monday, on Tuesday, on Wednesday, and on Thursday I shall be without six or eight hands, as the case may be, according to the season of the year, and I generally keep a full staff all through the year. From six to eight will not turn-to at all on those four days of the week, and on the other days eight or nine hands will not turn-to. I ask you gentlemen who patronize hotels and have travelled how a proprietor is going to carry on his business with eight of his staff absent during working-hours? It is a well-known fact that no business man employs more hands than can economically work his business. That being so, with forty-eight or fifty hands and eight hands away every day in the week, what is the position for the unfortunate hotelkeeper? It means that he has either got to ask the forty-two remaining hands to do the work of the forty-eight or fifty—in which case the work will be scamped, and the patrons of the hotel will not get the attention which they should get and which they pay for—or he has to put on so-many more hands, if the work is to be kept up to the best conditions, and if it is a first-class hotel it is absolutely essential that the conditions should be kept up. We are bound by law to keep open on seven days in the week in order to meet all requirements—provide meals and refreshments when travellers come in—and therefore we are in quite a different position from any other business. I would myself be very pleased to allow the staff one whole day in the week if I could participate in that whole day—if I could close up the hotel one day in the week. There would be no hardship then, and I could very well do with the holiday myself; but we cannot. Then it resolves itself into this: that I have got to pay, if I do not put the tax on to the remaining servants, from £12 to £15 a week extra wages. I contend that that is not a fair proposition for the hotelkeepers of this country to have to face. I am not advancing this as evidence; I do not propose to give evidence: I am only giving you a concrete instance of what is going to be the effect of this Bill if it is not gone into and properly thought out. I am quite sure it is not the intention to create any hardship as between employer and employee, and if the Legislature intends to make a fair Bill of this I think the question should be gone into more exhaustively than can be done by two representatives appearing here and giving evidence; it is a question that must be dealt with at length and gone into very deeply. I do not propose to say any more, but I do seriously hope that you will take this into your further consideration and see your way clear to postpone the matter until we can get proper evidence to put before you in order to show just exactly what this Bill is going to mean to the hotelkeepers throughout the Dominion.

2. *Mr. Clark.*] Do you think it is fair that the hotel workers should be compelled to work just to suit the public?—The hotelkeeper is compelled by law to suit the public, and he cannot do the work himself, and he must employ men to do it.

3. He will merely pass it on to the public, will he not?—How?

4. By increasing the price?—If we do that we simply drive people into the boardinghouses, which are not covered by legislation.

5. *The Chairman.*] They will be under this Bill, will they not?—No, this only deals with public-houses.

6. And restaurants?—Restaurant employees do not work on Sunday; they get a full day. Supposing the Grand Hotel, and the Empire, and the Royal Oak, and the Hotel Cecil raised their tariff