

nected with a licensed house that does not show a loss on the year. To add the amount that I have stated—from £300 to £700 or £800 a year—would mean a tremendous loss to many of the licensees which have bought their houses under certain conditions, not expecting legislation of this character.

16. What effect do you think this proposal would have on the smaller hotels in the country—hotels that keep perhaps two girls, who have to do the waiting and the bedrooms?—I think the effect is going to be disastrous to them. But I think it will recoil upon the employees, because some of them will have to be discharged in those small houses, and the licensees and their wives will have to do the work.

17. While there is a Licensing Act that compels you to keep your house open during seven days, you consider that it would be hardship if this measure were to pass?—It would be a gross injustice.

18. We have had evidence that hotelkeepers would be glad to close their houses altogether on Sunday, if the Act would allow it: is that so in Christchurch?—I am positive about that. There is not a hotelkeeper in Christchurch who would not close up his dining-room on Sunday if he had the chance, and go out and enjoy himself.

19. That is an impossibility?—Exactly, because the travelling public arrive on Sunday, and they have a nasty habit of wanting to eat on Sunday just the same as on any other day.

20. What effect do you think it would have on the tourist traffic if we closed the dining-rooms of hotels on Sundays?—It would have a bad effect on the tourist traffic.

21. Do you think the profit made on the sale of liquor would not stand this additional £700 or £800?—No. Profits on liquor are largely a myth.

22. *The Chairman.*] You admit the principle, I suppose, that where it is possible every man should have one day off in seven?—I have said that, but the hotel business is so entirely different from any other business that it is almost an impossibility. In theory I believe in a six-day week, but it does not work out in practice.

23. The great objection to this one-day-in-seven proposal is the cost?—Not altogether. The cost is one great objection, but disorganization of the staff is another.

24. That would be an inconvenience?—Not only to the hotelkeeper but to the travelling public.

25. Do you not think you could recoup the extra expense from the travelling public by increasing the tariff?—I suppose you could, but the question is how an increased tariff would be received.

26. Is it not a fact that the New Zealand tariff at hotels is the cheapest in the world?—Yes, it is far too cheap.

27. Supposing that any hotel put its tariff up a shilling a day, would that not cover all the extra cost?—No, it would not so far as Christchurch is concerned, because in Christchurch there are only about four times in the year when from a residential point of view the hotels do any business worth speaking of. For a good part of the year large hotels like the United Service, Warner's, and the Clarendon have only from six to twelve boarders in them, and they have still to maintain forty or fifty servants.

28. Do they keep the full staff in the hotel all the time?—Yes. You cannot employ a man for a week and then put him off because there is no business.

29. With regard to the tourist traffic, do you think the average tourist that comes along here would care whether he paid 10s. 6d. a day or 12s. 6d.?—I do not think the average tourist who comes to New Zealand would mind much whether the rate was 12s. 6d. or perhaps 15s. a day; but the tourist is not the only person to be considered in this matter. The regular traveller in New Zealand, or the man who goes down from Wellington to Christchurch for a holiday, is entitled to some consideration. It would cause more dissatisfaction among that class if the tariff went up from 12s. 6d. to 15s. in a first-class house, and from 8s. to 10s. in a second-class house.

30. Is it not a fact that, speaking generally of the travelling public who use hotels, an increase in tariff of 1s. or 2s. would not make any great difference?—I think it would make a great difference to them. I think it would cause a great deal of dissatisfaction. As a matter of fact, the people of New Zealand have been treated too leniently in the matter of hotel tariffs, and would resist any attempt to raise them.

31. You say that the hotels all make a loss on the dining-room?—I am speaking for Christchurch. Many of the hotels in Christchurch put on a lunch for 1s. which in other places you have to pay 2s. and 2s. 6d. for.

JOHN MORRISON, Proprietor of Albert Hotel, Auckland, and President of Auckland Licensed Victuallers' Association, made a statement and was examined. (No. 11.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Will you please state your views to the Committee as briefly as possible?—I have a fairly long experience of hotelkeeping, and am sorry to say that I am not able to retire yet. I have been for thirty-two years hotelkeeping in New Zealand. I have not been hotelkeeping all the time, but the greater number of those years, and I have kept the smallest to the largest hotels in the Auckland Province. I assure you that if this Bill is carried through it will cause a lot of dissatisfaction not only to the hotelkeepers, but to the travelling public generally. For instance, the present tariffs will be increased by quite half-a-crown a day if this Bill is carried through. I may say that it is quite an accident that I am here. I left home last Thursday night to attend the Christchurch race meeting without knowing anything, practically, of this Bill. During my stay there I had two or three wires asking me to try to appear here to-day to give evidence before this Committee, and I may say that I am not prepared to give evidence. With regard to what Mr. Nordon said as to it being impossible for large hotels to give a holiday without upsetting their arrangements, of course it disorganizes the whole business of the hotel if you have to give a full holiday in the week. As regards the tourist traffic in New Zealand, I think it would be a great detriment to that part of the trade as well as to the travelling public generally. I spoke to some of the Christchurch publicans over this matter, and they were all up in arms about it, and, as Mr. Nordon said, none of them were able to attend here on account of this being their very busy week, or many of them would have come to give evidence.