

31. *The Chairman.*] You will admit, I suppose, that the large hotels will suffer the greatest inconvenience if this Bill goes through?—Yes.

32. Do you not think that it would not make very much difference to the trade if you raised the tariff, inasmuch as the patrons of first-class hotels would not go to a boardinghouse on account of that small increase? A man who has been accustomed to a first-class hotel would not go to a boardinghouse, would he?—I am quite certain he would. Some of the boardinghouses are equal to the hotels, but they are not under the same conditions as we are. They can work the staff to suit themselves. We cannot.

33. *Mr. Okey.*] Have you heard from your employees whether they are asking for this amendment of the Act?—Up to when I left home on Thursday night they knew absolutely nothing about it. My employees have always been satisfied. I have always, as a rule, got on well with my employees. They knew nothing about this Bill on Thursday night.

34. Many of the employees, if they thought it would put you to undue inconvenience, would rather not have such a measure?—Many of them, yes.

35. *Mr. Anderson.*] How many days a week do you work your employees?—Seven.

36. Do you think that is a fair thing?—Our business is so peculiar: it is so different from other businesses that we cannot possibly help it. Of course they do not work seven days, but they are on duty seven days. They have a half-holiday off. We are not allowed to work our employees more than sixty-two hours a week, and there are very few that work sixty-two hours a week. If it is a quiet afternoon they can go out for an hour or two. I am quite sure that our girls do not work fifty-six hours a week. I do not know that any of the employees I have had for the last few years have averaged fifty-six hours a week.

37. Do all other employers in the hotel trade in Auckland work on the same lines as you: I presume you have a first-class hotel?—I have run some of the first-class hotels. They are all on the same lines. You will notice the girls out for an hour in the afternoon, and the men as well.

WILLIAM DEVINE examined. (No. 12.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Whom do you represent?—The Palmerston licensed victuallers and the Wanganui licensed victuallers, and I am also proprietor of the Empire Hotel at Palmerston North.

2. Just state your views in connection with the Bill?—I do not intend to go over the ground already traversed, but wish to state that in Palmerston North and Wanganui we are working under the Cooks' and Waiters' award, and if the Bill passes it means great hardship to us, and we shall not be able to cater for the travelling public as we have done in the past. I keep a residential hotel and employ a staff of twelve. If this Bill goes through I would have to engage three extra employees. In places like Palmerston North and Wanganui you cannot replace a chef at a moment's notice, and my wages will increase from £3 10s. to £4 10s. per week under the award of the Court. I would have to employ a staff of four in the kitchen, with a first and second chef. If I can get a casual employee to take the chef's place in his absence it would mean an extra cost of £39 per year, which means 15s. per day for a casual chef. If that chef were able to find employment in Palmerston every day it would mean seven different hotels he would be employed at, and each hotelkeeper would know what the other was doing. It would mean that he would be getting £5 5s. per week for the seven days. If the Bill goes through, in the country districts that I represent it will mean that tourists and travellers arriving by the late trains at night—we have two or three trains arriving at night—will not be catered for. Motor-cars travelling from New Plymouth to Wellington—of which there are a considerable number—call at our places in country districts at all hours of the night, and we shall not be able to cater for the travelling public. The extra staff required in the way of housemaids and porters would entail an extra cost of £246 per year. Owing to the award already made I have had to increase my staff by two, and I think the secretary of the union can bear me out in that. Previously my staff was ten, and now it is twelve. That is in the residential portion of the house. Some gentleman has asked, "Why not increase your tariff?" But that cannot be done in the country, where gentlemen staying for a little while make the hotels their home. These pay a lower tariff than the ordinary traveller and do not get the same chances they have in the city, where there are large boardinghouses, of getting accommodation outside the hotel. With regard to increasing the tariff, so far as the tourists are concerned, I do not think it would be a wise thing for the trade to do, because it is recognized throughout the world that the tariff is from 8s. to 10s. per day, or £2 2s. per week. This tariff is advertised by Cook's Tourist offices, so we have no chance of increasing our tariff. If the Bill goes through you will be doing an injustice to the travelling public more than to anybody else. As far as the award is concerned, we are giving the employees half a day off every week and a half-day every alternate Sunday, so that on an average they get one day a week. The hours are fifty-two for housemaids and sixty-two for male servants, but they never work that time, because the hotel business is altogether different from any other calling. As soon as breakfast is over the waitresses have some time off; when lunch and dinner are over the employees can, if they are at all smart, finish in about an hour. One of our difficulties is that we cannot get a staff at a minute's notice—we cannot fill the place of a man at short notice if he happens to leave. If the Bill passes, the public will suffer and be put to a lot of inconvenience.

3. *Mr. Glover.*] You say you employ twelve of a staff?—Yes.

4. And you say if the Bill passes you will have to get three additional hands?—Yes.

5. Mr. Beveridge said that he employed forty-eight and would require to get six extra ones, and Mr. Oakes said he had fifteen and would require to get four additional hands, while you say you only employ twelve and would have to get three?—I said three additional hands, but one would be casual. The casual man would have to act as chef. The chef works up to 1 o'clock on the ordinary holiday, and would prepare the evening meal. I cannot see how I could keep my house going with less than two extra hands and a casual cook.

6. *Mr. Okey.*] You say you have been working under the award?—Yes.

7. How long has that award to run?—It has been in force since August, 1912.