

time, the Wellington people and the Auckland people could force the hand of the workers, bringing them before the Court, and conditions could then be entered into and an award made before this Act came into force.

17. Clause 31 says, "Notwithstanding anything in this Act any award of the Court of Arbitration relating to hotels or restaurants in force on the third day of December, nineteen hundred and ten (being the date of the commencement of the Shops and Offices Amendment Act, 1910), and in force on the commencement of this Act, shall continue in force for the period for which it was made as if this Act had not been passed"—That clause is no good.

18. You say you are not working under an award in Christchurch: what are they doing in Dunedin?—There is an award in Timaru. The award in Timaru was not in force on that date—1910.

19. *Mr. Clark.*] It was in force before that—on the 3rd day when the Act came into operation?—I cannot understand clause 31 at all; I would suggest that the whole thing be cut out.

20. *Mr. Grenfell.*] Do you believe in the principle of an award in existence being modified upon the legislation coming into force? We will say it is based upon the existing legislation in regard to working-conditions. The Act of 1910 provided for certain working-hours, and these are proposed to be interfered with by this Bill, are they not?—Yes.

21. Would this be a solution: that a clause be inserted in the Bill that upon legislation coming into operation affecting that award that that award shall cease to operate?—The whole award? No. If you had been reasonable and rational from my point of view I might have agreed with you, and if you had referred only to those provisions which the Act dealt with, but you are going to make it something that comes in and deals with one thing—you are going to make it act on twenty.

22. Do you recognize that the granting of a whole holiday will require an increase in the staff of hotels?—Not everywhere.

23. That it will affect the rates of wages to be paid to several workers?—In what way?

24. You are aware that the Court has established a method of providing for the scale of wages according to the number of hands employed, where three or more are employed: now, the increase in hands would mean an increase in wages?—Not necessarily.

25. Supposing the hotelkeepers only see that way for making provision for the whole holiday?—But they do not.

26. It has been suggested that the only method they have of providing for the whole holiday is by increasing the number of hands. That would mean a proportionate increase in the wages of the other assistants?—I think not necessarily. Last year employers in Christchurch—some employers—thought they would prepare themselves if the Bill went through, and this is what they did: they had a scheme whereby one extra employee was engaged—where there was a staff of twenty or thirty one extra hand was engaged, and he was to be a general hand. It was put in hand in one place. A man is a printer, he is a waiter, he relieves in the bar, he relieves the hall-porter, or any other porter who is off for his holiday—he is practically a general factotum. So far as Christchurch was concerned that can be done. If the union was agreeable, and the union was agreeable (seeing that we are working under an agreement, one more hand would be put on; he would be given a special wage, and entitled to be employed in any capacity. There is no award in Wellington, as you know, nor any in Auckland, so that there is a way out. Employers themselves, as just now instanced, recognize a way out without adding to a staff and without increasing the wages of five or six employees. If the man is relieving it is immaterial to him if it is a half-holiday or a whole holiday.

27. Now, with respect to sanitation, have you noticed the provisions with regard to accommodation? Clause 37 (f) says, "The Inspector may from time to time, by requisition to the occupier, determine as to the shop or office what space of cubic or superficial feet shall be reserved for the use of each person working therein, and the occupier shall cause the same to be reserved accordingly"—That applies only to working-conditions.

28. Would this satisfy you: if another word were inserted, by which it would read "working or sleeping therein"; but I think there is provision in the Act as it reads. In clause (a) you will find this: "The shop or office shall be kept in a cleanly state, and free from any smell or leakage arising from any drain, privy, or other nuisance"—You cannot make those clauses cover the case by shoving in a word here and there. I suggest special provisions dealing with sleeping-accommodation.

THOMAS PETER HALPIN examined. (No. 45.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Whom do you represent?—The small shopkeepers, the drapers, clothiers, and mercers of Wellington. Mr. Seaton, for many years chairman of the Wellington Shops Association, was to be here this morning, but could not possibly come along. Mr. Fownes, who was chairman of our last two meetings, will support me. With reference to the Shops and Offices Bill, on the whole we believe it a very fair one. One or two exceptions we take. The proposed hours for closing, clause 23: this Bill proposes our closing at 8 in the evening on four days other than the half-holiday and at 10 on one day. We are of opinion that it would be fair to make it 9 o'clock on four days, 1 o'clock on a half-holiday, and 10.30 on a late night, on a Saturday. Those are the hours in the requisition under which we are now working. Those are the hours we ask that we be allowed to keep our shops open in Wellington. We also wish to make it a strong point that we consider that 1 o'clock on a half-holiday is a fair hour to close. We understand that the proposal has been put before you to close earlier, but we suggest that the hour be retained for closing on the holiday.