

me is associated Mr. Booth, of Christchurch, who also represents the Christchurch Industrial Association. In the interest of the industries of the colony the Industrial Associations cannot agree to the Factories Act as now framed, for the following reasons: First, it will seriously affect the cost of the production of the different classes of articles now made in the colony, and if the proposed Act is made law it will certainly be the means of stopping any more capital being invested in any new industry. Second, no one at present engaged in the manufacture of any goods that are also imported will be able to compete against the imported goods, and, in our opinion, if the proposed drastic alterations to the present factories are made law it will be the means of closing down a great many of our industries. Third, our association cannot think that the present amended Act has been seriously thought out by the Government, for it cannot possibly be in the interests of the working-classes that it has been drawn up, for do we not every day hear evidence before the Conciliation and Arbitration Courts about the increased cost of living. And may I ask, what is the cause of this extra cost of the necessaries of life but the increased cost of production? And the more restrictions that are inflicted on the manufacturers in the matter of shorter hours of labour, and higher rates of wages, so will the necessaries of life become dearer to all classes of the community, and the working-class will be in a far worse position in the future than now; but if the Government insist on the Act becoming law we trust it will reconstruct the Bill so that it may be made workable to the different classes of industries now being carried on in the colony. My association have drawn up different clauses which we think would be far better for both the employés and the employer than those at present before us. The Corporation and the Industrial Association differ a little in the lines that have been drawn up between us, but they are all bearing on the same point in respect to the hours of labour, the overtime, and the amount of holidays, which we consider will injure a great many of our industries. Referring to the Act, clause 18, our association object to the forty-five hours of labour, and they respectfully ask that in section (a) of clause 18, page 7, that "forty-five hours" shall be altered, including meal-times, to "forty-eight hours," making a full week, which we have been fighting for for years—namely, eight hours per day; and we also ask in section (b), where it says that it shall be eight hours, excluding meal-time, in any one day, may be inserted "eight hours and a half." In section (c) it says, "for more than four hours continuously without an hour for dinner." We ask that this be altered to "five," for this reason: Under this Bill it is proposed that there shall be forty-five hours a week, and also that you shall not work more than five hours without rest or refreshment. I do not know how we are going to work Saturday in with these hours. In clause 19 we ask that it shall not apply to male adults, for the simple reason that it is a matter of impossibility to carry on industries in the hours stipulated there for overtime. There are other trades, gentlemen, that you know that we are dependent upon, such as repairs, breakdowns, and in the case of a job going on continually until it is finished; and nearly every one of our industries is affected. Therefore you must see with any serious breakdowns and your conditions of overtime as laid down in this Bill gives us no opportunity of carrying on continually. The Bill states "not more than three hours in any day," or "more than two days in any week," or "more than thirty days in any year." That, gentlemen, would be a disaster to us in the case of any necessary repairs in breakdowns. We ask that this clause be struck out altogether; we could not carry on under it. Having to speak again as an employer I will then be able to state all the different industries that will be affected by payment for these extra hours and in cases of emergencies. The Canterbury section of the industries are on something like similar terms. I attended last Friday night to meet the Corporation there, and this report I hold in my hand was put in and printed in all the Canterbury newspapers. Most of the members of Canterbury themselves have seen it and approve of it. This is the report: "To the chairman of the Canterbury Industrial Association,—We beg to report that your Bills Committee met on Monday, the 5th August, and considered the Factories Bill now before the House, and make the following suggestions of alterations in the Bill for the consideration of members:—Clause 6, subsection 5: We think that the principle of introducing other persons than the Inspector into a factory is not conducive to its peaceful working, and therefore suggest, if it is necessary, that 'any other person' read 'constable, officer of the local authority, or Stipendiary Magistrate.' Clause 18, subsection (a): We suggest that 'forty-five hours' read 'forty-eight hours,' for these reasons: Forty-eight hours is a reasonable working-time. Forty-eight hours is less than is worked in any competing country. At some seasons of the year the work cannot be done in the time. The necessary work cannot be done in the time at same cost. The hands in a factory cannot be increased without outlay for building, plant, tools, &c., on which increased expenses must be made; and, further, expense for motive-power will be increased to turn out the same quantity of work. Employers cannot thus increase hands to cope with work at busy times without dispensing with a number at slack times. This is not favourable to employés. All these items mean increased cost to consumer, who, therefore, either buys a less number of articles or does without. It also places our industries on a reduced ability to cope with foreigners. If forty-four hours is made usual for factory-hands, hands working in the country will also demand less hours, which will, when added to increased cost of colonial-made manufactures, seriously handicap the great producing-classes. Section (b): We suggest 'eight hours and a half' instead of 'eight.' Section (c): We suggest 'five' instead of 'four.' Clause 19, section 1, (b): 'Two' days should read 'four.' Section (c): 'Thirty' days should read 'sixty.' There are seasonable trades in which overtime is unavoidable, else the work cannot be done. Trade will therefore be lost to the country, and the cost of manufacturing will be increased to the consumers' detriment. Section (3): The rate of increased pay for overtime should, we think, be left to the Arbitration Court to decide for each trade on its merits. Clause 21, subsection (3): To provide a dining-room for as few as four hands will be very hard on small employers, and give large concerns still greater advantages. Clause 28, subsection (3): Add to clause 'except when all employés agree