

proposed to be dealt with in a general way by legislation; and we are of opinion that the Court is better able to judge on these points, having a full knowledge of the circumstances connected with each trade, than is possible to the general legislative body. In fact, the removal of this matter from the jurisdiction of the Court would to a large extent stultify it, and impair the efficiency of its operations. I think it is the general opinion throughout the colony that the Court conducts its operations very well. With regard to the general condition of industries throughout the District of Canterbury, I have to say that they are not so flourishing as to be capable of bearing heavy additional burdens, and this Bill undoubtedly proposes to hamper industries to a very large extent. The payment of wages for holidays when no work is being done alone would cause a great addition to manufacturing-costs. The restriction of hours and the overtime would have the same effect. I submit to the Committee the industries of Canterbury and the colony are not capable of carrying this increased burden. You have probably heard more than once prognostications of disaster to various industries in consequence of drastic labour legislation, and although too much may have been said at various times—that this and that factory will close up, and this and that industry will be ruined—the fact remains that many industries in the colony are being carried on with very considerable difficulty, particularly those industries engaged in manufacturing goods which have to be sold subject to foreign competition. We have adapted ourselves to the existing legislation to a considerable extent, and the industries are working along well, but we are not so prosperous as some believe. The great majority of the industries are struggling, and a slight increase in their burdens would cause a diminution in the amount of work carried on, which will act prejudicially to the workmen themselves. If this Bill comes into effect in the shape in which it at present exists, no less than fifty per cent. of the men now employed in many of the manufacturing industries in the colony will be out of work. The effect of measures which will prejudice industries will be detrimental not only to the employers, but will tend to throw workers out of employment, and some of our industries will be extinguished. Shortly put, what our Canterbury Employers' Association wishes to urge is that the Bill, so far as it introduces new matter, should be thrown out altogether. There is plenty of legislation in existence at present, and for such cases as are not already provided for the Court of Arbitration provides all that is necessary.

Mr. J. C. MACKY, Auckland, examined. (No. 10.)

Mr. Macky: I wish to say a few words, Mr. Chairman, to express the views of the Employers' Association in Auckland. Our association comprises nearly all the industries in Auckland, which are very important and very valuable. We had a meeting of the manufacturers and employers of Auckland shortly before we left, and the opinion of all present was expressed clearly and forcibly that this proposed Bill—this Factories Bill—would be the most serious legislation that has ever been thought of in New Zealand, and it would have a detrimental effect on both the men and the masters in our district. I am here to say very much the same as Mr. Booth, of Christchurch, has said. Our industries in Auckland are declining; some are paying very small dividends, and some none at all. The industries are struggling on, and if this last blow comes a great many of our industries will have to close down and cease altogether. Now, we say that the industries in Auckland are very important. We gave you the list of them. We represent the Sawmillers' Association, the boot-makers, the tanners, the shirt-manufacturers, the clothing-manufacturers, the builders and the ship-builders, the engineers, the iron- and brass-founders, the tinsmith-workers, the woollen-mills, the paper-mills, the flour-mills, the sugar-mills, the tinned-meat manufacturers, the biscuit-manufacturers, the printers and binders, the brush-makers, the saddlers, and laundries. These are not all the manufactures of Auckland. These are all prepared to say this new Factories Bill will do great damage to both the masters and men. We reckon in Auckland we employ at least five thousand hands; that we pay in wages annually at least £250,000; that our plant is worth at least £850,000; and the weekly wages we pay amount to about £5,000. This outlay, summarily put into figures, means that the weekly hours of work now run from forty-six to fifty and fifty-two, and the average is forty-eight. A reduction to forty-four hours means a reduction of $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The loss therefore through this Bill, taking the lowest estimate, means on wages four hours per week, which means four weeks and a half per annum at £5,000—£22,500; and on wages through these holidays being paid for—to the men only—it means a loss of £3,000. In one industry alone these holidays mean £1,500. On plant the £850,000 produces, say, £85,000, and a loss of $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on that, totals £7,225; or we have a total loss through the Bill of £32,725. I say the struggling industries of Auckland cannot stand that; the industries only pay 5 and $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. In Auckland we have got to compete with the outside world. We are trying to do an island trade in timber, biscuits, produce generally, and all sorts of things; and with these short hours it is impossible to compete with places like America, where they are working fifty-nine and sixty hours, with a magnificent plant, and turning out their stuff far quicker. We have got to send our timber out, and generally to Australia, and to send produce, biscuits, &c., down to the islands. We cannot live and do it. There are four of us who have been sent down from Auckland to try and do our best to convince this Committee and the House that this legislation will be very injurious indeed to the men and the masters both. We do not say we want to see the men getting less wages, as prosperity to the men means prosperity to the colony. We are anxious to see the best wages paid. We have got to a straining-point which if we go beyond means disaster to us and to the colony generally. We want wages to be paid. The evidence which will be given will show how close the thing is cut, and how serious the matter is. The evidence to be given of the different industries will give you exactly the position.

Mr. THOMAS HENRY WHITE, Manager of the Kauri Timber Company's Auckland Mills, examined. (No. 11.)

Mr. White: I have some figures here, Mr. Chairman, which show that in our country mills they are working fifty-two hours per week, and in our town mills forty-seven hours per week. We