

hours, and have always worked forty-five hours. There it is a matter of very little importance. Under the Act we are allowed to work forty-eight hours, and it became a question whether we ought not to work the forty-eight hours, but decided that as we had been running these hours so long we would not interfere. In connection with our clothing-factory, we have only to turn the gas off which drives the machines and there is an end to our expense.

51. You have been able to carry on your factory successfully in working it at forty-five hours a week?—The clothing-factory.

52. And the company is in a good position, and has paid a very good dividend for twenty-two years?—An average of 7 per cent. for twenty-three years.

53. *Mr. Arnold.*] You told us, Mr. Blackwell, that the Mosgiel operatives petitioned the employers to be allowed to work eleven hours a night for four nights?—The night-workers asked the manager to be allowed to work four nights at eleven hours and the other night at four hours, so that they could get clear from Friday evening until the Monday evening.

54. Are they working on that now?—Yes.

55. With regard to New South Wales, you say they work fifty hours per week there?—Yes; it was one of the Factory Inspectors who was examined by our Federation Commissioners whose evidence I quoted, and it is printed in the evidence of the Commission. Mr. Clegg, Chief Inspector of Factories, New South Wales, said this.

56. Have you much competition with New South Wales?—Oh, yes; there is heavy competition there.

57. More so than with others?—The tariff in Victoria has hitherto precluded both ourselves and others from entering there. New South Wales has been mainly a free port, and both British and Continental manufacturers dump down their surplus manufactures there for sale. At one time we had a branch agency there, with considerable stock, but we found it did not pay and closed it up, and now we are exporting to New South Wales about £6,000 a year. We have an agency there.

58. Still, you are quite willing to continue at the forty-five hours, notwithstanding they work sixty hours in New South Wales?—I was making a comparison when I referred to New South Wales.

59. With regard to the overtime, you said that time and a quarter is a fair thing?—It is fair and reasonable.

60. Does that apply all round, both to your woollen-mills and clothing-factory?—We never work overtime at the woollen-mill. We have been paying time and a quarter for some considerable time, and do not object to it.

61. You said two nights a week was fair: would that apply to the woollen-mills?—The only overtime we work is at the clothing-factory.

62. You consider, as far as the clothing-factory is concerned, the present arrangement is reasonable?—Yes.

63. You do not speak for the woollen-mill?—No.

64. Of course, you represent the company here, Mr. Blackwell, this morning?—Yes; and I am the managing director of the company and president of the Woollen-manufacturers' Association.

65. You do not represent the operatives?—Yes, I do, always.

66. From your own point of view, no doubt?—I think, probably, they would admit it also.

67. If the operatives are dissatisfied, you are not usually the person they would speak to?—No; they would speak to the manager.

68. They would be more likely to speak amongst themselves?—Oh, yes.

69. Or to their representatives in a union, or before a Conciliation Board?—Yes.

70. So, when you say it is the desire of these people to have forty-eight hours a week, you really do not know, do you?—I do know, though not officially.

71. By what one or two have told you?—By what a great many have said. I have been perfectly familiar with them from the very beginning. Out of the twenty-four years, I have been twenty-two years chairman, and have known most of them from childhood. We have been fairly open and communicative one to another. I know there is a good deal of strife and bitterness going on, on account of the Conciliation Board and Arbitration Court. The demands before the Court are contested. I am advised the present demand was considered by the Trades and Labour Council of Christchurch, who laughed and sent it back again for revision; but they declined to revise it. Even the Trades and Labour Council thought it was better to be revised.

72. You speak with regard to the mills in the Southern Island?—I am the president of the Woollen-manufacturers' Association.

73. You speak on behalf of the woollen employes?—Yes, from the reports made by the managers.

74. *Mr. Laurensen.*] Do you pay weekly wages in every case, or do any of your employes work on piecework?—On piecework and weekly wages, but they are paid weekly. At the woollen-mill they pay every Wednesday afternoon, and at the clothing-factory on Thursday.

75. Do you prefer wages by the hour or by piecework?—We think the industry ought to be encouraged, and the more the operatives can get out of the machine the better it pays us.

76. Your employes want piecework?—Yes; though under their demands they ask for the abolition of piecework.

77. *The Chairman.*] You are aware, Mr. Blackwell, a telegram has been received by the Committee approving of the forty-five hours in this Bill?—I am not aware they have telegraphed about it. They have asked for that in the demands before the Board.

*The Chairman:* The telegram is in the possession of the Committee from the secretary of your union approving of the forty-five hours.