

Mr. H. WYNYARD examined. (No. 23.)

In reply to the Chairman's invitation to state his views on the Bill before the Committee, Mr. H. Wynyard, in the employ of the Gear Meat Company said: In appearing before you this morning, Mr. Chairman, we represent different departments in the company's works. There are many of us who have complaints, and the Conciliation Board may be asked to give us consideration in connection with our department. We work at the rate of 1s. an hour, and on Sundays 1s. 6d. an hour, and for loading 1s. 6d. an hour. For ordinary chamber work—working in the freezing-works, where I work—we get 1s. an hour all through. We have to work during the season an extraordinary number of hours a week, sufficient to keep us going for the slack time of the year. The main reason why I represent our department here is that if we could not get the longer hours during the busy time we would not be able to manage during the slack time. During the winter season some few of us go looking for outside employment, and we take what work is offering by the company. I can only speak as regards our department. Our idea is this, for the men to work a little longer hours in the busy season and manage to knock along, and not interfere with the outside labour during the slack times.

Mr. ROBERT COLQUETT examined. (No. 24.)

In reply to the Chairman's invitation to state his views on the Bill before the Committee, Mr. Robert Colquett, fellmonger, in the employ of the Gear Meat Company, said: I may say with regard to what has been said by Messrs. Carter and Wynyard our department would also ask the Committee to exempt us, because we are practically placed on the same footing. It is only in the summer months practically that we have a chance to earn a living. We do not compete with outside labour in the winter time on any account.

112. *The Chairman.*] Practically the whole of the deputation's evidence is that it requires the overtime to be able to make a year's living, Mr. Colquett?—That is so.

113. *Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] What is the total number of men that are employed during the busy season, Mr. Carter?—In the four departments named, during the busiest month of last year, there were 230 persons employed.

114. How many are there that are situated like you are?—There are about ninety out of the two hundred.

115. Then the other 110, I suppose, have to go and get casual labour where they can?—I mentioned the fact in my address that both the slaughtermen and the tinsmiths would not join hands with us because they were appearing before the Conciliation Board, and they would not express an opinion on it at all. That would wipe out nearly seventy people.

116. How many of you are there that go outside to get casual work?—During the slack time there are 230 men walking about Petone and looking for work.

117. How many would stop about Petone, and how many would go and get work outside; tell me approximately?—I do not know.

118. Are there about fifty?—Do you mean to say, doing other work? If a man paints his own house, would you consider he was competing with a painter for the work?

119. No, I would not. I mean permanent hands like yourselves?—I do not know of an instance where a permanent man goes outside and competes with other men.

120. I want to know how many of the casual men go outside Petone and look for work?—The difference is between two numbers. At present the company are employing 160 hands, this being practically the slack time, and in the busy season they employ 220.

121. About seventy men?—Yes.

122. *Mr. Arnold.*] You say that the great reason why you object to this Bill is in connection with the overtime. You wish to work overtime. Do you get extra pay for your overtime?—In some departments they do, and in others they do not. I believe it is looked on in this way: by working a couple of hours more in a day during the busy time you can keep the work going without an extra man, and when they are slack it does not mean that there are so many to cut it up amongst.

123. And of course if you were not permitted to work this overtime other men would be put on?—No doubt.

124. And they can take a certain proportion of your work away?—Yes; they would cut it up to that extent so that it would be no good to either of them, and it would practically force these men who have for a number of years not done any work outside the company to compete with other men outside.

125. With regard to the other men that do work outside in the slack seasons?—They do it according to their necessity. Sometimes a man might be there for a month in the busy time, but it is not to be supposed that he would remain the other eleven months idle.

126. He competes with somebody else afterwards who might be having a busy time?—Yes.

127. You object to those having a slack time competing with you in your busy time. The whole matter comes from a selfish standpoint?—Undoubtedly. Our average work is considerably under forty-four hours a week during the year. In many instances it runs down as low as thirty hours a week.

128. Do you get paid for any holidays?—No; I believe now the company—for this last two years—have paid in some of the departments, but I am not sure.

129. What is your week's work supposed to be?—Forty-eight hours.

130. And these men who receive extra pay for overtime: does that overtime commence after forty-eight hours, or after the day's work?—Again I think that is different in some departments. It has been the practice in some departments for a man to work out forty-eight hours, and whatever overtime he got after that he got paid for. A man may make ten hours one day, and only six the next day; that would mean two days, and he would not get any extra for that time. Forty-eight hours has to be worked before he gets any overtime.