

204. How do you arrive at that?—Under the Bill the employer has got to pay for fifty-two half-holidays, and there are those statutory holidays. The others omitted Boxing Day, which would make it five weeks and a half. Payment for these holidays, according to our last year's wages, would amount to close on £2,500, and that is to hands—men and boys—who are not asked to work a single hour without they are paid overtime rates after their day's work.

205. Under what system do you pay your men; so much a week?—No, by the hour.

206. How do you make out these days would be lost if you pay them by the hour?—Every wage-earner in a factory is entitled to be paid for the half-holidays and statutory holidays at the same rate as he is paid when he is working.

207. *Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] You said, Mr. Cable, that you took work here at low rates so as to find work for the men?—We have to do that.

208. Have you that regulated amongst yourselves, so that one shall not charge more than the other—I mean between you and the other foundry-masters here? If a job is asked for and you, with a view of helping the men, which is very philanthropic, take it at a low price so as to find work for the men—has your other competitor an arrangement of the same sort?—We all have to do it.

209. You have that arrangement between you?—Yes, it is one of the evils of the trade that there is not sufficient repairing work to keep the various foundries going. I am talking about ordinary times. During the past two years we have not had to do that, because there was more work in the country than could be tackled. Two or three years back you had to take a job at merely a nominal profit to keep your place going.

210. You have seen in the Press that the result of this "combination" of foundry-masters in Wellington is sending the business out of Wellington, up country and so on. Is there any truth in that?—I am not aware of it.

211. Such a "combination," you will admit, might have that effect?—Yes.

*Mr. Luke:* In those particular cases you refer to, Mr Seddon, we were competing all round the colony.

212. *Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] It is done for philanthropic purposes?—It is not that we are philanthropic—were we inclined to be; it is the necessity in the trade.

213. *Mr. Hutcheson.*] Is there a definite agreement between the ironmasters in Wellington about what rate they will take work at, Mr. Cable?—In some lines, but there are not two things in the market that you can fix any rate on. There must be an ordinary rate for costs. Perhaps a man will want a 25-horse power engine this week and some 50 or heavier horse power engine next week.

*Mr. Luke:* In nine-tenths of the trade you cannot have a schedule, and in other places there is a schedule.

214. *Mr. Hardy.*] Is there a "combination" amongst the employers that the men are to be kept on, or is it merely a circumstance of the trade in which each employer deals for himself?—Simply a circumstance in the trade.

215. Is there no "combination" that you are to keep your men on?—It is to our real social benefit that we have the men. This refers, I may tell you, to our highest paid men only. The ordinary five-eighths tradesman has got to take his chance.

216. You have to keep your men round you, and in order to keep your men you have to take work that does not pay you?—Yes.

Mr. PETER HUTSON examined. (No. 28.)

In reply to the Chairman's invitation to state his views on the Bill before the Committee, Mr. Peter Hutson, as representing the clay-workers, said: I would like to say, like the previous speakers, that, as far as the hours in this new Factories Act are concerned, it is simply an impossibility for us to work under them. In our particular trade we are on a par with the gas-works and the meat-works, or freezing companies. Where there are large works similar to what I have and others in the colony, we have to continually work on night and day, especially in our kiln-work. There is no provision made here in this Act for that. The overtime would not suit us in any shape or form; and, moreover, the Act states that the full week shall be forty-five hours. We have men that have to work seven days a week, and we cannot possibly do without it. I tried to work my men in shifts, but at the same time there is a Sunday coming in, and somebody has got to work, and if we do not carry on those kilns continuously some of the men would have to stand still. It is a system of work that can only be carried on by a continuous system of work. In my case I have five kilns running, and with regard to those five kilns, if any one of those five kilns got out of repair, we would have to stop the work, and some of the men would have to cease work until that kiln got repaired, and was made fit to run again. Therefore, under the hours stipulated here in this Act, we cannot possibly carry on our business. Then with regard to the extra cost this Bill will inflict upon us in the matter of our overtime for working and the pay for holidays; it means about 12½ per cent. extra cost on our output. That is impossible in the main department I am endeavouring to carry on, and it simply means if this Bill became law I should have to close down, and could not carry on at all. In speaking to that particular point, I am trying to foster what should be one of the largest industries in this colony—viz., the pottery business; and I believe I am the only one to-day that is manufacturing real pottery suitable to our markets, and there is thousands of pounds' worth coming to this colony, which ought to be manufactured within the boundary of this colony, and if this Bill is carried into effect it simply means the imported article will compete against the article made by the manufacturers in this colony. For years we have been trying to develop and foster industries in this colony, and individually I have tried to do so, and I may state I have been far more successful than a good many in the fostering of the pottery trade. It seems to me, after ten years' experience, where I can see the possibility of trade developing a