

19. Have you known of cases of men getting hurt in that way?—Yes, a man named Hock hurt his back. He had only clear surface enough to stand on, and stepped a little too far, and went over on his back. He tells me now that his back is weak. When you strain your back you go to the doctor, and perhaps are cured; but you always have to be very careful.

20. In dragging these bags and hauling them the men use grain-hooks, do they not?—In the shed they do; but you cannot carry a variety of tools with you, and use your ordinary hook.

21. Does that cause more splitting of the bag than would be the case if it were a lighter one?—Unless it is of tough material a bag will not stand the strain. There is a lot of waste. The farmers will use second-hand bags.

22. Have you known many men die as the result of these injuries?—I have not known them die, but I have heard it reported.

23. Did you know Kelly?—I heard of Kelly.

24. You remember about Kelly leaving his heart to the hospital, expressing the hope that the medical men would keep his heart so as to show the effect of the strain on him?—I have heard the men talk of it.

25. You have heard of Gowers?—Yes.

26. Did you know Penny?—Yes, I have heard of him, too.

27. How many years have you been in Lyttelton?—I came here when the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall came to New Zealand.

28. In 1901?—Yes.

29. You are not one of the older hands?—No.

30. Do you remember when the loading took place for the Boer War?—Yes.

31. Those were all light bags?—Yes.

32. Were the men able, with the light bags then, to get more weight of stuff handled in a certain time than they were when handling the big bags?—When you have a light bag you can be quick, and you do not waste any time. With a big weight it is awkward. You must have it accurately across your shoulders, or you may strain yourself.

33. You heard the evidence given by Mr. Anstey as to the advisability, in any change that may be made, of making the sacks narrower?—Yes.

34. Which would suit you best—to have the end turned down and to have a short sack of 200 lb., or to have a long sack of 200 lb.?—I thoroughly agree with Mr. Anstey. A sack should be shaped like a brick, so that you can build and bind them in.

35. It would be much more desirable to have them long?—Yes. Further, when the price of potatoes is very high you hear the men say, “It is a shame that food which we cannot afford to buy should be spoilt.” You can understand that when you throw a sack of potatoes down from your shoulder it bruises them.

36. You think that if there was a smaller sack of potatoes there would be less damage done to the potatoes?—I am sure of it. It is one of those facts you cannot mistake when you see it so often.

37. Really, then, it would be to the advantage of the farming community to have lighter sacks, because of the saving of injury to their products?—That is, if they are their own products; they may be the merchant's. I may say that in carrying sacks we have to carry these heavy sacks off the wharf up inclines when loading the East Coast boats, and the incline may be a stiff one; and then, when you reach the top, you have to throw the sack over your head to get it on to the shoot. When one gets a sack of oats it is quite a relief.

38. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] Have you found any general objection to the 200 lb. sack?—No objection at all. Then men were thankful to get that concession.

39. The objection is to the 240 lb. sack, is it not?—Yes.

40. *Mr. Barber.*] Do the men have to pick these bags up, or are they lifted on to their backs: do they have any assistance to get them on to their backs?—When a vessel is loading you lower them right down the hold. You build what we call a stack. As to lifting up, well, of course, you have to do it when you have limited space.

41. You have to pick the bag up yourself?—Yes, and it is hard work.

42. *The Chairman.*] You would be content if the bags were not heavier than 200 lb.?—I think so. I may say that what Mr. Anstey said is voiced by the men who do the stacking—that it is far preferable to have a proportionate bag.

43. It is within your own experience that sound men have been permanently injured by handling these heavy sacks in the holds of ships?—The thing is this: Injuries that took place before the amendment of the Compensation Act the men were not paid for, and these men have to compete for their livelihood, but they do not wish to come forward, because the employers will say, “Oh! if you were injured I will not stand the risk of your being laid up.”

A. C. HUBBARD examined. (No. 4.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you, Mr. Hubbard?—President of the Wharf Labourers' Union, Dunedin.

2. And you appear as —?—Their representative.

3. We shall be glad to hear what you have to say. Will you give us first a statement of your own experience?—Of course, in Dunedin we do not have, as they have in Lyttelton, such a terrible lot of bag-carrying. Still, we have a fair amount in the grain season, and our experience is altogether with the ship's hold. We have no stacking in sheds at all to contend with, barring a little in the barley season. We find that the 240 lb. is altogether too heavy. There are times when we are stacking in a ship's hold when we are not allowed to have a stack. Then these bags have to be lifted by hand—that is, two men lift and carry them with their hook, perhaps twice the length of this room. Then you have to put them up five or six high. One gentleman who gave evidence this morning said he never knew of any loss in grain on account of the size of the bags.