

28. You think it could be done without inconvenience to the rest of the public?—I certainly think so.

29. *Mr. Sidey.*] You refer only to those Departments that have not to deal with the public after 4 o'clock?—That is so.

30. *The Chairman.*] Four o'clock would be the terminating time for all business?—Yes.

31. *Mr. Sidey.*] Do you think that one section of the community attempting this would be sufficient to bring about all the advantages to be gained by it?—No, because, with regard to amusements and so on, the hour would not be altered. We should still have to stay up as late at night. By doing it piecemeal we could not get the same advantages. The great advantage of the Bill, to my mind, is that everything would be an hour earlier, and we should not unduly extend our time of going to bed.

32. Do not some of your members belong to cricket clubs and lawn tennis and other clubs?—Yes.

33. Would there be much advantage in a few of the members getting off at 4 o'clock if their club-mates could not join them? It would detract, would it not, from the benefits of the proposal if only a small section were to adopt it in that way?—I should certainly think so. I am certainly much more in favour of the comprehensive scheme in one Act.

34. It would not be a very satisfactory trial of it if only one section of the community adopted it, because you would have to observe the ordinary hours if you went out to amusements and so on?—Yes.

EDWARD TREGGAR, Secretary for Labour, examined. (No. 5.)

*The Chairman:* Will you make a statement in connection with this Bill?

*Witness:* I wish to speak on the subject almost purely from the industrial point. I find there are so many enactments in different statutes which deal with the hours that unless the clock were put on by Government direction I think there would be a very great deal of confusion, and it would be almost an impossibility to continue. Thus, in the Factories Act, the men's hours are not limited as to when they shall begin and end, because most of those times are arranged for by awards of the Arbitration Court; but the women working in factories—and there are many hundreds—must not work later than 6 in the evening or begin work before 8 in the morning, except during certain months, when the Inspector can give them permits to commence at 7. In certain factories—the Kaiapoi factory and one or two others—I believe they do take advantage of that during the summer and begin work at 7, but as a general rule factories begin at 8. I have brought with me a list of certain awards that I just jotted down roughly in which the hours are named. I will hand in this little list. It could be very much supplemented. In the federated boot trade, for instance, the agreement fixes the hours as between 7.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. The Wellington Carpenters and Joiners work from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. during May, June, July, and August, with half an hour for dinner, and for the rest of the year from 7.45 a.m. to 5 p.m., with three-quarters of an hour for dinner. So you see the hours are named, and it is very important to the men, because they get overtime for even a few minutes' work after these hours. This would not be influenced in the least if the clock were altered. But you were speaking of a partial experiment in the matter. If the Government altered their hours and the others did not, I can see that very serious inconvenience and trouble would arise.

1. *Mr. G. M. Thomson.*] The Act, as far as women workers are concerned, fixes the hour at 8 o'clock in the morning, you say. Why?—An abuse sometimes occurred. If a woman were allowed to work forty-eight hours a week without such limitation, a certain sort of employer would work her forty-eight hours almost continuously while there was a press of work, and then would not work her at all.

2. If we made this arrangement by means of which we should alter the clock, should we not evade that particular Act and bring the woman there?—I do not think it would evade it.

3. It has nothing to do with the hours at which she gets up in the morning, you think?—I do not think it is so much that as that she shall not work too many hours in one day. That is the idea. I may say that, though I am not empowered to appear here by any body of workers or employers, I have spoken to a very great many of them on this subject, and they are almost universally favourable to the alteration of the clock by an hour. It would be better for health and recreation, and especially in the matter of the eyesight, which is very much tried now by our working an unnecessary hour by electric light, or in badly lighted factories. The more daylight and the better daylight the people can get, the better it is for them, and there is no doubt that in a New Zealand summer the three hours from 5 in the morning till 8 are infinitely the best part of the day—the brightest and most beautiful.

4. *Mr. Sidey.*] Do you think there is any danger whatever of the workers' hours of work being lengthened or encroached upon if a proposal of this sort were brought into effect?—I do not think there is the least danger of their being lengthened. Overtime would have to be paid for. But I should like you to rely more upon the evidence of the secretaries of workers' unions on a point of that sort.

5. Do you think there would be a tendency to require more overtime from the men?—No, I do not think so.

6. You do not see any disadvantage at all from the worker's point of view?—Nothing has occurred to me in this matter in regard to the worker that would not be for his benefit. Most of the working-men that I know are up very early in any case. Sometimes they are standing about in the early morning, sometimes gardening. To get more hours for recreation afterwards and to get better light for their work would be, I think, great advantages.