

WILLIAM PRYOR examined. (No. 5)

1 *The Chairman.*] You are here, I understand, representing the Employers' Association?—I am secretary to the Employers' Federation, and represent them, as well as the New Zealand Licensed Victuallers' Association.

2 Both together?—Yes.

3 Has your association considered this Bill?—Very fully.

4. I may say that the Committee has considered the question of taking the evidence, and we think it will meet our case if we have one representative from the employers—yourself, perhaps—and one from the licensed victuallers. It is our desire to keep within the four corners of the Bill before us, and not open up the general question of shops and offices. If you will kindly help us on these lines, we shall be obliged?—Yes, I will try and keep upon those lines. Mr Beveridge, who is president of the Wellington Licensed Victuallers' Association, will give evidence, also Mr Dwyer who represents a particular section, if you will allow that. None of us will be long. I also wished to say that the evidence that was given last year for the employers on behalf of this Bill will stand, so far as we are concerned, and we propose this morning just to touch upon the more important points. I am instructed also, on behalf of the New Zealand Employers' Federation, to again say that the federation is utterly opposed to legislation of this kind, which overrides the Arbitration Court awards; and if the Committee cannot see its way to recommend that the Bill should not be proceeded with, then we are prepared this morning to suggest alterations in the way of a compromise, in the hope that that will meet with the views of the Committee, and amend the Bill in some directions in the way desired by employers. Taking section 2 of the Bill, we ask that these words be added at the end of the section and also a shop carried on in conjunction with a restaurant." Where there is a shop and a restaurant combined, the assistants are interchangeable, and we submit that it would be a matter of great inconvenience to have different sets of hours for them.

5. Do you mean a draper's shop?—Not the like of Kirkcaldie and Stains. What we have in mind is the like of Godber's, where the hands are interchangeable, and if you had one set of hours for each, there would be no end of a mix-up, and it would make it very hard to administer the law.

6. Have you any objection to confectionery going in?—I suppose that would about cover it.

7 *Mr Fraser.*] Do you mean adjacent, connected with, or contiguous to? It might be in the next street?—I do not know of any place of that sort. It was Carroll's, Godber's, and this sort of places we had in mind. When the matter was being discussed, the cases of Kirkcaldie and Stains and the D.I.C. were mentioned, but we thought it could not be set up that their business was conducted in conjunction with the restaurant.

8. *The Chairman*] The Committee will have to provide for the point Mr Fraser has raised?—It is the cases of the dining-room and the shop alongside that we are referring to, and I do not know of any place where they are apart. Section 3 defines an assistant. We ask that engineers, electricians, and hotel clerks shall be exempted. They are not, in the ordinary sense of the term, hotel assistants, and we think they should be exempted. Section 4 provides that sections 3 to 6 of the principal Act shall not apply to hotels or restaurants, and I have to direct the attention of the Committee to the fact that subsection (2) of section 3 of the principal Act exempts the wife of the occupier or any member of his family from the operations of this Act, and we ask that that exemption should be included in this Bill so far as hotels and restaurants are concerned.

9 That is the present law?—Yes, but it would be necessary to provide that subsection (2) of section 3 of the principal Act should apply to this Bill as far as hotels and restaurants are concerned. You will see it is necessary that the members of a family should be exempted from the provisions of the Bill. This should be included, we think, amongst the exemptions proposed in section 3. Another alteration we ask for is in regard to section 4. We require in that to insert after the word "Act," in line 24, the words, "and the definition of a working-day" That will make it read as we desire it. The desire is to make the employment a seven-day week employment so far as hotels are concerned. We shall show you later (but Mr Beveridge will deal with that point) that unless that alteration is made, so far as hotels are concerned, in regard to night-porters the employers have only got five nights in the week in which they can give the holiday. The night-porter has to get twenty-four hours holiday; for the time at which he would ordinarily commence his work, and the inclusion of the definition of "working-day" in the principal Act, as far as night-porters in hotels and restaurants are concerned, would mean that he could have his holiday on Saturday night or on Sunday night, and would not be restricted to Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday, as the Bill as at present drafted would necessitate. Then, it is a seven-day employment, and we submit that the restriction regarding "working-day" in the principal Act should not be applied to hotels and restaurants. In regard to section 5, we wish to alter subsection (a) to sixty-two hours for males and fifty-eight for females. Here, of course, the employers find the greatest objection to any clause in the Bill. The fact that awards have been made by the Arbitration Court in the first instance, and then by agreements afterwards by different sections of employers and employees, makes this all the more important. Just a month or two ago in Auckland an agreement was arrived at for sixty-five hours. The Court made its award since then in the Wellington dispute for a similar number of hours.

10. Was the agreement between the union and the employers?—Between the union and the employers. The agreements we made previous to that related to Christchurch and Dunedin—all for sixty-five hours.

11 *Mr Fraser*] In regard to whom do you mean?—All the employees in hotels.

12 Male and female?—So far as hotel employees are concerned; and for the employees in restaurants it was sixty-five hours for males and fifty-two, I think, for females; and we do resent very strongly the interference of the Legislature with these awards and agreements. They cannot