

be taken to mean that there are six or seven employees. It would be generally an employer and one employee. We have the figures for Wellington City for the last year, which show that, while there were thirty-three Chinese laundries, there were thirty-nine European laundries, further, that there were forty-three Chinese employers in thirty-three laundries, and quite a number of two together

*The Chinese Consul:* Not including the suburbs?

*Witness:* Not including the suburbs. We find that the Chinese employees number twenty-one, and the European employees 274. Now, so far as legislation concerning employees is concerned, you can see that it is going to have a pretty considerable effect upon the European employers against the twenty-one Chinese. Another effect I see will come from the operation of the Bill will be that I am afraid quite a number of the twenty-one Chinese will promptly become partners in the concerns.

*Mr. Fraser:* That does not affect them under the Bill.

*Witness:* I mean, single employers on their own now. I would point out in connection with Mr. Lock's evidence that he stated there were thirty-two laundries, one with 4, six with 3, and seven or eight with 2 employees—that is, fifteen that would be affected by the Bill. If our contention is right, these seven or eight would soon cease to be affected. That would leave seventeen that would not be affected by the clause at all. I am desirous of making the point that the clause will not have the effect that it is drafted to fulfil. I have got the further point that European employers should not be subjected to further restrictions than now.

*Mr. Fraser:* What are the hours at present?

*Witness:* The hours of work mentioned in subclause (b) are the same as under the Factories Act—forty-eight for adult males, and forty-five for women and boys. Where, however, the restriction comes in, and a serious one—at the present time it is not necessary to get permits for adult workers to work overtime. They are not restricted to the limited hours as in the case of boys and women, but this Bill makes it necessary that they should be restricted the same as women and boys are now. That does not obtain in any other Act at present.

*The Chairman:* Could you give the proportion of male workers?

*Witness:* I could not: the great majority are female workers, and there can be no question about that. Laundry-workers are female workers. Mr. Tong mentioned the case where a husband and wife worked the laundry. The Bill does not propose to alter that. It provides that where a husband and wife are engaged in it the Bill does not apply.

*The Chairman:* His point was that they had to compete with that.

*Witness:* The competition would be, from the Chinese point of view, still worse than at present. The Chinese would be restricted, while there would be a free hand given to husband and wife. I have not got a copy of the West Australian Factories Act—it deals with the laundries there; but we say that the only way—if Chinese laundries are going to be dealt with, and if their hours are going to be restricted—is to say that there shall be certain hours for them irrespective of whether they are partners or individual employers. The West Australian Acts, I think, reads that no laundry in which Chinese or Asiatics are employed should be open before 8 in the morning or after 5 in the afternoon. Whether the Committee or Parliament would take those drastic measures is a matter for their consideration. We say that this clause will not do it, and we are satisfied that it will not deal effectively with the hours in the laundries; and we say that it will be quite unfair and absolutely unjust to put further restrictions on the Europeans. That is the only justification for the clause. With regard to sanitary conditions, I did not mean to suggest that the conditions were insanitary only in Chinese laundries. There is no question that we could bring evidence that there are Chinese laundries in which the conditions are not what they could be, and they could bring the same evidence in regard to some of the smaller of the European laundries. We, however, do say that there should be strict sanitary conditions, such as concrete floors for the purpose of getting rid of washing-suds, and that that is not done. It is necessary for the health of the neighbourhood, as well as of all those whose clothes are going into these places. I should like particularly that you should note an exemption we desire if the clause is made law. We ask that it should not apply to those engaged in lighting fires, getting up steam, cleaning the premises, or employed at machinery. Until steam is got up, the bulk of the workers cannot commence work. It would mean really the engine-drivers and firemen in the steam laundries, and they are pretty well all covered by the engine-drivers' awards. The cleaning of premises is an absolute necessity, and must be done after hours, and there is provision here that no work should be done after these hours. Then, of course, it is necessary in the interests of employers and employees alike that if repairs are necessary the stoppage of work should be for as short a time as is possible, and that the repairs should be done in other than working-hours. I will not take up your time further on this clause.

1 *The Chinese Consul.*] In what ways are the Chinese laundrymen working on the same lines as a European factory?—I think I said, somewhat on the lines of the small factory, where there is a husband and wife—not on the lines of our large steam laundries. I meant that a small factory run by a woman, or by a woman and a man, was pretty much on the same footing.

2. Will you give us one or two points as to the competition?—I will leave details of that kind to Mr. Wills. I do say, however, that any one who has ever been near a Chinese laundry will recognize that it is a very serious item in regard to competition with that class of trade.

3. The Chinese think the other way about—that it will give the European more chances, and give them less?—First of all, if the Bill were to go through such as it is, and the conditions were to remain as they are, then the question in regard to where two or more are employed in a Chinese laundry will be affected. If I were in a Chinese laundry in partnership with another, I should simply say, "You had better get out, and get a place of your own. If you do not we shall come under the law." So far as European laundries are concerned, they have no advantage under