

WILLIAM THOMAS YOUNG examined. (No. 2.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—I represent the Wellington Trades and Labour Council and the Australasian Federated Seamen's Union.

2. Do you represent the Wellington Council or the Executive?—I am a member of the Colonial Executive. I was a member of the New Zealand Executive, which has now been taken to Auckland.

3. Will you make a statement?—We understand the principle of this Bill is to concede to workers a full twenty-four hours' rest in each seven days. That principle is not very hard to indorse. I may say that the Bill was considered at the recent Labour Conference, and the principle of it was unanimously indorsed. In regard to the Bill itself, we know that the Sunday is prescribed as being from 12 noon on Saturday to 12 noon on Sunday.

4. *Mr. Fisher.*] It is afternoon-midnight?—According to the Bill it will not be legal for any person to do any work outside of what may be considered to be work of necessity or mercy; and included in the matter of work of necessity or mercy is work in connection with Divine service, "relief of sickness or suffering, including the sale of drugs, medicines, and surgical appliances; the continuance to their destinations of trains and vessels in transit when the Sunday begins, and work incidental thereto; the delivery of milk for domestic use." I would mention in this connection that there would be a good deal of contention as to work of necessity and as to what is a matter of mercy, and I think these words would cause a good deal of conflict and trouble. If something more definite could be put into the Bill it would be very much better. I indorse the evidence that has been given by Mr. Carey. He has all the details at his finger-ends that I do not possess, but I would like to point this out in connection with this particular matter: that a very large number of workers in New Zealand, such as shop-assistants, factory hands, and others, receive the half-holiday in each week and the Sunday in addition; but that right is not enjoyed by a very large number of other workers, and we take it that the object of the Bill is to extend that right to those who do not now enjoy it.

5. *The Chairman.*] Can you give us some instances in addition to that of the cooks and waiters?—I can give you that of the seamen. The seaman is a man who works fourteen days in each week. When I say "fourteen days in each week" I want to make myself perfectly clear. Pretty well all shore workers average something like eight hours per day. They get their sixteen hours' rest out of the twenty-four; but that privilege is not enjoyed by the seaman. On the average he works sixteen hours a day, and very often he works twenty-three hours out of the twenty-four. It has been in evidence before the Arbitration Court times out of number that seamen have worked seventeen and eighteen hours in the twenty-four, and after putting in all those hours have received 6d. or 1s. overtime. To show you exactly how that is brought about I will take the case of an intercolonial liner arriving at Auckland on Sunday from Sydney. She lies there on Sunday and Monday night, and leaves on Tuesday, and drops into Gisborne the following day. A day's work is done at Gisborne with all hands on deck. She leaves Gisborne the same day, is at sea that night, and arrives at Napier the following morning. Another day's work is done at Napier with all hands on deck. She leaves that afternoon, is all night at sea, and arrives at Wellington the following morning. Another full day's work is done in Wellington with all hands on deck. She leaves again that evening, is all night at sea, and arrives at Lyttelton the following morning. Another day's work is done at Lyttelton with all hands on deck. She leaves again that evening and arrives in Dunedin the following morning—Sunday. So you see that, with that vessel, from the time she leaves Auckland until she arrives at Dunedin it is a case of watch-and-watch all night, and the men working all day in port in addition. Take the case of an intercolonial liner arriving in Wellington from Sydney. The same principle of hours applies to that vessel, and the same with the vessel arriving at the Bluff every Monday from Melbourne. She arrives at the Bluff on Monday, and leaves in the afternoon, arriving at Dunedin on Tuesday morning. She remains overnight at that port and leaves on Wednesday, arriving at Lyttelton on Thursday and Wellington on Friday, and leaves again the same day for Sydney. There is no case I know of where these vessels are lying in port in the daytime where the full eight hours' work is not extracted from the men. That applies to a great many more vessels. You can take the case of the "Huia," the "Stormbird," and the "Arapawa," trading between Wellington and Wanganui in the coastal trade. Weather permitting, these vessels are in port all day; the sailors are working cargo the full eight hours in port. They invariably leave at 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening, and pop into port again at 7 or 8 o'clock the next morning in time to turn to again. Which is another instance of eight hours' work in the day and watch-and-watch at night.

6. Will you look at clause 4? Will you tell us how the boat could be worked under this Bill so as to give every man his twenty-four hours off once a week?—I think it could be arranged on board a vessel just as easily as it could be arranged in respect to any work on shore. There is no vessel engaged in the coastal or intercolonial trade of New Zealand that does not pop into port at least once in each week, and it would be quite competent when that ship is in port for the men to get the day off. Take the case of the vessel I have quoted arriving at Auckland on Sunday from Sydney. She leaves Sydney on the Wednesday, invariably about noon, and, weather permitting, arrives in Auckland, on the average, about noon on Sunday. It would be quite within the bounds of possibility to give the sailors, firemen, trimmers, and greasers the full Monday off, seeing that she does not leave Auckland until Tuesday at about 4 p.m. The vessel arriving at Hobart from Melbourne leaves the latter port every Wednesday, and leaves Hobart, under ordinary circumstances, on Friday, and arrives at the Bluff on Monday. She is in Dunedin on Tuesday. She has a full night at that port, and does not leave until Wednesday afternoon, I think, about 4 or 5 o'clock. In that case it would be quite competent to give the men a full twenty-four hours off. The same also applies to the vessel arriving at Wellington from Sydney. She leaves Sydney every Saturday, arrives at Wellington on Wednesday morning early, and leaves again on Thursday afternoon at about 4 or 5 p.m. In that case also it would be competent to give the men the full twenty-four hours off at Wellington.