

7. So that each man could have twenty-four hours on shore once a week?—Yes. Now take the case of the “Arahura,” engaged in the Wellington—West Coast trade. She leaves Wellington every Saturday; proceeds to Nelson, Westport, and Greymouth; arrives at the latter port on Monday morning; and in some cases she leaves again on the same tide, and in other cases does not leave until the p.m. tide. She arrives back at Wellington on Wednesday evening or early on Thursday morning. Generally she arrives at 6 or 7 on Wednesday evening and lies in Wellington until Saturday at noon. In that case it would be quite competent also to give the men the full twenty-four hours. Now take the case of the “Mapourika,” engaged in the West Coast trade. She leaves Wellington every Tuesday; proceeds to Nelson, Westport, and Greymouth; and returns to Wellington, in most cases, on Saturday evening—in some cases, but very rarely, on Sunday; and lies here until Tuesday afternoon. There is another instance where it would be quite competent to give the men the full twenty-four hours. It could also be done in respect to the colliers. Take the case of the “Canopus.” She is mostly engaged in the trade between Lyttelton and Westport, and she usually makes, on the average, about two trips a week. It generally takes about two or two and a half days to discharge her under ordinary circumstances, but if there is a rush on she can be discharged much quicker; generally it is two and a half days. It would be quite competent to give the men a full twenty-four hours once in each week; and that applies to all the colliers that I know of. Now, with regard to the ferry-boats: The “Maori” arrives here on Sunday morning at about 8.30, and remains in port until Monday night at 8 o’clock. That is another instance where the men could be given the twenty-four hours; and that also applies to the “Mararoa,” which leaves here at 11 o’clock on Saturday night and arrives in Lyttelton, weather permitting, at 12 noon on Sunday, on the average, and does not leave Lyttelton again until 6.20 on the Monday evening. As a matter of fact, there are very few cases indeed—none that I can think of at the present moment—where all seamen could not be given a full twenty-four hours’ rest in each week. In view of the very large number of hours that these men work—as is well known to Mr. Millar—I think it is reasonable that something should be done in the direction of this Bill so as to give them a full twenty-four hours’ rest. I may say this in addition: that there are many cases on record where men have gone to sleep at the wheel through being on their legs so long. Personally, I have been on my feet, when before the mast, twenty-three and a half out of the twenty-four; and that is not an isolated case.

8. *Mr. Luke.*] On account of bad weather?—No, just the ordinary running of the ship. When a vessel is at sea the men work under the watch-and-watch system. One watch will do fourteen hours and another ten hours in each twenty-four, which averages twelve a day. The geographical position of our ports is such as to permit of a vessel dropping into port in the morning, working all day, and proceeding to sea in the evening, dropping into the next port at 7 or 8 o’clock in the morning, and again working all day. That goes on up and down this coast year in and year out. This Bill permits a vessel to continue to her destination on the Sunday; practically that means that any vessel arriving in Wellington on Sunday and wishing to leave again the same day can do so. Now, I think, and my organization thinks, that the time has arrived when vessels should be prohibited from leaving port on Sunday. I believe that is the Victorian law. By the law of Victoria it is not permissible for any vessel to leave a port in that State on Sunday, and, so far as I know, the law works exceedingly satisfactorily to everybody concerned.

9. *The Chairman.*] Of course, we cannot legislate for that in this Bill?—No; but the Bill, I think, would permit of a vessel continuing to her destination on Sunday. A vessel’s destination is the port where she turns round and retraces her steps, so to speak. If a vessel is bound for Auckland, Auckland would be her destination; but if she popped in here it would be permissible for her to leave again to continue her voyage to her port of destination. I could say something in respect to the tramways; but the secretary representing that body is present, and I do not wish to unnecessarily detain the Committee by duplicating the evidence. I should like to say this in regard to the delivery of milk for domestic use: Our union thinks that this concession should extend to those engaged in the delivery of milk, just as much as it extends to the baker, or the butcher, or to any other person. If any arrangements have to be made in any other occupation to meet the requirements of the Bill, then it is certainly clear that it is quite possible to make similar arrangements in regard to the delivery of milk. It is only a matter of getting another man or two who knows how to manage a horse, and to measure milk, and to knock at the back door of a customer and fill the jug, to meet the situation. I do not think there is anything further I wish to say in connection with the Bill, but I may add in conclusion that the bodies I represent, and also, I may say, the Labour Conference that recently sat in Wellington, very strongly and unanimously indorsed the principle of this Bill. Whether the whole of the Bill is correct as it stands at the present moment I am not going to say, but so far as the principle is concerned we recognise it as being a thoroughly good one, and we hope something will be done by the Legislature to put it on the statute-book.

10. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] Do you not think the name of the Bill is an entire misnomer—“Sunday Labour”? There is no attempt made to prohibit Sunday labour at all; it is only an attempt to get one day off in the week. The evidence, at all events, is in that direction, but the Bill itself is in the direction of prohibiting Sunday labour?—The Bill does not prohibit Sunday labour.

11. It practically does—it makes it an offence. Look at clauses 5 and 6?—Clause 3 says, “Except in cases of emergency, it shall not be lawful for any person to require any employee to do on Sunday the usual work of his ordinary calling unless such employee is allowed, during the next six days of such week, twenty-four consecutive hours without labour.” That is perfectly clear, so far as I can see. According to that clause it would be permissible for an employee to work on the Sunday, but if that were done the employer would be compelled to give him a full twenty-four hours clear from duty during the next six days.