

this Bill. The Federation claims that the industrial conditions such as are provided for in the Bill should either be dealt with under the Arbitration Act, or, if that course is not satisfactory to the workers, then that the Act should be repealed by Parliament. Let us know where we are. It surely appeals to all fair-minded people that it is anything but British fair-play for two parties to agree, as they do, to refer their differences to arbitration—to refer their differences to a Court provided by Parliament under an Act in which Parliament says that that Court's decisions shall be final—and then, because one side is not quite satisfied with what it has got, it may come along and take some other means of getting what it could not get in the regular way. I may say that very strong feeling indeed is felt by employers throughout the Dominion not only in connection with this Bill, but because we realise that if this sort of thing is conceded it is only a beginning. As a matter of fact, it is only within the last few days that I have been told that the Auckland Seamen's Union has either approached or is about to approach Government in order to ask for legislation to override the award made with regard to the extended river limits in the Auckland District; and I ask where we are going to get to if this sort of thing is to be permitted. To put the matter shortly, the demand of my Federation is that we should either have Arbitration Court awards or parliamentary legislation, but not both. So long as such legislation is proposed, so long shall we raise our voices against it.

6. Which do you prefer?—If the workers do not like the Arbitration Act we will help them to wipe it out. The restrictions that are being placed upon the employers and industries of this Dominion are beginning to be unbearable, and if we find in addition to the Arbitration Court awards such legislation as this, and more irksome conditions provided by such means as this Bill, then we say we are getting tired of it, and, if the workers are not satisfied with the Arbitration Act, let them be quite frank and say so, and we will easily wipe it out. We are prepared to meet them if it comes to a fight—and I do not mean "fight" in a wrong sense—but we are prepared to meet them on the floor of the House. We want to know where we are, for we must have either one tribunal or the other. Coming to the Bill, we submit that if legislation is necessary and the business is dealt with, the present Shops and Offices Act provides all the protection that is required. Two years ago, as I have said, the union approached Parliament and got the half-holiday, and we submit that nothing has occurred in the interim to justify the union coming and asking Parliament for altered conditions. What is the position with regard to hotels and restaurants? I take Wellington as the example. The Wellington award is the award on which all other awards are based, and what applies to Wellington I think applies equally to all the other centres. When, two years ago, the award came into force, it meant that the employers affected by the award had to alter their business to suit the conditions of the award. The half-holiday provision in the Shops and Offices Act was brought in about the same time, and it took some considerable time before the employers could settle down and get their business to work smoothly under the restrictions and conditions imposed. We know in our office the amount of trouble it caused, because in many cases we had to draw up time-tables and had to work our rotas for different classes of employment; but now to-day, after having got things into working-order, it is proposed within this short time to upset everything and put us in the same unenviable position again; and we have to do this, so far as we know, without one valid reason being offered for such alterations. I propose to go shortly through the objections we have to the Bill, and then the gentlemen present and Mrs. Spiller, who represent different interests and are representatives from different parts of the Dominion, will deal with the parts of the Bill that affect them most particularly. I will put in the schedule, so that the Committee may have before them eventually the whole thing in order. Section 2 of the Bill reads, "'Hotel' means any premises, whether licensed under 'The Licensing Act, 1908,' or not, in which meals are provided and sold to the general public for consumption on the premises, and lodging is provided for hire for the accommodation of persons who desire to lodge therein; and 'restaurant' means any premises in which are provided as aforesaid, but in which lodging is not provided for the accommodation of persons other than the occupier and his family and assistants, and includes a tea-room and an oyster-saloon." First of all, we should like to know how far this goes—what class of business the word "hotel" includes. The definition is a wide one, and it is quite possible under the definition to include anything right down to the private house where one or two boarders are kept, because even in these places meals are provided and sold to the general public for consumption on the premises, and lodging is provided for hire for the accommodation of persons who desire to lodge therein.

7. That is not intended?—But we have to go on what is in the Bill. Then I ask, if that is not so, where are you going to draw the line? You would have licensed hotels, recognised private hotels, the Hotel Windsor and Arcadia and other hotels of that description, then you would get down to private houses where meals are not sold but where boarders are kept. Are they to be included? If not, where are you going to draw the line? If they are to be included, where are you going to draw the line between private houses and the other places I have spoken of? You see the difficulties in the way, and these difficulties are being recognised by the Arbitration Court, which has restricted the application of these awards. And members say that this is not intended, and is not in the Bill; but, so far as the Bill goes, with such a provision as is here provided, the first thing that will be attempted will be to draw every class of boardinghouse within the provisions of the Bill. I submit that it is a very grave danger, and one that wants very careful consideration. If the Bill is to go through, we recognise that we must discuss it with you and endeavour to get the very best terms possible, and we are here for that purpose this morning. We ask that in section 2, after the words "lodge therein" in line 15, shall be added "where three or more assistants, exclusive of the members of the occupier's family, are employed." That would stop the operation of the Act where a certain number of assistants are being employed other than the occupier's family. I was saying a moment ago that the Court recognised the difficulty in drawing the dividing-line, and in connection with an application for an award *re* private hotels and boardinghouses generally, the Court says "that private hotels are only boardinghouses under