

be—fifty-two weeks at £8 12s. 8d., £448 18s. 8d., with the addition of board and residence to seven members of my staff at 15s. per week. I should like to mention here that 15s. per week at the price of commodities at the present time, cannot keep one of our staff, but I put it in at that because the union and the Arbitration Court agreed that that should be the rate—10s. for food and 5s. for lodging. So that I am now taking that low rate for seven of the staff for fifty-two weeks, and that works out at £273. Adding the two gives a total of £721 18s. 8d. for the year's upkeep of seven of an extra staff for my establishment. That is if they agree to give one full-day holiday per week. Giving the full day is going to cost all this. We have arranged our business to suit the half-day. We had great difficulty, I may say, in arranging our business to meet the holiday granted by the Legislature at the last dying hours of the session, under which circumstances we had no opportunity of lodging our protest against it. It became law in that way at the last moment of the session, and the employees were granted a half-holiday. While it was under consideration by the Arbitration Court the members of the Cooks and Waiters' Association were granted a half-holiday, and we were never asked about it. Then, when our businesses have become adapted to that, we are asked again to grant a whole holiday. This will necessitate, as I have said, a lot of expense and the upsetting of our business in order to rearrange it.

Then, Mr. Chairman, if the term holidays are granted—say seven days in the three months, as the Bill provides—this means that for every eleven months' work each member of the staff receives twelve months' pay. That is to say, each member of the staff receives one month's salary in excess of what he has worked for. That means four weeks' wages to forty-eight of a staff at £4 18s. per month—a total of £232 16s. Also four weeks' board and lodging at £3 (15s. per week) comes to £144. There is this further consideration: that there is no provision in the existing law whereby you can ask your chef, we will say, whose holiday comes due, that that chef shall take his holiday off your premises. So that if one of your staff decided to take his week's holiday to-morrow, he could say "I'm going to take my holiday out in bed." He can remain in his room, take his meals, and claim his wages, and we have got to supply accommodation for him, find his meals, and pay his wages. So, in addition to paying for his holiday we have got to add wages and board and lodging for his relief. The total expenditure thus works out at £761 12s. per annum in my case. Now, if you can say that I can do that and still have a profit, well, I will be content to hand it over to somebody else. As I mentioned before, this is carrying it out on my working winter staff. In the summer-time the amount will be further augmented. That will just show you what it means, gentlemen, in the way of holidays, and in the upsetting of house and staff. It is all very well to say "You can easily put some one else in his place." But a waiter is not ready to do anyone-else's business. A waiter, for instance, is not in a position to do hall-porter's work. Suppose the hall-porter is away for his holiday. A big Home steamer arrives, and we get twenty or thirty of the passengers, and they come along with their luggage and expect to receive proper attention. Who is going to touch that luggage? You cannot put a waiter on to attend to it. Hall-porter's duties require certain qualifications in the way of tactfulness, courtesy, &c. Putting another porter on in place of the man who is on holiday means money.

Now, I am taking my half-holiday arrangement here, to show what it means to me every day. On Monday 13 of my staff walk out, on Tuesday 6, on Wednesday 7, on Thursday 8, on Friday 8, and on Saturday I have 6 on holiday, making a total of 48 hands, averaging eight off daily every day of the week. That is, Sunday does not count as a working-day under the Shops and Offices Act. So that we have got to allow the whole of our staff to have their holidays from Monday to Saturday. On Sunday, when we could easily accommodate the members of the staff in the matter of a half-holiday, we are not allowed to do so, and consequently they are with us then, when we could easily let them away. Therefore it is very hard to work your staffs and arrange your business so that the people who pay shall get the attention they want.

One might say it is easy to get some one else to do the work, and pass the cost on to the public; but we cannot pass the cost on to the public—the public will not stand it. In that connection we are somewhat different from Sydney and the other colonies. In Sydney they have a large population to deal with, and better conditions in regard to employment of labour. There they have 1,200 businesses of caterers and hotels, with 12,000 employees, in the city and surroundings to draw from. Now, in the case of, say, a chef in the Royal Oak, and the Grand Hotel, and the Empire Hotel being likely to take their holidays in the same week, where could we get in Wellington three efficient men to supply their places? We have not the command of labour that they have on the other side. It is practically impossible. On the other side they can do it, and can pass the cost on to the public as we cannot do here. For instance, take the Cooks and Waiters' award from 1909 to 1912. The wages there paid are, waiters, £1 5s. per week of fifty-eight hours. In that connection I may mention that the Australia Hotel has raised the tariff from 12s. 6d. to 15s. Menzies' Hotel, in Victoria, has also done the same. Another institution I remember is Phfalert's Hotel, in Sydney, which, owing to the increased cost of wages, has done away with dinner at night, discharged all the waiters and substituted waitresses, give what they call a "high tea," deleted poultry and fruit, and saved the extra money they were paying owing to the increased cost. That speaks for itself. We have not got the command of labour, sir, to draw from if those conditions as to holidays are to obtain here.

I do not think there is anything more I can say, except that I might mention that my hotel is one of those that employ an engineer, and I think you will agree that it would hardly be possible to ask an engineer to take his holiday and bring in anybody else who did not understand the machinery. It is necessary that he should be there. He starts at night and works four or five hours. He also comes in the morning for an hour and has a look round. He is in charge of the lifts and electric lights. We apply for exemption for engineers on those lines: that they are necessary for the safety of the house and the public.