

ployees outside the waitresses in dining-rooms will get the half-holiday. That is about the only real difference, with the exception that the Bill is going to increase the hours of female workers in restaurants. The chief benefit to be derived in this Bill is in relation to employees in hotels. I notice that section 5, paragraph (b), provides that an assistant shall not be employed "for more than ten hours (excluding meal-times) in any one day." At the present time in hotels there is a considerable number of employees who have to work twelve hours and over per day, and we have always considered that twelve hours is a very long day. As a matter of fact, in some of our large private hotels, which come within the definition of section 2, there has been no restriction in the past at all. The employees had to work, in some cases that I know of personally, fourteen or fifteen hours. They had no half-holiday or consideration of any kind. There are some private hotels in Auckland with a staff up to twenty. The girls have to work from twelve to fourteen hours, and the men up to fifteen hours, at the present time. Attempts have been made to get awards to cover private hotels, but in each the Arbitration Court has refused to give an award. Therefore it is only by legislation that we are likely to get any redress from people who carry on this class of business. These private hotels enter into competition both with restaurants and licensed hotels. Section 6—provision for granting a weekly half-holiday to night-porters. This is one which my union is strongly in favour of. At the present time the night-porter is really only entitled to two hours: seeing that he does not go to work until 10 o'clock at night, his half-holiday is really from 10 o'clock till midnight only, and therefore there is only one night in the week when, instead of going on at 10 o'clock, he goes on at 12 o'clock. That is the only half-holiday in force that he has had in the past. The Bill proposes to give him twenty-four hours in a fortnight, and we feel that that fills the bill admirably, and we hope it will find its way on to the statute-book. Section 7: We are very strongly opposed to the aggregation or accumulation of the half-holidays. We consider it is a very dangerous innovation to allow the half-holidays to accumulate. Considering the fact that our people never stop in one place longer than a few months except on some rare occasions, they are a class of worker who shift about a good deal, and we feel sure they would lose the benefit of this provision, and would practically be done out of their seven days in every three months. Knowing the practice of some of the hotelkeepers in Auckland, I can say that there would be many workers deprived of this benefit. We hope that the Committee will strike this out of the Bill, because it is not in the best interests of those it is intended to benefit. Although the Bill says that employees can enter into an arrangement with the employer as to the accumulation of the half-holidays, or he may give notice to the employer of the termination of that agreement, we who have a knowledge of this business know exactly how that would work out, and it would not be in the interests of the workers affected. As a matter of fact, at the present time the half-holiday—more especially with female employees in hotels—is of no benefit at all, because they do not get it. I know of a considerable number of cases where the employees, instead of getting away at 2 o'clock, do not get away until half past 3 or 4 o'clock, and it is therefore not a half-holiday at all. No doubt it was the Minister's idea when getting section 7 drafted to give a benefit, but I was instructed to protest very strongly against it being placed on the statute-book. Although notice in writing has to be given to the Inspector, and a lot of other procedure taken to safeguard the position, yet we know it would have the effect of robbing the employees. As a matter of fact, they would have to wait till the full three months before they could get any relaxation at all, and, considering that they start work at 5 o'clock in the morning in some cases and are working until 10 or 11 at night, with an hour or two free, it would be a monstrous thing to ask them to wait three months before they could obtain any relaxation. If the employer says he is going to give all his employees the seven days, they would have to go if they were not agreeable to accept the offer. It certainly is not in the best interests of the employers themselves in some of the very large houses. I was instructed to strongly protest against this section. With regard to section 8, I trust it will find its way on to the statute-book. Most of you will probably remember the case which was heard in Auckland before the Stipendiary Magistrate, the case of our union *v. Morrison*. It was over this same thing, and if the clause goes in it will prevent any recurrence of what took place at that time. I pointed out to Mr. Morrison that complaints were made to me that the employees were working longer hours than were specified in the award. He said they did not do anything of the kind, and I said, if that was so, why did he not put up on the wall the number of hours to be worked, so that all could see it, and so regulate the hours. He said it was absolutely impossible—it could not be done. As a matter of fact, at that particular time he had the hours of porters and cellarmen regulated in that way, but he said that as far as the women workers were concerned it was absolutely impossible. We gave him an opportunity of doing that before we took proceedings against him for breach of our industrial agreement, and on several occasions I recommended him to do it, but he said it was impossible while proceedings were pending. I do not know whose advice he acted upon, but he did as I first of all suggested to him, and at the present time he has the hours so arranged that each one of his staff knows exactly when he has to go to work, when to go off for meals, the half-holiday, and so on. So that the difficulty which he said obtained, he must admit now, does not cause him any trouble at all. If that had been done before, there would not have been any necessity for the legal proceedings, because the girls would have known exactly when they had to go off work, and if asked to work longer hours than those specified on the time-sheet they would have been paid overtime, and it would have been all right. The custom in the past, prior to unions being formed all over the Dominion, was for the hotel servants to go on and stop on. The employers, more especially the hotelkeepers, never thought their employees were entitled to any consideration at all. They seemed to think that they had a right to have their workers at their beck and call from early morning to midnight. It is the same in the private hotels, and this section 8 will be of very great assistance to our people in having the hours regulated so that they will be in the same position as other classes of workers of knowing at what time they have to go to work and what time they will be finished,