

and when they are to get their half-holidays. The custom that obtains at the present time in some of the hotels in Auckland is for the servants not to know when they can go off for their half-holiday, but the employer will come along and say "You can have your half-holiday to-day"; or, if they are getting the same half-holiday for a number of weeks running, they naturally look forward to that day; there are cases where some of the young men and girls have made arrangements to spend the afternoon off, and after making all their arrangements the employers come along and ask them what day they had their last holiday; and perhaps they say "Last Monday," and then he says "You cannot go off to-day; you must go off some other day." The Inspector finds great difficulty in this respect when he comes along, when complaints have been made that the staff has not been getting the half-holiday. He inquires whether the staff gets the half-holiday, and the usual thing is for the employer to say "Oh, yes! Come and ask the staff." He will say, "Is this the day when you should get your half-holiday?" and the person replying will say "Oh, no! I got mine yesterday." That is the way it has been evaded. The workers who have followed this occupation have received very little consideration from the employers, and are frightened that they will get dismissed if they mention the half-holiday. That is why a number of them do not get away until half past 3 or 4 o'clock on the half-day, when they should have knocked off work at 2 o'clock. We should like to see a clause put in this Bill making it an offence for a worker to work on the half-holiday. From our point of view we consider it would be useful in this way: that a servant could say to his employer, "This is my half-day off. I must go off at 2 o'clock, because if I am found working here after that I shall be liable to a penalty." Section 10, dealing with the wages and overtime book: We should like to see the word "overtime" struck out, to make it "the wages and time book." At the present time the wages and overtime book has to be kept under the provisions of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. That only applies at the present time to employers who are bound by an award. I should just like to tell you how this book was kept in the case of one employer in Auckland—the employer I spoke of that we had before the Court. He produced the book before the Court, and was asked by the lawyer for the union who kept the book, and he said "My son." It appears that he kept the book in the first instance correctly according to the regulations for a fortnight, and after that it was evidently too much trouble for him to keep it correctly, and he ceased to keep it in the form prescribed by the Act and regulations, and we know for a fact that there was no entry of the hours worked by the staff at all. When the trouble commenced they dated the book back and entered up sixty-five hours, and then sixty-five, sixty-five, and so on, and the Magistrate remarked that the hours each day varied, but there was no variation after that—the hours were sixty-five every day in the book, and the hotelkeeper had to admit that his son was away from business and in the meantime he had charge of the book himself. He also admitted that he did not enter up the time in the book at the time, although he paid the wages, and it came out that the son entered the time up before he went away, and when he came back again he brought the book up to date. The girls swore positively that there were no hours in the book at all at the time they saw it, and that they must have been put in subsequently to their signing for their wages. Of course if that is the way the books are going to be kept it is nothing less than a farce. It certainly will not meet the case and do what it was intended to do—to be a check on sweating, which we know has been going on, and which we know continues to a considerable extent at the present time. We trust that this provision for the overtime-book will be struck out altogether, and that the regulations which will be framed to deal with this Act will lay it down very strictly with regard to the manner in which the book has to be kept. I do not think it is necessary for me to take up any more of the time of the Committee. I would just like to strongly impress on members of the Committee again how serious a matter it would be to increase the hours of our women workers, considering the fact that our girls are the future mothers of the nation. We think it would, from a national standpoint, be a serious matter to increase the hours of female workers.

6. Has your union considered the Sunday Labour Bill?—Yes.

7. Have you anything to say with regard to it?—So far as my union is concerned we are extremely anxious to see the six-day-week principle brought into operation. We think that, seeing that nearly all other classes of workers have one day off in seven, there cannot be any sufficient reason shown why workers in restaurants, hotels, and boardinghouses—I am speaking from our point of view—should be called upon to work seven days a week. More especially do our remarks apply in respect to the half-holiday. We know at the present time that our workers are not getting the benefit of the half-holiday to the extent they have a right to expect, and this Sunday Labour Bill, which would give them one full twenty-four hours off, would certainly be a decided step in the right direction. The half-holiday at the present time is so open to abuse that, so far as the Auckland union is concerned, we have decided to go on working and agitating all the time until we get this six-days-a-week principle placed on the statute-book. We intend to keep at it because we consider we have a right to ask for what is fair, and just, and reasonable, and we consider that there is no possibility of a good case being put up against us. I took back with me a subleader which was in the *Dominion* newspaper the morning after our deputation waited upon the Minister, and I read it out to members of the union. No doubt you have seen it. You will remember it says that our class of workers in other countries are in possession of this one-day holiday in seven, and that it certainly does not redound to the credit of democratic New Zealand that we are behind the times in that respect.

8. But is that the fact? We do not take what we see in the newspapers?—That is so, but Mr. Carey has all the facts in connection with it. We have a considerable number of people in our union who travel backwards and forwards from Sydney, and who certainly find it a great hardship when they come over here, because they are only working fifty-six hours over there and are getting the one day off per week. We intend to hammer away in connection with this matter until we get the six-day principle on the statute-book.