

5. And you wish to represent their views?—Yes. As far as possible I must indorse what previous speakers have said with regard to the new Bill brought before the House, and condemn it in many respects as being a most unworkable Bill as far as the country hotels are concerned. I take exception to clause 5, where we intend to provide a new proviso with regard to the extension clause. In the country, and Palmerston North particularly, during the year we have about eight weeks when we are exceedingly busy. The first two are given up to shows. There are two racing meetings, and then there are a military tournament, gold club meetings, and a polo tournament, and during the time of these meetings we are always forced to employ extra hands. In the country we are placed at a great disadvantage in not being able to get men at the time who are suitable, and it would be a very good thing for hotelkeepers if we were able to retain our own hands and to pay them overtime instead of giving them the holidays, rather than to get new hands from Wellington, on account of their unsuitability. If we do get them we have to pay them for the one or two days they are employed, and, in addition, pay their train fare and extra wages, which our business does not warrant. The extra business is actually over in two or three days, and these are the days sometimes on which we have to give our hands the half-holiday. We have to replace them, and very often the men who are sent to us from registry offices are not very reliable at times. For these reasons I say the hotelkeepers in the country would much prefer the privilege of paying their servants overtime during those weeks of exemption from work. So far as the employees in country hotels are concerned, they are not dissatisfied with the present conditions, although not under an award. They have never objected in any way or asked for an increase in wages or extra overtime. Dealing with Sunday labour, I think it would be very unfair to ask the country hotelkeepers to close their hotels on one day in the week, for this reason: Under the licensing laws licensees are compelled to keep their houses open at all times for the convenience of travellers. We have them coming through Palmerston North at all hours of the night in motor-cars, and trains are coming in at all hours. If this Sunday Labour Bill were to come into force it would mean that the employers would be asked to cater for the travelling public, and it would be impossible for any employer to do that himself. I have a staff of twelve servants, and it would be impossible for me to do their work myself. That is all I have to say.

6. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] Are you working under an award?—In Palmerston North, no.

7. You have no award at all?—We give our staff the usual weekly half-holiday, and do not work them more than sixty-five hours per week.

8. You are practically working in accordance with the terms of the Wellington award?—Yes, practically.

9. Do you pay them overtime if they work over sixty-five hours a week?—Yes, if they work overtime we pay them for the overtime.

10. Are you aware that the hours worked in the hotels in New Zealand are far in excess of those worked in the hotels in Australia?—No, but I should like to point this out: that, so far as the country hotels are concerned, we have to keep our staff going whether we have work for them or not, and we should not be warranted in keeping them all the year round were it not that we had the heavy weeks I referred to. Some of our staffs do not work forty hours a week.

11. You think that the reduction of the working-hours to sixty would practically make a very big inroad into the profits made in the trade?—Yes, the business would not stand it unless you gave us a sliding scale, and allowed us to pay for the number of hours they are called upon to work.

12. Do you think the ground landlords of the hotels could afford a reduction in their ground-rents?—I think so.

13. *Mr. Luke.*] Do the servants get any intermittent periods of rest?—Practically speaking the housemaids in the country have every afternoon off, except when it is their turn to be on. They have an hour to work between half past 6 and half past 7 in the evening, and in the slack time, when there is little business doing, their work is finished every day at 11 o'clock. But of course one has to be about the premises. If there are two housemaids kept, one has to relieve the other.

14. There are periods of rush in your business?—Yes.

15. You cannot put it on a normal basis?—No.

16. *Mr. Poole.*] Have you had any request, as president of the Licensed Victuallers' Association, for the term holiday as contained in clause 7 of the Bill?—None whatever. Our staffs in the country are all perfectly satisfied with the Act in existence at the present time.

17. Do you think that, if this clause were put in out of consideration for travellers in rush times, it would be impossible to give the staff the weekly half-holiday?—Yes.

18. Do you think the clause has been inspired by that idea?—I am certainly in favour of this exemption clause going in.

19. What hours on the average per day do your servants work?—In slack times not more than seven hours per day.

20. In the busy times what hours do they work?—In busy times they work sixty-five hours a week.

21. But on any one day what is the maximum number of hours?—They have a rest in between. Breakfast is put on in the morning, and if there are not many people in the house it is over from about half past 9 to 10. Then, if any of the staff are anxious to get away they can get their dining-room ready in about an hour and be finished at 11. They have three hours.

22. What is the maximum number of hours they are on duty from start to finish?—It would be from six and a half to seven hours.

23. I mean the maximum number?—Not more than eight hours. That is, as far as the dining-room staff is concerned.

24. Then it would not be a hardship on you to fix the clause so that not more than ten hours should be worked in any one day?—It would be a hardship, because if we did not get this exemption we should have to increase our staff.