

be there to hamper and restrict and to worry him in the way that clause did. While on the point of the payment of overtime, there is another question in connection with attention to horses. We maintain that so far as attention to horses is concerned there is no necessity for the Shops and Offices Bill to legislate for that at all, because the awards throughout the whole country apply. It is recognized that every man who drives a horse has to give that horse a certain amount of attention not only during the week-days, but on Sundays as well. It is one of the hardships, I admit, probably, of a man dealing with horses that those horses have to be attended to just the same as human beings have to be attended to on Sundays, and we object to the restriction binding us down to giving a man a certain wage for driving his horses and then that we should be saddled with the little extra work he has to do about the stable in having to pay him time and a quarter. It will run into something like eight hours a week, and you might as well fix that man's wages at £3 5s. instead of £2 10s. It is recognized as part and parcel of a driver's work. Those are our principal objections to the Bill, and the principal amendments we desire introduced into it. There are one or two smaller ones. The provision in clause 11 (*d*) regarding default in payment of wages, fixing a fine of 5s. a day while the default continues, seems to us to press rather hardly, because in nine cases out of ten the default of an employer in paying his assistant's wages is the fault of the employee himself. It is mostly with the junior employees. The employer is not aware of the fact when the boy's birthday is. The boy forgets to mention it, and thus an unintentional breach of the award is committed. We think that we should have a little longer time to make good that default. 5s. a day is a very heavy penalty, although probably it would not be inflicted. We suggest that the time be made fourteen days, because the Act itself specifies fortnightly payment of wages, and the wage could be made up at the next fortnightly payment immediately thereafter. The Christchurch representatives are going to deal with the points regarding closing-hours. As to heating, if you were familiar with the conditions under which the various trades are carried on you would recognize that whilst heating, particularly in draughty shops where women are employed, would be a very great advantage, there are circumstances under which it would not be either convenient or advisable. We do not think that the grocery trade is one which really requires any consideration as regards heating. A good deal of the work is heavy work, and if a man feels cold there is plenty of work he can find to do to bring up his circulation. We consider that if this clause does remain in the Bill some more elaborate provision should be made specifying the kind of heating, so that it should not be left entirely and solely, as it is with the present vague words, in the discretion of the Inspector. You will recognize that this puts large powers into the hands of the Inspectors, many of whom, we willingly admit, work very harmoniously with the employers; but at the same time it puts a very serious power for mischief into the hands of a man who may be inclined to be a little cantankerous or to take a "set"—we have known it happen—on any particular employer in any branch of trade. It gives him an immense power for putting that shopkeeper to expense. He might demand that heating-appliances be put in which might run the employer into a very large sum of money. Whilst we are not prepared to suggest any alternative, we think that your Committee would do well to think over the clause a little more and give us a little further protection from the possible vagaries of any Inspector who may be put over us. With regard to clause 43, you give us fifteen minutes' grace after the closing of the shop. There are many circumstances under which this fifteen minutes' grace might press very hardly. I think we may take it for granted that no shopkeeper wants to take any mean advantage of his employee as regards the few minutes that are allowed us after the actual closing of the shop. But supposing the shop has been full right up to 1 o'clock. The assistants have a certain amount of work to do in covering up perishable products. Many of them have their cash to balance. Most of the shops now are run on the cash-register system, under which each man is responsible for the money in his own till, and that man cannot get away from the shop until the cash has been proved to be correct or that the shortage, if any, is not in his till. Supposing the cash does not work out, the cash-register slip has to be sorted out so that the shortage may be sheeted home to the man in whose drawer it has actually taken place, and then and there he may probably be able to give a satisfactory solution of the shortage. If it is left till the next day the matter has gone from his mind, and very often that is apt to cause serious trouble. We do not think that any employers in our trade would take a mean advantage of thirty minutes' grace in the way of making a practice of it. I think you may well give us thirty minutes there in case we should need it. Clause 49 (*a*): "With respect to proceedings by an Inspector against any person for any offence against this Act the following provisions shall apply: The proceedings shall be commenced within three months after the offence was committed." We ask that the proceedings shall commence within one month instead of three, because that gives an employer the feeling that ancient history is not going to be raked up against him, and that he can conduct his business without fear of undue persecution.

4. *Mr. Davey.*] With regard to that last remark, have you ever been unduly or unfairly persecuted?—We have known cases where we have been unduly persecuted—certain individuals, not as a trade. I am not going to say that it was not through their own fault. They may perhaps have treated the Inspector a little cavalierly and thus got him down upon them. But we know there are circumstances under which Inspectors are inclined to make a personal matter of their grievances and be pretty severe on certain individuals in the trade.

5. You commented upon the clause in the Bill which gives you fifteen minutes' grace. Assuming that the shop was full at the proper time of closing, would you be satisfied if you had to close your doors and simply serve those customers: would not that be sufficient?—Not if you tie us down to fifteen minutes. Supposing there are a dozen people in the shop; it may take pretty well fifteen minutes to serve them. You cannot shut a customer off short and say, "I have no time to give you any more." Even after the assistants have served those people who are in the