

We also ought to have an eight-hours day, but are offering a compromise of an additional eight hours for men and two for women on the forty-eight-hours week. Surely that is fair in this boasted eight-hours country! Now, as to differentiation between hotels and restaurants, there is neither rhyme nor reason for it. It is a special concession to hotelkeepers. The women in restaurants do exactly the same work as do women employed in hotels in a similar capacity: why should a waitress in a hotel have to work longer than a waitress in a restaurant? Sub-clause (c) is altered from "ten" in the existing Act to "eleven." This is done merely to make sure that the full sixty-two hours shall be got out of us in the six days proposed in the next section. We are against it, and urge no departure from the ten-hour limit now fixed. That is an hour in excess of the limit fixed for other shop-assistants. There is this point I want to make before the Committee in this connection: Our working-day is never done straight off. In most cases it is from fourteen to fifteen hours after commencing work on any one day that a worker in a hotel is finished. Because of the unusually long stretch of the day over which our working-hours extend we ought to have less hours than other workers. A hotel worker starts work at from between 6 and 7 in the morning—two hours before the ordinary worker goes to work—and finishes at 8 at night. In some cases he works up till midnight, and has to work over a stretch of sixteen hours out of twenty-four. There has been some talk of hotel workers getting off duty every afternoon. If they did not get off some time in the day they would work on the average thirteen hours a day—from, say, 6 to 7 a.m. to 7 or 8 p.m. The ordinary shop opens at 8 or 9 a.m. and closes at 6 p.m. It is open on only five days and a half of the week. A hotel has seven days in the week to do its business. Its bar trade is done from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. If barmaids were required to work all the time the bar is open their hours would be sixteen a day. That is why they get time off: it is not generosity on the part of the hotelkeeper—merely that they cannot exceed the weekly hours and must give their employees some time off in the day. Surely ten hours' work in a day is long enough for a woman to be on her feet! The hotelkeeper ought to be satisfied with the advantage he has to trade when all other shops are closed, without requiring the extra advantage of an eleven-hours day from his barmen and barmaids. Now I want to give the Committee the hours fixed by Australian Parliaments for hotel workers, and also those fixed by Australian awards. So far as I can gather they are as follows:—Act hours: New South Wales—Sixty hours since 1899; Victoria—fifty-eight for men, fifty-six for women; West Australia—fifty-six for men, fifty-two for women; Queensland—sixty hours for barmen; South Australia—(?); Tasmania—fifty-four for barmaids. There are one or two facts about these hours that I wish to mention to the Committee. The New South Wales hours have been obtaining since 1899. The Government has promised a Bill to fix them at fifty-four. The Victorian hours have been fixed since 1905. Here is a case where the hotelkeepers and hotel workers went as a deputation to ask for a sixty-hours week. Sir Alexander Peacock, who was then Minister for Labour, point-blank refused the request of the deputation, and said that a working-week of fifty-eight hours was even too long, and should be reduced, not extended. Clubs are included under the Act. Now as to the award hours fixed. These are the awards—I have them with me:—Award hours: West Australia—Barmen, fifty-four hours (nine hours a day; 2s. 6d. an hour for Sunday work); other hotel and restaurant workers, fifty-eight for men, fifty-two for women; tea-room workers, forty-eight hours: Tasmania—fifty-eight hours: South Australia—fifty-six hours. Victoria—fifty-six to fifty-eight hours: New South Wales—hotels, old award, fifty-eight to sixty-three hours; new award, for a certainty not more than fifty-eight for men and fifty-six for women; restaurants, fifty-eight hours for men, fifty-six for women. The hotel award is now being fixed. I can assure this Committee that the hours will be no longer than fixed in the restaurant award, and I believe they will be less. We ask for fifty-six and fifty hours, and in doing so I want to make a special appeal to this Committee to consider the hours of women workers. If this Committee would do so it could get medical evidence to show that it is harmful for the motherhood of this country that women shall be required to rush round on their feet for fifty-eight hours a week. The work of a waitress has a certain effect. The continuous rushing round on their feet predisposes them to falling of the womb, brings on varicose veins, and makes for other physical irregularities. It unfits them for motherhood, and makes them subject to ill health generally in after-years. If anybody needs a full day's holiday in a week it is the women workers. At certain periods the rich woman takes to her bed and gets every attention possible. The working-girl in a hotel does not even get one day a month to rest herself. Whatever her condition is she is required to rush about working and standing on her feet at the very time she should be resting. The hotel trade is rich enough to pay £40 a week for goodwills of the hotels—it refuses decent labour-conditions for its women workers; and we confidently submit that it should be made by legislation to grant a six-day working-week of fifty hours, and that this Committee will make that recommendation. Our special appeal is that the Government will give a square deal to the women workers in hotels and restaurants. Subsection (2), section 27: 'There is an important omission in this subsection—extended hours. We want the words "nor any holiday" added in. If that is not done, then the workers can be asked to work extra hours on the day of their holiday. Now I come to subsection (4), section 27: The intention of part of this subsection is to provide that in hotel-bars and in restaurants that do no business on Sundays the present half-holiday weekly and the Sunday holiday shall be preserved. I am satisfied that that is what the Minister of Labour intended. But a careful reading of the subsection will show that such is not the case. I wish to explain the existing conditions first. There are many restaurants, such as Kirkcaldie and Stains', the D.I.C., and Godber's, that close up absolutely on Sundays. There is not a hotel-bar in Wellington where the barmaid is employed on Sundays. These workers already get a weekly half-holiday. Their fear has been that if the six-day week is granted they will lose their half-day. That is why they have not signed our petition. I have explained to them that Parliament would never take away from workers holidays