

7. How would it work out in the small hotels in the country?—In the country and in Wellington I have been speaking to several of the hotelkeepers, who say they will offer no opposition to it at all. There are many—especially the smaller ones—who are prepared, if the large hotelkeepers will fall into line, to give us the whole day's holiday per week. I think, too, the women workers, who represent at least two-thirds of the employees in the industry, should be protected. Women who have their home ties and home comforts to attend to should have the privilege we require in a separate day to themselves. We want to be able to say to ourselves on one day in the week that we have not got to go to work that day. We are quite prepared to work the hours we do now, provided it can be done in the six days instead of the seven. On general principles we think the old biblical law should be observed, and we believe it can be done in our trade and in some of the other trades upon which representatives are going to give evidence.

8. Can it be done over the whole twenty-four hours in one day—from midnight to midnight?—In most trades it would be from midnight until the morning following the next midnight, because there is only one man working after midnight, and in the restaurants no one. In oyster-saloons in the large cities many close all day on Sunday, and only open in the evening to oblige their customers. I believe the oyster-saloon keepers generally would be prepared to support the measure if it were made obligatory on all, and many only open now because they are afraid their customers might go elsewhere on other days if they did not open for their convenience on the Sunday. The men and women in our trade will not be satisfied until they get the holiday they think they are well entitled to, and they think the industry can well stand it. In connection with the Sydney arrangement, the hotelkeepers themselves had a meeting with other employers, and unanimously decided to abide by the award of the Wages Board with regard to the full day's holiday, and refused to appeal to the Industrial Court. The men and women in our trade there are now enjoying the privilege we are now asking for. I should like to say further that under the old Conciliation Board's award we worked under from 1907 to 1908 there was a provision whereby, in addition to the half-holiday weekly, the employees in the various establishments were given one Sunday a month in full. That agreement was upset by the Arbitration Court because of its invalidity, and when we approached the Court and asked for a re-enactment of the agreement in connection with holidays which had been in existence for a year and which was contained in the Conciliation Board's agreement, the Court suggested, and stated in its addenda, that it was a matter for the Legislature—that, seeing that the Legislature had enacted the holidays in the Shops and Offices Act, it was not for the Court to interfere. In Sydney it is very seldom that the hours of labour approach in length the hours prescribed in the Wellington and other awards. We are asking for this privilege not so much on behalf of ourselves as on behalf of the country workers. In the country the workers in our trade, because of their migratory nature, are almost incapable of organization. To give an instance of the way in which our people travel from town to town, during the last two years and a half there have been just on three thousand names passed through my books. There were 880 people in the first year.

9. How many are there on the roll now?—Roughly, we have three or four hundred live members. Our financial membership I expect will be about six hundred. The arrangement can be made with very little inconvenience to the employers, especially in hotels and restaurants, where the chief men in the kitchen or two or three in the dining-room could fall in when extra assistance is required, and it only needs a little bit of arrangement so that the holiday can be given without any great measure of inconvenience. It is remarkable that in countries like Herzegovina, the Argentine, and other places similar measures have been enacted to the one that we are asking for, and the hotel trade is particularly mentioned because in those places the café system is in full swing. The cafés are open for seven days, but the employees are given one day off in rotation. We see no reason why even milkmen should be exempted. Some people I know say it is impossible, where only one man is employed, to deliver milk; but we think the employer also is practically a wages-man and may not very often make so much as the man who delivers the milk, and in such a case he should take his turn on and do part of the work. Although he is running a small business, he should not be able to compete unfairly against the larger employer.

10. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] I see by the Sydney agreement there are many exemptions. The hours are from fifty-eight to sixty-three—there is no unanimity?—The position is this: In Sydney the majority of the men have the privilege of sixty hours each.

11. Sixty-three?—That is in the kitchen. They are not deemed to be shop employees. They have had the hours reduced from seventy-seven to sixty-three.

12. In Queensland the hours are fifty-two to fifty-six, and in Victoria fifty-six to sixty?—Fifty-six to fifty-eight.

13. *Mr. Luke.*] Will not the Bill have the effect of reducing the number of small employers, and bring about a condition of things which will prevent anything like an expansion of individual effort?—In no instance have we had opposition from the small employer. It has always come from the large man.

14. You are speaking from the point of view of your own employees?—Yes.

15. You have to take the Bill as it is drafted here, and it will affect not only the small employer in your industry, but also the farmer. A small farmer may require to do a certain amount of cropping, and would there not be a difficulty in giving effect to the Bill in that respect, and also in places working a small tramway—say, in Napier or Wanganui?—My point is that if six men work on seven days they do the work of seven men in six days. We want to see a measure of this sort brought about because it will widen the chance of employment and employ more workers. I also think that, in common with all other measures for shortening the hours of labour, it will conduce to the productivity of the men employed.