33. So that the definition would cover large boardinghouses unless they kept a common table? —Yes.

34. *The Chairman.*] With regard to overtime: Do I understand that, in addition to showing the wages and the overtime, you wish the book to be kept to show the time the assistants should work?—In our trade the hours the men are expected to work every week should be put down on a sheet—because the Department will agree with me when I say it is absolutely impossible to get at the accurate number of hours the men work.

35. *Mr. McLaren.*] With regard to section 7, in relation to subclause (5), "the occupier shall, within fourteen days . . . . allow to the assistant a holiday on full pay": Do the men in the trade move about very much?—The men shift about a good deal, but we say that, in the case of night-porters and other men who are not in a sufficiently stable position to better their condition, it would happen that some employers would have, say, four scullerymen in a year, and would consider that they need not give any of them any holidays at all in the three months, because all they would require to do would be to give them the option of monetary payment in lieu of the half-holiday. We want the half-holiday, especially for the married men, and we do not think that, having once given it to us, Parliament should put anything in the Bill to operate against it.

36. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] A lot of the men want the money?—That is not so in my union. There are cases in which even the girls have refused the money, as well as the men.

WEDNESDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 1909.

WILLIAM PRYOR, Secretary of the Employers' Federation of New Zealand, examined. (No. 5.)

1. *The Chairman.*] The Committee will hear what you have to say in connection with the Shops and Offices Bill and the Sunday Labour Bill?—Yes. Do I understand that you do not intend to touch the Factories Bill. There are one or two witnesses here interested in that, and if they are not wanted they can get away.

2. Do I understand you have some witnesses here from a distance?—Yes. We should like to take the Shop and Offices Bill first.

3. We have arranged to let you have the whole of the morning. Does the Federation represent, as far as these Bills are concerned, the retailers?—It includes all classes affected by the Bill. They are all connected with our Federation in one way or another. I am representing the employers generally.

4. So that in connection with the Sunday Labour Bill also you represent the restaurants and hotels?—Yes.

5. Will you make your own statement?—I would say that the provisions of the Shops and Offices Bill to a large extent override the provisions of the Sunday Labour Bill, and that we have based all our evidence on the Shops and Offices Bill. I am aware, of course, that the Sunday Labour Bill proposes to go further than the Shops and Offices Bill, and would affect other trades and industries. It would affect, for instance, freezing-works, dairy factories, tramway concerns, and other propositions which are absolutely compelled to work on Sundays, and I have to say quite frankly and without any disrespect that the provisions of the Bill seem to be so framed as to be absolutely impracticable. It would, we think, be so impossible to bring such a Bill into operation that we have not given much attention to it; but I am here to say that we oppose it totally. That being so, we will ask the Committee to take our evidence as referring to both Bills. With regard to the Shop and Offices Bill I am instructed by my Federation first of all to absolutely and most strenuously object to this class of legislation. The Federation is opposed to any legislation which overrides the Arbitration Court awards. We say that the Arbitration Act is framed for the purpose of, and the Arbitration Court is the tribunal set up by the Act for, controlling the industrial conditions of the workers; and, especially where by means of the Arbitration Court the conditions operating in any trade or industry have been inquired into, we say we should not be required to appear before the Conciliation Council or the Arbitration Court if, because the other side may not be quite satisfied with what it gets, it should have power to come before Parliament and ask for legislation overriding the decisions arrived at by those bodies. So far as the hotel and restaurant business is concerned in different parts of the Dominion it is controlled by Arbitration Court awards. In Wellington here some two years ago the Arbitration Court, after the Conciliation Board's recommendations had been declared null and void, went into the whole of the conditions—went into them very exhaustively, as I have reason to know, as I conducted the case for the employers. The union put into the box some forty or fifty witnesses representing every grade of worker, and after an exhaustive inquiry by a tribunal specially set up to deal with that class of case it gave its decision. Before it gave its decision the union approached Parliament and asked for legislation, with the result that between the time the case was heard and the time the award was given a Bill was put through giving the half-holiday to hotel and restaurant employees; and the memorandum in the award stated that the holiday question had not been dealt with by the Court in view of its having been dealt with by legislation. That, I take it, was not put there because the Court would not consider the question of holidays, but because it had been dealt with by legislation. Then, following on the Wellington award, other awards have been given, other agreements have been entered into in different parts of the Dominion; and we submit that no good reason can be advanced why legislation should now be introduced to override those decisions of the Court It seems to us absolutely unfair that the workers' unions should take all they can get by means of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act and then come to Parliament for extra concessions and secure provisions for overriding existing awards, as are asked for in