

we should have our holidays reduced by one-half. They would deduct the extra days from our salaries, and would call upon us to work the maximum number of hours a day. Another point is this: that there is work which we shall not be allowed to take home at night. In the first place, it would be impossible for the Inspector to find out what kind of work we were doing, because he cannot go into private houses. We say that it is a great convenience for clerks when they have a little work to do to be able to take it home at night. If we have to do it at the office we lose the time it takes us to get there and back, whereas if we take it home we can very often do it and have our evening off as well. Then, again, under one of the provisions of the Bill we shall be driven from our offices at 5 o'clock, with some few exceptions. With law clerks this will be very inconvenient, because they intend to try and pass the examinations. Many cannot afford to buy the expensive books which it is necessary to study, and even if they could those books would be out of date in a year or two. They cannot afford to buy the Law Reports or the Law Encyclopædias, and therefore it is very convenient to them to be able to use their employers' libraries. If this Bill is passed as it stands, it means that the law clerks will be deprived of these privileges, because the employer would know that if he allowed his clerks to come back he might have to meet a charge of keeping his employees after time. But the main reason why we law clerks object to this Bill is this: that bringing the law clerks under the provisions of the Bill presupposes that some wrongs have been done to them, and that it is necessary to redress those wrongs. If the Bill is to be of any use it should give us more than we have got at present, and not that there shall be a provision that the minimum shall be less than we have. The Bill says in effect that the employers are trying to get more out of us than they have a right to do, while we say that they are treating us very liberally and generously, and that they get more work out of us because they treat us so well. I will give you an instance of what occurred in my own case. I went back to do some work on the day before Easter, and my employer came in and found me at it, and he said to me, "You have been at work pretty hard for the last few days," and he gave me a cheque for £10. That ought to show you that I was well treated for the work which I had done. We say that the Bill is worse than useless to us, because it will show the employers that they can work us for longer hours than they do without having to pay for it. In the majority of cases they will see that they can set us to work earlier than they do now, because there is no provision as to the hour at which we are to start. We now have an unwritten law that our hours are from half-past 9 o'clock till 5, or from 9 o'clock till half-past 4. If this law comes into force we shall have to stop work at 5 o'clock, and there is nothing to prevent them making us start at 8 o'clock in the morning. The extra work has to be done at some time, and we might be called up to do it then. With regard to the work which the law clerks have to do, I may say that it is very irregular. In some cases it may be the drawing-up of documents; and if they are required for some case which is coming on in the Court on the next day it is necessary to work overtime. There is a peculiar provision in the Bill, and that is that we can be brought back for overtime work three whole months in the year. That is to say, that we can be brought back on three nights in the week, but only to do a particular class of work which is not usually done by law clerks, and there is no provision for overtime for the urgent work which we have sometimes to do. Finally, I should like to point out that, looking at the provisions of the Bill, it appears to me that it has not been drafted with the object of including law offices, and that it has been only intended to apply to mercantile, banking, and insurance offices, because there is nothing in the Bill which seems to suggest that the draftsman had in his eye the condition of the law clerk. I say that because the provision which is made for overtime would give us less than we get at the present time, and because we should be deprived of many privileges that we get at present. As it is, it seems to me we are not in the class of employees for whom this Bill has been drafted, and that we have been inadvertently included in the interpretation clause in the definition of "office" and "office-assistant."

*Mr. L. B. Linklater:* Mr. Wedde has put the views of the law clerks so fully before you that there is very little left for me to say. I can indorse everything that he has said. We shall gain nothing under the provisions of this Bill. In fact, it will be the other way. I am engaged in the office of Messrs. Bell, Gully, Bell, and Myers, and I can say that they treat their clerks liberally. We work thirty-six hours a week as a rule, and if there is overtime work to be done the typewriters get 1s. 6d. an hour for overtime, and the engrossing clerks are paid 3d. per folio for paper work and 4d. per folio for parchment. Besides, we get between twenty-five and thirty days' holiday in the year. That is to say, we get more holidays than any other employees, with the exception, perhaps, of schoolmasters and school-teachers. I may tell you, as an instance of the manner in which our employers treat us, some eighteen months ago I applied for six weeks' leave, which was readily granted, and my employers not only continued to pay me my salary during that time, but they gave me a cheque to pay my passage to Sydney and back. With regard to the work in a solicitor's office, I should like to tell you that it is not the same as the routine work which is carried on in merchants', bankers', and insurance offices. It is more irregular. There may be half a dozen cases to prepare for the Court of Appeal, and they all have to be got ready by a certain date. As you are aware, cases to be submitted to the Appeal Court have to be printed. Some time ago there was a case to be prepared in our office which ran up to 795 pages of printed matter, and it took the clerks some considerable time to get the copy ready for the printers. Then they had to correct the proofs and revise, a great portion of which had to be done overtime so as not to keep the printers waiting. The clerks who did that work were well paid for their overtime, and were perfectly satisfied with their treatment. Therefore I think I can say that the law clerks, in Wellington at all events, do not want this provision as to overtime. I have spoken to a great many of them personally, and I can say that there is not one of them that I have spoken to who is in favour of the Bill. There will be no benefit to us under it, and it may possibly lead to friction between us and our employers.

*Mr. John Graham:* I am employed in Messrs. Bell, Gully, Bell, and Myers's office. My remarks must necessarily be brief after what Mr. Wedde and Mr. Linklater have said. They have laid