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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS

STANDING COMMITTEE B OFFICIAL REPORT

FACTORIES BILL

THURSDAY, 22nd APRIL, 1937

Thirteenth Day's Proceedings

Contents

Further progress was made during morning and afternoon
Sittings with Clause 68, which was still under consideration when

The Committee adjourned until Tuesday, 27th April, at
11 a.m.

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FACTORIES BILL.

STANDING COMMITTEE B.

OFFICIAL REPORT.

Thursday, 22nd April, 1937.

[Major LLOYD GEORGE in the Chair.]

CLAUSE 68.—(*General conditions as to hours of employment of women and young persons.*)

Amendment proposed [20th April]: In page 56, line 26, after "shall," to insert "in the case of a woman."—[Mr. Short.]

11.7 a.m.

Question again proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Sir John Simon): The Committee is not at the moment very full, but I think I must state at once, for the information of hon. Members, the course which I suggest it would be best for us to take now in respect of the matters that we were discussing at the last sitting, on which I made a statement. At that time I proposed that when the Committee stage was over and the Bill was reported to the House, the Government should bring up an Amendment which would embody the change that I sketched out last time. I gathered at the time that some hon. Members did not feel satisfied that that would be the best way to do it, and I am bound to say that, on reflection, I agree with them. I do not think it would be a good plan for the Committee, which is devoting so much close attention to this Bill, to pass the Bill back to the House, so far as this matter of juveniles under 16 is concerned, without actually making any adjustment to meet our discussion last time and waiting for the Report stage for the new proposals to be tabled. I have consulted my hon. Friends opposite, and I think they take the same view. In fact, they rather pressed that view upon me, and I wish to meet them.

The question is as to what would be the best way to do it according to the rules of Order and in order to be business-

like, because we all want to make progress. I am informed by the authorities that it would not be in order for us to postpone Clause 68 to the end of the Bill, because we have already entered upon the Clause and, indeed, have adopted some portions of it. The best course, therefore, would, I think, be this: The modifications which I sketched out would not come into force immediately, but would come into force after an interval, whatever it might be. Two years was the time that I mentioned. Consequently, they would have to be expressed in a Clause which provided that after that interval of time the figure 48 would be altered to a smaller figure, with the other provisions that I indicated. That, I am advised, could properly be done in a new Clause, which would be Clause 69. Clause 68 would be a provision as to what would happen when the Bill passed, and the new Clause 69 would be a provision as to how that would be altered after an interval. I propose to undertake that the Government will put down during the Committee stage a new Clause in the terms which they, after inquiry and reflection, think should be right for what I have called the new Clause 69, that is, the modifications which will come into force after the interval.

Mr. Graham White: To be discussed in Committee?

Sir J. Simon: That is right. We would put it down before the Committee stage is over in sufficient time—of course, I must make my inquiries first and get information from many quarters; it is pouring in now—for it to be discussed by the Committee. Being a new Clause, it would have to be discussed at the end of the Committee stage, and I do not think that would be inconvenient, for we shall have had time to think about it. When the Bill comes to be printed for the Report stage, the order of the Clauses is sometimes readjusted, and the new Clause would then be moved up and would appear immediately after Clause 68. I think that this device, which I am advised is the best one, is probably the most practicable plan. I am anxious to meet what my hon. Friends opposite and others feel, and I agree with them that we ought to deal with this matter in the Committee. It is necessary to have some such plan, because I have made it

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[Sir J. Simon.]

plain that the details of these changes involve very careful and complicated considerations, and it is only right that the opportunity should be given to those responsible for learning from various quarters—I want to hear from the workmen's organisations—what is believed to be the best way in which to do it.

Viscountess Astor: Is it proposed to define the hours?

Sir J. Simon: Certainly; the new Clause will formulate in terms what the shorter hours will be, and that will be discussed when we come to the new Clause. The result of this suggestion will be, I think, that we must go on with the necessary discussion on Clause 68, and I rather hope that, subject, it may be, to dividing on the 40-hour week, or whatever hon. Gentlemen may wish, we can make rapid progress on some portions of the Clause. The new discussion will arise when the new Clause which will contain the definite number of hours comes up. There are some points on Clause 68 which, I suppose, the Committee will deal with in the ordinary course this morning. For example, there is the complicated question of what is the hour for the beginning of the day, what are the breaks, and things like that. I have discussed with a good deal of care the suggestion that I have made with those who advise in such matters. I do not think it would be easy to make a better one, and I hope the Committee will think it the right course to take.

Mr. Brooke: The right hon. Gentleman referred to the fact that he was seeking the views of people interested. Is he inviting the views of workmen's organisations and employers' associations, or is he simply leaving it to their initiative to send information?

Sir J. Simon: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman has raised that point. I know how much he knows about this matter in a part of the country about which I know very little and he knows a great deal. I am anxious to get, and I am sure that I shall get, the views of organisations on both sides. I do not want to hear from one side without hearing from the other side. I have no doubt that it will mean one or two deputations; well, life is crowded, but this matter is important enough to have deputations upon it.

Mr. Brooke: Are they being invited to send deputations or to send their views, or is it a general invitation to everybody?

Sir J. Simon: I do not want to exclude anybody, although, of course, one cannot have personal interviews with everybody. We are dealing with the matter in the way in which we have dealt with other things in the Bill. So much interest is being taken in this subject that I hope that we shall get the views of everybody concerned.

Mr. Burke: Is the right hon. Gentleman inviting the views of education authorities?

Sir J. Simon: I will take them from any proper authority.

Mr. Short: We do not object to the suggestion made by the right hon. Gentleman. He has assured us that he is prepared to put down a new Clause, which will come before this Committee for consideration, and I think we might well proceed with the discussion of Clause 68.

Mr. Mander: The suggestion made by the Home Secretary is very reasonable and is the best way of dealing with the matter, but there are one or two points that I should like to make, because we cannot leave the whole of the discussion over until we see the actual form which the new Clause will take. I want, as shortly as possible, to emphasise a point which I hope the Home Secretary will bear in mind in framing the terms of the Clause. I cannot help feeling a good deal of disappointment with the speech which he made the other day, although to-day he did show a distinct change, for which we are grateful; but I do not know whether the Under-Secretary will regard it as an example of drive and determination. I think it hardly came up to the standard of the Under-Secretary.

The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd): I think it does.

Mr. Mander: I hope we can persuade the Home Secretary to stand firm. I am sure that he will be glad to hear any arguments which will be required. He said that the figure of 40 hours, while perhaps most important, was not sacrosanct. Of course it is not, but that figure is one which is very much in the minds

of reformers in all parts of the world, including those who are trying to negotiate a 40-hour week at Geneva and those in this country who are trying to reduce hours to a lower standard level. Various hon. Members have given their own personal experience. Perhaps I might be permitted to mention that, in my own works, all the employes, men and women, work a 40-hour week.

Mr. Silverman: On a point of Order. I gather from the tenour of the hon. Gentleman's speech that he is now discussing the merits—

Sir J. Simon: He is explaining his merits.

Mr. Silverman: I was wondering whether we had now left the discussion of the procedure suggested by the Home Secretary, about which I wanted to say a word before we went on to discuss the merits of the various proposals.

Mr. Mander: It may be that it is inexpedient for me to make a long speech, but surely I am in order.

Mr. Silverman: I wanted to make sure that the opportunity of making some comment on the procedure suggested by the Home Secretary would not be lost to me.

Mr. Mander: I quite appreciate the suggestion. I do not want to make remarks at greater length than I can help. I was stating my own experience of rationalisation and the 40-hour week. It is not a question of the older persons only; those of every age come into it. The Home Secretary referred the other day to the Committee which had recently reported upon the hours of employment of young persons, and suggested that the Committee recommended a 48-hour week, but I believe he went too far in making that claim. Let me quote the actual words, which are on page 27 of the Committee's report. What they say is:

"We are therefore of opinion that, for young persons as a whole, a week consisting of as much as 48 working hours is definitely too long to afford the necessary opportunities for continued education and recreation."

From that, the Home Secretary will see that he went too far in saying that the Committee had recommended a 48-hour week. If we try to make any sort of change in reducing the hours of young persons, we shall create a good deal of

friction and trouble with employers; I hope not much, but a certain amount of adjustment will be required. If we have to face that, we might as well face it for something which is worth while. If we simply do it for the sake of a 44-hour week, or even a 42-hour week, we might as well wait for an opportunity a year or two later, when we can do something more effective. Obviously, the opportunity is now, and I beg the Home Secretary to look at the matter from this point of view. The 40 hours will involve him in very little more trouble with the employers than 42 or 44 hours, but the position has to be faced at some time. I believe this Committee and the country would much rather see an effort made, if it is to be made at all, for something really worth while, a 40-hour week, than for any higher number of hours.

Mr. Silverman: I recognise that I am probably as inexperienced as any other Member of the Committee in matters of this sort, but in my inexperienced mind the proposal made by the Home Secretary raises very considerable misgivings; and the result, unless my misgivings can be explained away, will be trouble and embarrassment to the Members of the Committee. I understand the proposal to be that the Clause as it now is, and the Amendments upon it, shall be discussed, and, if necessary, voted upon, that Clause 68 shall be ordered to stand part of the Bill, and that, at a later stage, a new Clause will be moved containing proposals about which the Home Secretary has not yet made up his mind, so that he is not in a position to tell us what they will be.

What will then be the position? If what the Home Secretary then proposes satisfies both sides of the Committee, those hon. Members who have been pleading with him very hard for the Amendment, or, at any rate, for the principle of the Amendment, now before the Committee will already have discharged their function; they will have voted upon these proposals. Will the Committee then have to discuss exactly the same principle and exactly the same ideas and proposals, with reference to the new proposals of the Home Secretary in the new Clause, if these turn out not to be satisfactory; or will it then be said that these matters have already been discussed and disposed of on this Clause? [HON. MEMBERS:

[Mr. Silverman.] "No."] If it were so, the moving of Amendments to the new Clause would be out of order. I accept it that that will not be so, and that when the new Clause comes, if it is not satisfactory, we can put these Amendments down again and discuss them again.

If that be so, what is the point of voting upon them now and discussing them upon this Clause? They may all come up again if the new proposals are unsatisfactory. Would it not be much more expedient to vote this Clause out now, and embody parts of it with the new proposals, into the new Clause? Otherwise, the position will be either that it will be out of order to discuss these Amendments on the new Clause, or that the Committee will waste time by discussing twice over proposals about which the arguments are exactly the same. It must be one or the other of those alternatives. Many Members of the Committee who would want to vote for these proposals if the Home Secretary's new proposals were unsatisfactory, might not want to vote for them if the Home Secretary's new proposals were satisfactory. Therefore it is extremely difficult for many Members to make up their minds how they will vote on this Clause and on the Amendments to the Clause which are on the Paper, without knowing what the Home Secretary will suggest. That is why it seems to me that to discuss this Clause and these Amendments, and to keep the Clause in the Bill, is likely to be a source of considerable embarrassment to hon. Members who are anxious about these proposals and who, at the same time, do not want to delay the passing of the Measure.

With the utmost humility and diffidence, because I recognise that I am talking about things in which the Home Secretary has spent a lifetime and in which I have had only about 18 months, I suggest that, on a true view of the matter, the best thing would be not to consider this Clause and these Amendments at all until we have before us the proposal which he will feel himself in a position to make when he has had the further information which he is now seeking. Nothing could be lost by that procedure, and a good deal of embarrassment might be prevented.

Sir J. Simon: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for pointing out where he feels a difficulty. We are just consulting together. I think that the suggestion that I have made is the best one, and probably other hon. Members think so too. The short answer to his difficulties will probably be that if we were to regard what is to be found in the present Clause 68 as expressing what is to be the situation when this Bill passes, but with the knowledge that we are going to provide hereafter, and after an interval, that the hours are to be reduced, the difficulties would disappear. For my part, I should be extremely unwilling not to hear what the Committee has to say.

Mr. Ridley: May I interrupt the right hon. Gentleman?

Sir J. Simon: It is rather difficult to answer two hon. Gentlemen at the same time. I should certainly wish to hear what is to be said, for example, about periods of employment and breaks when the Bill passes, and things of that sort, and to hear it now. If the efficient drawing of the new Clause is one of the objects we are all after, all that will help me. I do not think there will be any difficulty, but if there were the sort of difficulty which the hon. Gentleman very honestly and candidly fears, and if the worst came to the worst, we should always be able to say that we had voted on the new Clause and that it would involve minor adjustments in this Clause, which could be made before the Bill left the House, but I do not think there will be difficulties. We shall have to have a code which will operate from the day on which the Bill passes, and Clause 68 will provide us with part of it. If we add a Clause, and I hope we shall, which will modify the position as regards juveniles after an interval, we can discuss that Clause all the better for having fixed up Clause 68. I hope that the Committee will support me in that view.

Mr. Ridley: While I do not share all the dubieties of my hon. Friend the Member for Nelson and Colne (Mr. Silverman), there are some difficulties in my mind. First of all the right hon. Gentleman's presumption is based on the belief that when Clause 68 is finally disposed of through this discussion, its final terms

will be worse than the terms of the new Clause which the Home Secretary proposes to put down. All through the Amendments to Clause 68 there will be in our minds the indistinct and undefined terms of an unknown Clause. Our arguments will be vitiated by the fact that further provisions are to be included which are at present entirely unknown. If, when we come to the new Clause, it will be regarded as a Clause to which further Amendments can be put down, some difficulties may be disposed of, but if it is to be an Amendment to the Bill on which we can vote, our difficulties will be increased.

Sir J. Simon: The right hon. Gentleman can relieve his mind entirely in that respect. When I put down the new Clause it will be open, like any other new Clause, to Amendments from any Member of this Committee.

Mr. Ridley: That does relieve part of the difficulties but the substantial one remains that all through the discussion of the existing Amendments to Clause 68 there will be an indefinite idea that if we only wait for a day or two until the terms of the new Clause 69 are known, all objections to Clause 68 may be disposed of, and that may, of course, not be the case at all.

Mr. Rhys Davies: May I, as one who was not present at the last sitting, venture to put the case as I see it? It seems to me that the new Clause will simply deal with young persons from 14 to 16 years of age, and their destiny only will be governed by the new Clause. There is another point. Whatever we do to-day on Clause 68 will govern everybody—women, young persons, and these children—until the operation of the new Clause. Some hon. Members are afraid that when the new Clause is presented to us the right hon. Gentleman may put down, say, 46 hours in it and they may not then be able to put Amendments to that new Clause. We shall put exactly the same Amendments to the right hon. Gentleman's new Clause as we are putting now with regard to the same persons in the old Clause.

Mr. Banfield: In discussing the Amendments on this matter in relation to the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman, it would be fitting if certain facts

regarding this question of a shorter working week for young persons were put before him for consideration. We cannot all take part in deputations. The right hon. Gentleman is going to consult the employers and probably the workers' organisations. There is a point or two that I would like to put to the right hon. Gentleman which he, in his turn, will, I hope, put to the employers, because I gather that there may possibly be some opposition from certain employers and from certain quarters.

Sir John Haslam: And employés.

Mr. Banfield: We are dealing with children of 14 years of age in factory life, and they are not in any position to express an opinion on this matter at all, so I do not know about employés. We, who are older and are legislating for the children of this nation, must do for them what we think best. I have been very much disturbed recently at the failure of employers to recognise the necessity for skilled and trained workmen. I want to suggest to employers, and to those here who represent industrialists, that it is absolutely necessary, if trade workmen and skilled craftsmen are still to be the pride and joy of the British nation, for far greater opportunities to be given to children entering into industry to enable them to take the best advantage of the technical education which the nation is prepared to give them. Employers complain bitterly that they do not get skilled workmen, that they do not mind paying any amount of money to get them, and then they put all sorts of obstacles in the way of enabling children to get the technical education which fits them for their calling. In London we have a technical institute called the Borough Polytechnic, which has all sorts of schemes for educating children from the age of 14 upwards in their trade and occupation. But my experience is that the only young persons who can take advantage of it at the most favourable time, during the day, are the sons and daughters of employers. The workman's children are kept at work far too long, and even if, in their youthful enthusiasm, they go along in the evening, they are too weary to take things in and finally they get led away along the easy path of picture palaces and so on.

The right hon. Gentleman has already explained that this new Clause will deal

[Mr. Banfield.]
with children only up to the age of 16. I would like it extended to the age of 18. I do not see why a shorter working week should be given only to those up to the age of 16. If we are in earnest about the matter of physical training, young persons must be caught young and given opportunities then. If not, they will never take an interest so long as it is a voluntary system of physical training. This question of the hours of young persons is of the utmost importance, because we are gradually evolving into a state where sooner or later there must be some legal restriction upon the hours of labour. In this Bill we are doing what we can to put some restriction in regard to women and young persons, but outside its scope young persons, women, and men will be working unrestricted hours—60, 70, and even more—and so we are getting to the point where some legal restriction must become necessary.

I would like to pursue what is generally the way of the British Commons, and that is to proceed gradually. Here we have an opportunity to restrict the hours of labour of young persons up to the age of 18. When I was apprenticed to my trade we used to serve a term of seven years from the age of 14 to 21. Now in the vast majority of skilled trades they want children to be equipped from an educational point of view, and they take them from 16 generally and, in any case, not before 15. On this Clause 68 the Committee must not lose sight of the fact that they are going to settle primarily the conditions for a vast number of people coming under this Bill. I hope we shall persevere with our endeavour to make the Clause as favourable as we possibly can. If I may say so to the employers and to this Committee, they have everything to gain and nothing to lose by making the employment of children in industry such as will give the children a real chance to develop the best that is in them.

Mr. Wakefield: Members of this Committee will feel a certain satisfaction in the statement made by the Home Secretary on Tuesday on the reduction of hours for young persons from the ages of 14 to 16, but I would like to refer to the hours of work for young persons from 16 to 18. This new Clause which will be proposed

will deal only with young persons from 14 to 16, but surely the progress of education is such that before long young persons under the age of 15 will not be entering industry. In fact, therefore, the new Clause will deal only with young persons between the ages of 15 and 16.

I would like to put before the Home Secretary some facts which may influence him in reconsidering the position of the hours of work of young persons from the age of 16 to 18. I am connected with a voluntary organisation catering for the leisure hours of very many thousands of boys between the ages of 14 and 18, and we have found during the last few months that many of them have not been able to attend recreational or educational classes in the evening. I instituted an inquiry into this, and I found that in the main it was because their hours of work were so long that they were not able to attend. I had an analysis made among some 100 cases of the hours of work which the young people did, and I found that in the clerical profession the hours were comparatively reasonable. They were either just above or just below 40, but when we come to the factories I find that there is a very different story, and I have a large number of instances here showing the hours of work which young persons were working. There was an apprentice compositor here working 48 hours, a hat blocker working 50, an assistant plater 48, another hat blocker 49½, a packer 50, a varnisher 50, a metal worker 47½, an engineer 49½, an apprentice upholsterer 52½, an instrument assembler 49, a clock-case maker 52½, a leather worker 52½, and a bakehouse boy 52.

I could go on giving quite a number of similar instances. These hours of work may definitely prevent these young people attending physical and educational classes, which I think we all agree are very necessary for young people of that age. The proposals in this Bill will not touch these hours. These hours which I have described are round about 48 and with the limited amount of overtime which young persons from 16 to 18 would be permitted to work a very unsatisfactory state of affairs would be maintained. I do want to ask the Home Secretary if he will reconsider the position in the light of that evidence and other evidence that I hope he will obtain, so that he can apply the position of young people between the

ages of 14 to 16 to young people between 16 and 18. I have here further evidence of the necessity for decreasing the permitted hours of work of young people between the ages of 16 and 18. I obtained it from the head of a London County Council evening institute. It so happened that a number of boys were not attending the institute and it was necessary to find out why. It was found in many cases that they worked so late that it was not possible for them to attend. Again, it was proposed to have a gymnastic display one evening. Two instructors were arranging this display, and they asked the head of this institute that these items should take place after 9 p.m. as the boys taking part would be unable to attend before that hour. I want to suggest that young persons who have worked from early hours in the morning, who have had to travel to work and then work perhaps 48 to 50 hours, are not in a fit condition to do a gymnastic display in the evening.

I am certain that investigation of this matter will disclose that even if young persons do attend places of instruction for physical education or places for physical recreation at that time of the night they are too tired to benefit properly from it. I suggest to the Home Secretary that it will be impossible to carry out the provisions of the new Bill for physical training and recreation unless young persons work shorter hours. I do not see how we can conscientiously do our work on this National Advisory Committee unless young people have shorter hours of work and, therefore, more leisure to enable them to obtain the full benefit which they ought to receive from physical education and recreation in the evenings.

I would like to give my own personal experience in this matter after the War. When I decided to enter commerce I was a fully grown man, but I considered that it was desirable for me to go through those processes which normally an apprentice would undertake at an age between 15 and 18, and to work the hours, the overtime, and the extra time which young persons of that age might have to do. I must say that although as a grown man I was quite competent and able to do it, I did think those hours were too long and too heavy for a young person aged 15 to 18. I would ask those Members of this Committee who were at school themselves at an age from 15 to 18 to

consider the hours they worked there. If I remember rightly, I used to get up somewhere about 7 o'clock and allow myself one to 1½ minutes in which to dress, and then we got down to preparation. Altogether it worked out at about 8½ hours a day, and with 6½ hours on two days of the week it made a total of approximately 48 hours. We were living on the spot and did not have an hour's journey to get there. Our work was varied in character, and I am certain that for a considerable time we were planning how we could cause trouble, so that the blame would be apportioned, not to ourselves but to our neighbour. But the work was not as hard as it is for a young person working continuously in a factory, and let us not forget that during the course of the year at school we had approximately 15 weeks' holiday.

When we take these factors into consideration, I do ask the Home Secretary to reconsider the whole position, and I ask him whether he would consider entirely abolishing overtime for young persons up to the age of 18. I would also ask him to apply the same provision which it is intended to apply to young persons between the ages of 14 and 16 to those between the ages of 16 and 18. As an employer and an industrialist, I appreciate that time is needed for industry to adjust itself and that in certain industries there may be need for certain exceptions providing a sufficiently good case is made out. I cannot see why we cannot put on the Statute Book provisions of the nature that I have described. Surely we have not reached the stage when the prosperity of this country is dependent solely and entirely on young persons of 16 to 18 working 48 hours? If that is the case, I say that it is time we ceased operations altogether, and I feel that so long as certain employers can work young persons overtime—

The Chairman: Order. The hon. Gentleman has referred several times to overtime. He must confine himself to the number of hours per week.

Mr. Wakefield: I made that statement in error. What I meant was the number of hours worked beyond 48 per week. Under the provisions of this Bill, as I understand it, young persons under the ages of 16 and 18 will work 48 hours a week and may be permitted to work a limited amount of overtime.

Sir J. Simon: But that is Clause 70; it is not Clause 68.

Mr. Wakefield: I feel that it is necessary that industry should be given an opportunity to adjust itself, but so long as employers are able to obtain cheap labour and work people longer hours, then I think they will do it. We find in times of slump, when industry has really to make itself more efficient, that it does so invariably by introducing new methods of administration or new machinery, and I am certain that if industry is not permitted to employ young persons for excessive hours, the same process will happen again. You will find that industry will re-adjust itself by the introduction of further machines to replace young persons, and in that way the difficulty will be overcome. Industry will itself become more efficient and therefore better able to compete with countries in other parts of the world.

Surely the health of our young people is the greatest asset we possess, and it is important, especially as the birth-rate is now declining, that we should make every effort to preserve it. I am quite certain that if, by reducing these hours, we are able to make them healthier citizens, it may pay the nation better in the long run. These young people will be fitter, there will be less sickness, and they will be far better fitted to carry out the various processes of industry. In conclusion, I would like to say that I appreciate that the proposed Bill is a great step forward, because it does mean that the unregulated trades will have to be brought into line, and in that respect there has been very great advance, for which I, personally, am and, I am sure, the whole Committee is, duly grateful. But I do hope the Home Secretary will investigate the points that I have put before the Committee and that the proposals that I have suggested will in due course be found upon the Statute Book.

Mr. Burke: On a point of Order. If we want to talk about the hours of young persons, are we to talk now? I understood that we were to leave it over until the new Clause was brought forward. Must we talk now or forever hold our peace?

The Chairman: I am in a little difficulty over this matter. While I understood that the Committee had agreed that we should defer the discussion on the hours of young persons until they saw what was in the

new Clause, I am in the position that I cannot say what Amendments would be called on a Clause that I have not seen. There is no doubt that a great deal of discussion has already taken place on the principle of a 48-hours week for young persons. I cannot say how much discussion can be allowed on it. I must wait until I see what is on the Paper, but with regard to the rest of the Clause, which does not deal with the aggregate number of hours of the working week, that can be discussed, because it deals with different points. But the indication that I received was that the Committee was prepared to wait for the new Clause on the Paper.

Mr. Rhys Davies: I would like to be clear on this matter, and I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will tell me if I am wrong. I submit that it is competent to discuss a reduction in the permitted hours of children from 14 to 16 on this Clause, because those hours will apply during the interval. Whether, however, it is necessary to dwell at length on the permitted hours during the interval, or whether we should have a longer Debate on the new Clause, is another question, but let us understand that we are not disposing of the hours of children by any promise that the right hon. Gentleman has made with regard to the hours after the interval.

Sir J. Simon: I quite agree.

The Chairman: It is in order for the Committee to discuss the hours of labour of young people now. The only thing that I said was that I cannot pledge myself as to what I can allow to be discussed on the new Clause.

Viscountess Astor: The hon. Member for Swindon (Mr. Wakefield) stated that he hoped, when the new Clause came in, that it would deal with children up to 18 and not merely with children from 14 to 16. Some of us agree with every word that the hon. Member said, because we think that it is just as important for children from 16 to 18 as it is for children from 14 to 16 that the hours should be 40, or whatever it may be. This is a wonderful opportunity, and if the Government do not take it, it will make their great grant for physical fitness absurd. Members on our side of the Committee are convinced in their hearts that if industry wants it, it can readjust itself,

and I beg the Home Secretary not to listen too much to industry. I am certain that the consciousness of the present House of Commons is far more interested in the welfare of young people than industry. After all, industry will depend on the people who come into it. In these days, unless we look after our children from 14 to 18 and see that they have proper working hours and recreation, it will be almost impossible for us to compete in the world. Not being a boy, I cannot speak, as the hon. Member for Swindon did, about what happens at school and so on, but I have five sons, and, as any woman can tell you, the ages from 14 to 18 and sometimes from 16 to 18 are often psychologically more difficult than those from 14 to 16.

The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary knows that juvenile crime is increasing by leaps and bounds. I know he will say that juveniles are brought more before juvenile courts, but why are they? It is because sometimes they are out of work and sometimes they are overworked. It is a terribly difficult age. I wish that our side of the Committee would follow the hon. Member for Swindon. He has put clearly, and better than it has been put from any side, the terrific difficulties of children being overworked—and they will be overworked if they work 46 hours, and I would say even 44 or 42. I hope that our side will make it possible for the Home Secretary to go to the Government and say that this Committee insists on dealing with the hours of children up to 18. We can do it, but if we listen to Ministers, they can persuade us of almost anything. The Home Secretary and the Under-Secretary have the most charming manners and the most delightful "bedside manner"—I mean, in a Committee of the House of Commons.

We have to keep in mind that we are here to protect children, and they are children up to 18. I hope we will not be put off, but that we will insist on shorter hours up to 18. If hon. Members have any doubt about their attitude towards this question, let them look up the story of legislation dealing with the hours of labour. They will find that there are always certain employers who say that if we interfere with them, it will be the end. We cannot really trust them. We have to follow the good employers, and they will welcome it if this Committee says that

the hours of children up to 18 have to be regulated. I hope that our brave and bright young men and our wise old men will say to the Home Secretary, "Get on with it; be as bold as the Chancellor of the Exchequer." If the Home Secretary takes this opportunity, he will, I think, have the whole House of Commons behind him, and I am convinced that he will have the whole of the right-thinking part of the population behind him.

Mr. Broad: If I thought that we should be wasting time by going over this question now and that the matter could be adequately dealt with when the new Clause was before us, I would not rise now, but the Home Secretary has told us what is in his mind about the new Clause, and I am almost inclined to say, "Thank you for nothing." I know his desire, but I think he has been over-influenced by those who point out the difficulties of industry to adapt itself. In these days of rapid change industry has had to adapt itself to much greater changes than this, and I am sure that with a will it could adapt itself to this change. I want to analyse what the Home Secretary has indicated as the desirable line on which we should go. If there is to be any reduction of hours of young persons below that of the standard 48, it is to be limited to those up to 16; it is to be postponed for two years to coincide with the Education Act; and then there are to be exemptions even from 14 to 16 for those who are engaged in beneficial employment. The formula which the Home Secretary has given us shows that there is a better understanding of this matter in the Home Office than in the Board of Education, but if exemption for beneficial employment between 14 and 15 at the end of two years is not to be more than a farce and a mockery, it will have to incorporate this formula. That is the practical test of "beneficial employment." The Home Secretary's proposed Amendment, however, says that if at the end of two years there is any employment from 14 to 15 which satisfies the conditions which he has outlined, the children can work for 48 hours a week.

Sir J. Simon: I will not discuss that now, because I think it will arise on the new Clause, but I do not think the hon. Gentleman has fully represented what I said as clearly as I could. He will find it in the OFFICIAL REPORT of the last meeting.

Mr. Broad: That is certainly what I gathered from what the right hon. Gentleman said. He stated that he would endeavour to provide that for juveniles between 14 and 16 the maximum permitted hours of working should be reduced. That is at the end of two years, but there are to be exceptions, and they have been laid down in this formula.

Sir J. Simon: The hon. Member will see that on page 514 of the OFFICIAL REPORT I said that before that could be done, those things would have to be proved.

Mr. Broad: And those things will be the test of beneficial employment and if those conditions are satisfied children will be able to work the full hours. It means that at the end of two years the only advance that we shall have made is that some young people may be employed—a large number possibly—from 14, if they satisfy these conditions and if they do that it will entitle the employer to keep them at work for the standard week of 48 hours. If that is so for youngsters from 14 to 15, there is little chance of securing a reduction of hours for those from 15 to 16. Then there is that ugly period from 16 to 18. It is a most difficult period, for it means the making or the marring of boys. You can crush all the life and spirit out of them by working them too long and sending them to technical classes afterwards with the idea of getting on. They are dulled and blunted; they lose all personality and become mere swats. They become mere calculating machines for somebody who has had more leisure and has a technical adviser's job or something of that sort. It crushes all personality out of them to have to work through the day and then to have to rush home in order to get ready for evening classes.

Some of these young people, while they may be working in association with adults, are often part of the team system with which Birmingham has been so closely associated. Within the workshop a skilled worker without much soul takes out a section of work and has a number of youngsters working for him. He pays them a set wage or a sub-price, and he has a rake-off on their earnings. It is a cheap way of getting slave-driven conditions. If this formula is to be applied, it should also be laid down that the number of young people employed in

proportion to the adults should be such as to make good wastage or reasonable extension of the industry, and it should not go beyond that. If it means five or six youngsters working with one adult, it will not be much good. With regard to health considerations, I have expressed my uncertainty whether the Home Office have any medical advisers at all. I have wondered that for many years. They have some capable inspectors, but not enough of them. I wonder, particularly when they talk about the health of young people not being affected by this work, whether their duties ever take them outside their offices in Whitehall, and whether all that they do is to examine reports and memoranda. If they ever entered a factory where large numbers of young people are employed, they would know that very often the chain process of work is such that the absence of one worker from that chain limits the output of the lot.

Young people very often have to rush from home early in the morning to get their trains. Having stood all the way and reached that workshop, if they desire to absent themselves from their work to respond to the calls of nature, they find that they are in the black books of the foreman or the ganger. Parents know that one of the difficulties of the young people in that time of life is constipation, and that they go in for medicines, and so on. In some of the suburbs of London, old houses of 8, 10, or 12 rooms are occupied by five or six families, although the sanitary arrangements are designed for the use of only one family. Hon. Members may not know that a great part of the trouble in such families is due to the quarrelling that goes on over the use of the sanitary accommodation early in the morning. Young people often have to go to their work standing all the way. At their work, after having travelled for an hour, they may have to stand on one leg, using both hands, and using the other foot to manipulate a treadle. There are factories where people have to ask for a key to use the sanitary arrangements, or a time-check is put on a moving band—

The Chairman: The hon. Gentleman is getting rather away from the point.

Mr. Broad: I am speaking upon the health consideration.

The Chairman: We have had the discussion upon that matter already.

Mr. Short: It affects hours.

Mr. McCorquodale: On a point of Order. It appears to me that these matters can be discussed when the new Clause has been put down. If there is a full discussion now, you, Major Lloyd George, may then elect to rule that the full discussion has taken place. Surely it is better for the full discussion to take place when we know what we have to discuss. Is it not dangerous to discuss these matters now, in view of the fact that we might not be able to discuss them upon the new Clause?

Mr. Rhys Davies: May I be allowed to point out that these young persons from 14 to 16 are being dealt for the interval by this Clause? We cannot dispose of the interval, which is suggested to be two years, by merely waiting for the new Clause which will deal with them after the interval.

The Chairman: I can only repeat what I have already stated. It is perfectly in order for any hon. Gentleman to discuss what is being discussed now on this Amendment; with regard to the future I cannot pledge myself about what we may discuss until I see what is proposed.

Mr. Broad: I was trying to give reasons why the Home Secretary should modify his position as to this limitation of hours for young people, not only up to 16, but up to 18 years of age. One of the considerations was the health consideration. While it may not be that those young people show a very adverse record of absence from work for sickness—their youth helps them to get over that time—the work marks them for the whole of their lives. We can see that in neighbourhoods where young working-class people go to a secondary school from the ages of 11 to 12 or go to work in a factory at 14. They may be mingled in the same families. You see them in a year or two, and notice the difference in life, vigour, height, and weight between those who have been to the secondary school and those who have been in the factory. Without any anthropometrical tables it is obvious, from seeing them, that those who have been to the secondary school are much better young men and women than those who, possibly because they

have not been well enough to pass an examination, have had to go into factories. That is why I question the medical advice given to the Minister that factory work has no effect upon the health of the children. Such work stunts them in mind and in body. I hope we shall be able, not only to raise the school-leaving age to 16, but to restrict the hours of employment of young people below those of adults, until the age of 21.

Sir Ernest Graham-Little: There are certain medical and educational arguments which I think have not been brought out quite explicitly, and which make a very special class of the children from 14 to 16 years of age. It is for that class that I want very particularly to plead. The Home Secretary has mentioned that that class is relatively small, something like 500,000. He has also said that there is every probability, if not a certainty, that there will be a smaller provision of that number of children in the near future. He said quite definitely that we are going to be forced to do something that we might do now voluntarily, which I maintain is the better way of doing it. When we have the opportunity, and are not up against the wall, is the time to make a reform of this kind.

Let me come to what appeared the very salient arguments for that proposition. I want to press the point, which has been made once or twice already, that medical opinion is unanimous in wishing to restrict the hours of labour of children from 14 to 16 years of age. There is no division of opinion upon that matter in any informed circle. I hope that the Home Secretary will go beyond his official advisers in that respect, and will see how unanimous that opinion is. Why is that opinion so unanimous? There are obvious reasons. In the period from 14 to 16 years of age the whole structure of the child, physical and psychological, changes. A very great deal of work has been done, I am glad to say chiefly in this country, in investigating the psychology of that period. It is a very important consideration. The mental and physical stability of the child in those years is in a state of turmoil. Those are the important years, physically and mentally, and they are even more important from the medical point of view.

[Sir E. Graham-Little.]

The child from 14 to 16 years of age ought not to be in the factory at all. It is a most distressing thing that he should ever have been allowed to be there. Our descendants will think as harshly of us for ever having permitted it as we think harshly of those persons who allowed children of tender years to work in a factory for 20 hours a day. The medical point of view is important, but we plead also for the educational point of view. It is a fact that continued education is broken by this period of factory work immediately after the age of 14. It is a misfortune that that should be so. Hon. Members may have had a copy of a pamphlet, as I have had, from the National Union of Teachers, a very experienced and influential body. They are pointing very stringently to the necessity of continuity. The child breaks off the school at 14 years of age and goes into the factory. He is very unfitted for the break, which is a complete one, and soon loses the keenness and enthusiasm that he learned at school.

Hon. Members who are familiar with modern schools will know that they are magnificent institutions. They are different from the schools which we knew when we were young. The spirit of enthusiasm, training, discipline, and forward-looking is what the children lose if they go into a factory. We do not want the children to lose it. For God's sake let the children go on from 14 years of age to 16, completing that part of their education, adding to the structure of theory and science, and fitting themselves to become what they ought and what we all so much want them to become, really skilled labourers in trades and occupations. The work which they do in factories from 14 to 16 years of age is in no way a preparation for a trade. They lose all the incentive which they learned at school, and they have a great period of indolence as regards mental activity, because of the absence of any incentive. At 18 years of age they are lifeless persons, and they are thrown again on to the labour market. That process is utterly uneconomic and foolish.

The child of 14, after having left a good school, is an intellectually curious person and is very anxious to learn more. Anybody who has seen the children at

technical schools learning trades, or something that is worth learning, will know how different the feeling is from seeing children who have been pitched into a factory to do repetition work and nothing else. We are wasting the best period of a child's intellectual development in those years. From physical and medical considerations, and especially educational considerations, the arguments are, I think, unanswerable.

Surely, at this particular time, it is utterly suicidal to do anything of that kind. We are up against a perfectly definite proposal, and we shall be contributing to the making of a C.3 nation if we do not make a great effort, the opportunity for which we now have in our hands, for physical reconstitution. It is utterly absurd to suppose that a factory child, after 48 hours' work in the factory, can do anything worth while in the way of physical recreation. It is ludicrous to suggest that it is so. I hope that we shall now be able to decide on this point of the 40-hour week.

Sir J. Haslam: The hon. Member for London University (Sir E. Graham-Little) is pushing at an open door when he argues about children from 14 to 16 years of age. The battle for the children under 16 was won on Tuesday, after the speech of the hon. Member for Central Leeds (Mr. Denman), and the Home Secretary has already informed us that he is prepared in another Clause to make a concession; perhaps not such as every hon. Member would desire, but the principle has been granted, I think. Therefore it is more—

Mr. Burke: Inside information?

Sir J. Haslam: It is not inside information at all. I was present in this room when the Home Secretary said that he would bring in a Clause, which is to be numbered 69, and that he would try to incorporate in it the views of the Committee, as expressed on Tuesday, subject to the conditions which he laid down on Tuesday himself. I think that is a right interpretation. We can consider that the battle is won, so far as children up to 16 years of age are concerned.

The discussion in regard to the ages from 16 to 18 has been valuable. I am sorry that the experience of the hon. Member for Edmonton (Mr. Broad) has

not been very happy in regard to the certifying factory surgeons. I can tell him that my experience has been in the opposite direction. A finer set of men it has never been my privilege to meet, or men who do more honourably and faithfully the duty which is laid upon them.

Mr. Broad: Is it not a fact that certifying surgeons are only concerned about the certifying of young persons entering the factory? They are not advisers in that sense.

Sir J. Haslam: Whatever the legal position is, I know from experience that the certifying factory surgeons are more often than not also employed by enlightened employers to look after juvenile workers. I have good experience of them, and a finer type of men it has not been my privilege to meet. I do not claim to have had the experience which the Noble Lady the hon. Member for the Sutton division of Plymouth (Viscountess Astor) has had of what has been called the Home Secretary's "bedside manner," but I have never met a Minister who was more amenable to the arguments used in Committee. That may, in fact, involve us in a good deal of trouble which we see ahead, because he has more or less accepted the principle that we have laid down and the suggestions that we have offered and has agreed to incorporate them on the Report stage, unless, of course, with his enormous experience and ability, he is able to get order out of chaos.

Every Member of this Committee seems to separate the people who want shorter hours for juveniles between the employers and employés. A more false division was never made. I have lived long enough to know that there are good and bad employers and good and employés. The people with whom we are concerned and who have the voting strength, are not the employers but the parents, and we have to take them into consideration. My hon. Friend the Member for Wednesbury (Mr. Banfield) said that the employers were not altogether unanimous on the question of lesser hours for juveniles, and I interrupted him. When I refer to employés I mean parents. There is not a member who cannot flout the whole employing class, but we must consider the parents, because they have votes. We have, however, to legislate

in advance of the parents very frequently. But you cannot draw a line between employers and label them bad and employés and label them good. I would ask the Home Secretary to pay careful attention to the speech of the hon. Member for Swindon (Mr. Wakefield), who expressed the views of many of us, and I hope he will consider all the previous discussion of this morning and find out the general trend of opinion in this Committee as to the future of legislation and particularly on Clause 68.

Mr. Gibbins: I was very interested in the last speaker when he said that the battle was won, because, until the speech of the Home Secretary last time, we thought it was won. There was not a voice against the proposal. I have seldom seen such unanimity in a Committee, and the other side agreed that a 40-hour week was essential and necessary. I take it that the hon. Member for Sowerby (Mr. McCorquodale), who is a business man, knew that it was practicable when he supported it, and the hon. and gallant Member for Erdington (Wing-Commander Wright) agreed that it was a very fine and necessary thing. Everybody on this side supported it, including the last speaker. But I am worried at present as to what caused the Home Secretary to turn down this 40-hour week, because he has advanced some reasons which will almost nullify the proposal that he is going to make. The hon. Member for Gorbals (Mr. Buchanan) asked when the Clause would come up. The Home Office has been in existence for a long time, the last Bill has been in existence over 35 years, and I am surprised that in spite of all those years' experience we have still to wait for 35 days, it may be, to find out whether we can get something else, not to prevent shorter hours, but to prevent 40 hours.

Sir J. Simon: The hon. Member means 48 hours.

Mr. Gibbins: The Committee was unanimous on 40 hours.

Mr. McCorquodale: Not on 40. I said that I did not regard 40 as being sacrosanct. I wanted a reduction—40, 41, or 39. There is no merit in 40 as a figure.

Viscountess Astor: Some of us did.

Mr. Gibbins: The OFFICIAL REPORT reported faithfully, and there was no qualification. Even the hon. Member for Sowerby wanted it. There was nothing at all to give the impression that he wanted 42, 43, or 44.

Mr. McCorquodale: I think I used the actual words "40 or some other figure lower than 48."

Mr. Gibbins: The hon. and gallant Member for Erdington went further than that and said that he would agree to less than 40, even 35, if it was a question of apprenticeship or learning. Surely, if the Committee was unanimous, there ought to be more powerful reasons than we have heard from the Home Secretary why this should be put off. The Home Secretary has said that there is no medical opinion to support the argument that 48 hours' work is detrimental to health. Another point was that 48 hours is essential to industry, yet every good employer agrees that 40 hours is enough. But what about the man who says that 48 hours is essential to his industry; what can the Home Secretary say to that? As to the question of team work, it will be hopeless for children to get out of this, because the employer will say that it is cheaper. How can the Home Office prevent that? In my opinion all those conditions will cause the complete evasion of a 40-hour week.

I have worked under those conditions, and I know what they mean. I have come home at the age of 14 years so worn out as to be unable to eat my tea, having worked from 6 o'clock in the morning to 6 o'clock at night. Children should be kept out of the workshop at the age of 14. It is said that it has no effect on their health, but surely it is not suggested that it has no effect on their physique? If hon. Members will pardon a personal reference, I have a boy of 11 who is about two stones heavier and about four inches higher than I was when I started work. What chance has any boy of poor physique to improve his health if he is allowed to do this? As far as night schools are concerned, it is not night school but bed and rest that these children need. I want to appeal to the Home Secretary to accept this Amendment and not to wait for two years. Can he go any further in the Bill? Are there any powers or pledges or arrangements that he has made with employers or trade unions that are in the way?

Sir J. Simon: As the hon. Gentleman has asked that question, let me answer it. We can have our differences of view as to what should be done, but I would beg him to believe that in endeavouring to discharge my duty in this Committee I do not make a pledge beforehand to one side or another about anything.

Mr. Gibbins: I withdraw what I have said in view of the Home Secretary's remark, but is there any pledge that no alteration shall be made in this Bill until we have met? The Committee was unanimous in agreeing on 40 hours—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."]—unless the business side of this Committee change their minds like weathercocks, in which case their opinion is not worth very much. The fact remains that if the Home Secretary wanted to do something really courageous, he would have said, "With the backing of the Committee I will accept the principle and face up to any difficulties as they arise in the way that the Home Office can." But he says that he must make inquiries and that it might mean 42 or 44 hours. I am quite sure that this Committee is quite justified in asking the Home Secretary to modify his opinion. No one who has worked in industry will say that it is the easiest thing in the world, and no change can be made without some preparation, but I would like the principle accepted first and arrangements made to meet any snag across which the Home Secretary may come. But let him guarantee the principle, and we shall at least have made it possible for a 40-hour week for these boys and girls. If we do nothing else, it will be worth all the worry and time that we have given it. I hope the Home Secretary will modify his conditions and the number of hours.

Mr. Denman: I think the last speaker was unduly pessimistic as to the result of the very substantial concession which the Home Secretary has promised. It is clear that the Home Secretary has surveyed this question with great sympathy and with a desire to meet the wishes of the Committee. There are few minds that I would trust more to weigh dispassionately the evidence as he has given it, and my own belief is that the case for 40 hours is overwhelming. It is the practice of many of the best firms, and it is a habit of factory legislation, to standardise, as far as it can, the practice

of the good firms. When he comes to investigate, he will find as the hon. Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Mander) says, that no higher hour is really worth accepting. It is not worth imposing the trouble of the change on industry unless you do it thoroughly and satisfactorily, so I have great faith in the value of the concession which the Home Secretary has made.

I rise only because I think it is time that we came to a decision on this point, which is to consider what should be our precise procedure. I do not know whether the hon. Member for Doncaster (Mr. Short) is going to take this Amendment to a Division, because I have already pointed out that I cannot support his Amendment as it involves the maximum seven-hour day. Assuming this Amendment is not accepted, another problem arises. I accept the concession made in regard to those between 14 and 16, but there has been no concession whatever in regard to those from 16 to 18, and the speech of the hon. Member for Swindon (Mr. Wakefield) has put the case so well that I need not repeat the argument. I think it would really help the Home Secretary if the Committee took this matter in its hands and said that its own view is that a 40-hours week up to 18 is what ought to be prescribed. I believe that that plain and simple declaration by this Committee would materially strengthen the hand of the Home Secretary and make it possible for him to consider further the problem of those from 16 to 18 and see whether he cannot do something for them which would go far to meet the wishes of the great mass of the Committee.

Mr. Burke: The hon. Member for Swindon (Mr. Wakefield) stressed the point of extending the 40-hours week to those aged 18 on the ground of education.

Mr. Wakefield: I did not mention the hours as being 40. What I did suggest was that the present working hours of 48 with permissible overtime should be substantially reduced.

Mr. Burke: I am hoping and assuming that the number 48 is not sacrosanct, and there is equally nothing sacrosanct about 40. The point is that a plea has been made on the ground of the physical education of young persons, and I want to supplement that by asking that a plea should be put forward for the technical

education of young persons as well. In my own constituency we have a technical college which draws upon young persons from a fairly wide area and which has been extraordinarily successful in sending out young persons, drawn from the elementary schools and educated by that college, into administrative and technical posts, not merely all over the country, but all over the world. One of the difficulties there and one that they would like to see removed is that young persons coming to learn and picking up their studies at that place at night are so physically tired that they are not mentally capable of taking the full advantage of the education that it is desired to give them there.

I think it is true, and that everyone in this Committee will agree, that in the industrial scramble of the future this country will have need for the widest technical education not merely among the experts, but among the rank and file on the floor of the factory. After all is said and done, while nobody wants to underestimate the value of scientific research to industry, I think it is true that many of the improvements that have put the industry of this country in the first position have come from foremen and the rank and file on the floor of the workshops. From the time of George Stephenson, who was an engine foreman, industry has been remarkably improved by the practical knowledge by the people on the spot. I do hope that the hours will be shortened and the age extended beyond 16 in order that not merely the physical but the technical education of our young people may become first in the world.

Mr. Short: I believe that now we may reasonably come to a decision. We have had a very long discussion on these matters; it is getting towards the lunch hour, and we have some four Amendments to vote upon.

The Chairman: May I take this opportunity of pointing out that if the Amendment is negatived, the only Amendment that I shall call for voting will be the next one, to leave out "forty-eight" and to insert "forty."

Mr. Denman: Would you not call my Amendment?

The Chairman: I am sorry. I cannot do it. If the first Amendment is negatived, the Committee negatives the

[The Chairman.] suggestion of dividing women and young persons, and if that is negatived, I cannot call the third.

Mr. Denman: The first Amendment is merely introductory to the second one.

The Chairman: It decides the whole thing. If the hon. Gentleman will look at line 26, it states that the total hours worked shall neither exceed nine in any day nor 48 in any week. The Amendment is to insert "in the case of a woman." If that is negatived, the Committee accepts that the hours shall not exceed 48.

Mr. Denman: All that is accepted there is the introduction to the provision that asserts that in the case of a young person the hours shall neither exceed seven in any day nor 40 in any week. On the clear issue of a 40-hour week for young persons my Amendment is the only one that deals with it.

The Chairman: The only thing that the hon. Gentleman can do here, if he wants to get his Amendment called, is to vote for this Amendment. If this Amendment is negatived, the Committee accepts the principle that there shall be no division as to women and young persons.

Mr. Brooke: Do I understand you to say, Major Lloyd George, that if this Amendment is negatived, you will call my Amendment?

The Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Denman: In those circumstances it seems to me that the only way in which we can obtain a division on this question of 40 hours is to vote in favour of the Amendment now before the Committee, and then, later, on the other.

The Chairman: If the first Amendment were carried, either the hon. Gentleman's Amendment or the one in the name of the hon. Member for Doncaster (Mr. Short) could be voted upon.

Mr. Short: I shall not detain the Committee at any length, and I only want to say that we are profoundly disappointed with the attitude of the Home Secretary respecting the Amendment that is before the Committee, which, if it were carried, would have as its object the reduction of working hours from 48 to 40 in the case

of women and young persons. I regret that he has thought fit to ignore the overwhelming advice and arguments put forward from all sides of the Committee, and whatever may be the virtue of the new Clause, it certainly does not meet the criticism which we have put forward. When we come to the question of the Clause standing part of the Bill, we shall have something more to say.

Lieut.-Colonel Sandeman Allen: There has not been a full enough discussion on this subject. A lot can be said for the 40-hour week, but no one has thought out the question of whether any reduction of hours is going to imply a reduction of wages, and whether at the same time it is going to imply a reduction of output, which would have the effect of making it much more difficult to pay the wages. Also, I do think the medical side of the question has to be looked at very carefully indeed. I think the Committee will agree with the Home Secretary when he says that at this time of day Parliament is not going to tolerate hours of labour for young people longer than are good for their health. I am not for one moment suggesting that there should be a 60-hour week. My point is this, that if you are going to lessen the hours, you are going to increase your output. That would impose a very great additional nervous strain, which we want to avoid.

I welcome very much in the Home Secretary's speech the stress which he quite naturally and of necessity put upon the interdependence of various classes of workers in a factory—one upon another as a team working for the whole. The Committee has been rather enjoying this morning walking on the clouds, and I want to get down to the ground. You must not torpedo industry in your efforts to meet one section of the community. I want to make it clear that I am not in any way trying to destroy any good that has been intended, but we must keep on firm ground in this matter. I wanted to say that because we have talked more or less about one angle only, but there are other angles to be examined, and I believe we shall have to be very careful not to take too long a step at one time.

Sir J. Simon: I think that we really ought now to come to a decision. It would be a considerable practical convenience if, when we met this afternoon,

we were able to start on paragraph (b). That being so, perhaps the Committee may think it as well to have the break now.

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee divided: Ayes, 16; Noes, 21.

Division No. 10.]

Banfield, J. W.
Broad, F. A.
Brooke, W.
Buchanan, G.
Burke, W. A.
Davies, R. J. (Westhoughton)

Denman, Hon. R. D.
Dobbie, W.
Gibbins, J.
Mander, G. le M.
Ridley, G.

Short, A.
Silverman, S. S.
Smith, E. (Stoke)
Viant, S. P.
White, H. Graham

AYES.

NOES.

Allen, Lt.-Col. J. Sandeman (B'kn'hd)
Bull, B. B.
Clarke, F. E. (Dartford)
Emmott, C. E. G. C.
Goodman, Col. A. W.
Haslam, Sir J. (Bolton)
Hunter, T.

Kerr, H. W. (Oldham)
Little, Sir E. Graham-
Llewellyn, Lieut.-Col. J. J.
Lloyd, G. W.
McCorquodale, M. S.
Palmer, G. E. H.
Reid, W. Allan (Derby)

Salt, E. W.
Simon, Rt. Hon. Sir J. A.
Smiles, Lieut.-Colonel Sir W. D.
Tufnell, Lieut.-Commander R. L.
Wakefield, W. W.
Wragg, H.
Wright, Squadron-Leader J. A. C.

Amendment proposed: In page 56, line 27, to leave out "forty-eight," and to insert "forty."—[Mr. Brooke.]

Question put, "That the word proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided: Ayes, 24; Noes, 15.

Division No. 11.]

Allen, Lt.-Col. J. Sandeman (B'kn'hd)
Astor, Viscountess (Plymouth, Sutton)
Bull, B. B.
Clarke, F. E. (Dartford)
Denman, Hon. R. D.
Emmott, C. E. G. C.
Goodman, Col. A. W.
Haslam, Sir J. (Bolton)

Hunter, T.
Kerr, H. W. (Oldham)
Law, R. K. (Hull, S.W.)
Little, Sir E. Graham-
Llewellyn, Lieut.-Col. J. J.
Lloyd, G. W.
McCorquodale, M. S.
Palmer, G. E. H.

Reid, W. Allan (Derby)
Salt, E. W.
Simon, Rt. Hon. Sir J. A.
Smiles, Lieut.-Colonel Sir W. D.
Tufnell, Lieut.-Commander R. L.
Wakefield, W. W.
Wragg, H.
Wright, Squadron-Leader J. A. C.

AYES.

NOES.

Banfield, J. W.
Broad, F. A.
Brooke, W.
Buchanan, G.
Burke, W. A.

Davies, R. J. (Westhoughton)
Dobbie, W.
Gibbins, J.
Mander, G. le M.
Ridley, G.

Short, A.
Silverman, S. S.
Smith, E. (Stoke)
Viant, S. P.
White, H. Graham

Sitting suspended at Seven Minutes after One o'Clock until Four o'Clock.

On resuming—

4.4 p.m.

Mr. Rhys Davies: I beg to move, in page 56, line 29, to leave out "eleven," and to insert "ten."

The simple proposition in this Amendment is to make paragraph (b) read:

"the period of employment shall not exceed ten hours in any day"

instead of, as it now reads "eleven hours in any day." I shall be very interested to hear any intelligent argument from anyone on this Committee against this Amendment. In these days of mechanisation and rationalisation and the increased production per person employed in factories, the argument is all in favour of

reducing the hours per day in factories and workshops. I will give one classical illustration. Hon. Members for Lancashire constituencies will be aware of the very remarkable change in the textile industry of Lancashire, where, for the last 12 months, women weavers, for the first time in history, have been working six looms instead of four. As the machine is quickened up and the inventor comes to the aid of the manufacturer, increasing the production per unit per person per hour, Members of all parties ought to reduce the hours of labour in proportion to the advance of engineering science.

Mr. Lloyd: I think the hon. Gentleman has confused the hours of employment with the period of employment, and there is this great difference, that the period of employment is made up of the hours of

[Mr. Lloyd.] employment, plus intervals for meals and rest. Therefore what this Amendment seeks to do is, without affecting the hours of employment, to confine the employment period to a shorter time. That has the effect not of affecting the hours of employment, but of restricting meal times and rest intervals. That is not a good thing to do. Let me give the Committee an example. The usual practice in a 48-hour week is to work 4 or 4½ hours on Saturday morning, which leaves about 44 hours to be worked on the other 5 days of the week, an average of about 8¾ hours. Instead of working the rather inconvenient exact time, the practice in many districts is to work 9 hours on some days and less on others. Let us examine the effect on such a district of this Amendment which restricts the period of employment to 10 hours. It would mean that there could not be more than one hour's interval for meals and rest. In these days the hours for meals and intervals are largely suited to the local customs and convenience of the workers in each district, and in Leicester, for example, it is the practice to have 1¼ hours for the mid-day meal. The effect of the Amendment would make that system impossible, and the workers in that district would deeply resent any restriction which made that custom impossible. There is nothing in it from the point of view of hours of employment, but it would be unduly restrictive in arranging intervals for meals and rest, and in view of that fact I would ask the hon. Gentleman to consider withdrawing his Amendment.

Mr. Silverman: I listened to the Under-Secretary of State with very great care, but it seems to me that his argument is only sound on one assumption. His argument is that if there are only 11 hours in all and you cannot reduce the hours of actual working, then you can only reduce the interval. That did not need a great deal of argument, but why make the assumption that the hours of actual work are not affected by the Amendment? It does not at all follow that the hour's saving is bound to come out of the interval and not out of the hours of work, unless you assume that what the Clause lays down as a maximum number of hours to be worked shall, in fact, be regarded as the normal period. What the Clause lays down is that the number of hours worked

shall not exceed a certain number, but it does not say that they shall always reach that number. There is no need to make that assumption at all. It would be quite possible to reduce the hours of employment from 11 to 10 instead of at the expense of the interval.

Mr. McCorquodale: I do not think the point raised by the hon. Member opposite is worth further consideration, and I want to ask the Under-Secretary two questions. In many factories women cleaners are employed for a couple of hours to clean before work starts; they do not do any active work in the factory and are really charladies. Would they be counted as factory workers and would they come under this period of 10 or 11 hours? My other question is with regard to the shift system. A Bill has been passed in this House quite recently regarding the work of men and women and young persons on a two-shift basis; is this Clause going to affect that, especially with regard to paragraph (d)?

Mr. Lloyd: With regard to the shift system, there is no doubt that this Bill does not affect it. In reply to the hon. Gentleman's other question, I am informed that if they are cleaners pure and simple, who come in from time to time for that purpose, they are not governed by the provisions of this Bill, but if they are regular workers doing cleaning work, then they are regarded as being factory workers within the meaning of the Clause. The point of the hon. Gentleman opposite was regarded rightly, I think, as not worthy of very big consideration, because both these provisions are maxima: the total hours worked shall not exceed 48 in a week and the period of employment shall not exceed 11 hours in any day. They are just maxima, and one is working upon that basis.

Mr. Silverman: I do not follow that argument at all. They are certainly not minima. You have a period of employment of 11 hours. Supposing that is the maximum and you take out of that two hours for intervals, you are left with eight hours, and it would mean that on one day you could only work eight instead of the legal maximum, whatever it is. So far as the other point is concerned, about the reduction being at the expense of the interval, it must not be forgotten that there are other Amendments on the Paper which provide what the intervals shall be.

Mr. Rhys Davies: Although this Amendment is not consequential upon the previous Amendment to reduce the total number of hours per week, it has a relation to it, and therefore if we had succeeded in convincing the majority on the Committee in favour of the main Amendment, this Amendment would be in order. But having failed in the first proposal which we made, we naturally must, at the moment at any rate, withdraw this Amendment. I will call the very serious attention of hon. Members to the remark made by the hon. Gentleman about the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Nelson and Colne (Mr. Silverman). I am not so sure that we should allow a statement of that sort to pass, namely, that the remark of a learned member of the Bar should not be worthy of consideration.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

4.16 p.m.

Mr. Lloyd: I beg to move, in page 56, line 31, to leave out "six," and to insert "seven."

Some feeling was expressed in the Second Reading Debate against permitting employment to begin as early as 6 a.m. Hon. Members will remember our Debate on that subject. Reports of inspectors show that nowadays factory employment does not begin before 7 in the morning except when there is a special reason for doing so. Accordingly, in framing the Bill, it was thought that there would be no harm if 6 a.m. were left in as a reasonable hour, as in previous Bills. The Government, however, are prepared to agree that work should not begin before 7 o'clock, except in special cases where authorised by the Secretary of State. The Home Secretary has, therefore, put down the Amendment which I am now moving to substitute 7 o'clock for 6 o'clock, and he proposes to move a new Clause, entitled:

"Exception as to hour of commencement of period of employment."

which would be inserted in the special exceptions of the second half of Part VI of the Bill. The Secretary of State will then be allowed to empower the period of employment to begin earlier than seven o'clock but not earlier than six o'clock in the case of a particular class of factory where the exigencies of the trade or the convenience of persons employed so required. The Committee will appreciate

the reasons for this Amendment. We are meeting the wishes expressed on the Second Reading, but we have thought it necessary to provide for the possibility of exemption in special cases.

Lieut.-Colonel Sandeman Allen: May I ask what would be the position of charwomen? Are charwomen regarded as in the same position as workers?

Mr. Lloyd: I am informed that charwomen are outside these provisions.

Mr. Silkin: I wish to refer to the Amendment on the Paper which asks that the time should be 6 and not 6.30. Is this supposed to be a reasonable compromise?

Mr. Mander: I am very glad to have associated myself with my hon. Friend on this Amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

4.20 p.m.

Mr. Silkin: I beg to move, in page 56, line 32, to leave out "eight," and to insert "six."

The object of this Amendment is that in the period of employment the employment should end not later than 6 o'clock instead of 8 o'clock. In view of the many speeches which we have heard this morning and on previous occasions, I do not think I need say a great deal in support of this Amendment. On all sides of the Committee it has been agreed that young persons certainly ought to have many facilities for recreation and for continued education, and I think it would be conceded that if they finish at 8 o'clock, there is no possibility whatever of them having an opportunity of participating in continued education, or in recreation, or in any activity which would result in physical fitness and so on. I feel that if we are really concerned with the physical fitness and the continued education of our young children—

Sir J. Haslam: On a point of Order. We have already agreed to 11 hours as a maximum period for employment. We have also agreed that the starting time should be 7 in the morning. They start at 7 o'clock in the morning, and they have an hour for a meal. How are they going to finish at 6 in the evening?

The Chairman: The hours are from 7 to 6 o'clock. That is 11 hours, and the period of employment includes the interval for the meal.

Mr. Silkin: I think this matter would have the sympathy of every Member of the Committee if we were really sincere in our desire that our young people should have every opportunity of taking part in physical improvements and in continued education and so on. The hon. Member for Swindon (Mr. Wakefield) made it perfectly clear that the reason given by Members of the Opposition as to why young persons were not able to attend continuation classes and improve their education was that they finished their work too late. If we really want our young people to finish their education, we ought to take steps to see that they do not work after 6 o'clock in the evening, so that they have the opportunity of engaging in recreation and continued education. For these reasons I move the Amendment.

Mr. Brooke: I am sorry the Home Secretary is not here, because this Amendment affects a large number of people, especially young people, employed in his own constituency. This is really a practical Amendment, and it is one which I gather the operatives who are concerned are very much desirous of the Under-Secretary considering. I would assure him that there is a practice in many factories which I know, of starting the younger people at a later hour than the adult people and working them after 6, sometimes to 7 and sometimes 8 o'clock in the evening, although they may only get nine hours in the day.

Mr. McCorquodale: If I might interrupt, I think that will be stopped by paragraph (d). They have got to work at the same time.

Mr. Brooke: Yes, but it is the period of employment, not the period of work, and that is where the distinction comes in. The period of employment is 11 hours a day for adults and young persons, and the period of work is nine hours a day. It all depends on how the nine hours are spread in the day. My point is that there is a growing practice for the younger persons to start later than the adults. They have nine hours' work, and the employer can keep them until 6, or

7, or 8 o'clock according to the exigencies and the needs of the factory at the time. The point put by my hon. Friend, that if they are kept after 6 o'clock they will not be able to take advantage of recreation, is a substantial point.

There is another point which I would like to put forward in support of the claim that the Amendment should be accepted. In the part of the country from which I come, especially in my constituency, there is a shortage of juvenile labour. Young people are being recruited from towns as far away as Leeds and Bradford. They come up by special bus services and by train, which means that some of them have to spend an hour in travelling to and from their work. If they are going to be kept in a factory until 8 or even 7 o'clock in the evening, it means that they will not get home until 9 o'clock at night, and we all know what that means. One is almost too tired to wash and get the evening meal, and in view of those circumstances, as it takes so long to get away from work and to get home, and in view of the fact that it is not proper and right that young people should be kept in factories until 8 in the evening, whatever may happen to the adults, and that there is a general desire that young people should get away and get fresh air in the evenings, I hope the Under-Secretary will see his way to accept this very reasonable Amendment.

Mr. Broad: This provision applies not only to young people but to women as well. We have only had mention of the young people so far, but by an early decision of this Committee, with the acquiescence of the Noble Lady opposite, women are to be continued to be classified with young persons. It is evident that a great many people have not got the courage of their convictions. I do not approve classifying women with children and young persons, but where there are special considerations I am not in favour of treating women indifferently with men. There are occasions, and this is one of them. A very great proportion of the working women in factories and so on in this country lead double lives in this sense. A very great proportion of them have their homes to keep going, and they have to do the shopping and the housework and look after the children.

We are not legislating for all. We know that some people work in ideal conditions, or so we are told, but we are legislating for the generality and not for the few. I never said that all women were married, with husbands and families, and went out to work. Some women even have to maintain their husbands because they are disabled. Fifty per cent. war-pensioned men and 25 per cent. war-pensioned men can never get a job and cannot derive the benefits of workmen's compensation, so their wives go out and keep husband and family as well as doing a good deal of the housework. If it is reasonable to start those factories at seven in the morning, it is just as reasonable to say that they should shut at six in the evening, not only to give the young people an opportunity of going to their evening classes and having their recreation, but to give the womenfolk an opportunity of doing the other work which they ought to enjoy but which becomes a drudgery when they have to go out to work and keep the home going as well.

Viscountess Astor: It is quite true that women are leading double lives. I know it, because I am leading a double life myself. It is not only important for them, but it is really monstrous in the light of the present conditions. A case was brought to me of a girl, 16 years old, who begins work at 6 a.m. and continues until 6.30 p.m. It means that it is impossible for that girl to get any recreation at all. I hope very much the Minister will accept this Amendment. One of the hon. Members says it is quite different now. They say girls are coming up to business from a long way out. That is happening all over the country, and it is not as though they were walking down the lane to work. They have to go an enormous way to work—[An HON. MEMBER: "New housing schemes."]
—Quite true, and the more we try to get them away from the factories the better. If we had been wiser, we would have adopted the Dutch scheme of having them all together, but we have been blind and have not had the vision to build round the factories and so we have got this terrific problem. I hope very much that Members on this side will accept this Amendment.

Mr. Ridley: It seems to me that the Committee is now in process of trying to salvage Clause 68. The Committee has,

with considerable disappointment to, I think, a major number of the Members of the Committee, destroyed one important Amendment after the other, and I would beg the Committee, before it leaves this Amendment to suffer the same fate, to consider what this Clause is going to be like in the end if this process goes on. It seems to me that it would be a most hopeful and optimistic expectation that an entirely satisfactory situation is going to result when the Bill has gone through Committee. We have made three or four very important negative decisions. The first is that the age of entry into industry is to be 14, and that means, if this Amendment is not carried, that youngsters of 14 can be required to work at night until 8 o'clock. We have decided that there is going to be a 48-hour week and, for some young persons—no one knows how many—between 14 and 16. But even if, and I am not hopeful enough to suppose that it would be the case, the new Clause 69 provides a 40-hour week for young persons from 14 to 16, it is not intended to deal in the new Clause, so far as I know, with the hour of leaving employment. Therefore presumably, even though a 42, 43 or 44-hour week may be conceded for young persons between 14 and 16, it will be within the provisions of this Clause so far as the starting and finishing of hours is concerned. The Clause, unless it is amended in this sense, will provide that all young persons will be and can be required to start work at 7 o'clock in the morning—an unearthly hour for a young person—and can be required to be at work until 8 in the evening, also an unearthly hour.

I concede to no one my desire to see extended education for all young persons since it was so seriously denied to me, nor do I desire to retard any recreational facilities. I hope I have the hon. Member for Swindon (Mr. Wakefield) with me, when I say that natural recreation, that is, the recreation that you go to because you like it, is infinitely better than organised recreation. Eight o'clock on a summer evening in June means a complete denial of tennis and cricket and all the other natural sporting pursuits. Eight o'clock in the evening is going to deny all these natural outdoor pursuits which are essential for good health. I speak with all the more feeling about that because at this age I was consecutively for four

[Mr. Ridley.] months, during a glorious summer, employed from 9 o'clock in the morning until 10.30 in the evening.

Even more important from my point of view than either education or recreation is the question of rest. I have two youngsters at home. With one, nearly 14 years of age, I walked to school yesterday morning. It is appalling to say that I might have been walking to work with that child at a quarter to seven in the morning and that I might have been waiting for it to come home at 9 o'clock in the evening. That circumstance this Clause would sanction, except for the Amendment which is before the Committee. Leaving a London factory at 14 years of age at 8 o'clock in the evening and travelling an hour to get home means that the child has not got rest or food until 9.30 or 10 in the evening. No member of the medical profession would say that that is a fit and proper time for a child to be expected to retire for rest. It should be at rest at a much earlier hour in the evening than that, and I beg the Committee very earnestly indeed to engage in the salvaging process of saving this Clause from some of the more extreme proposals in it.

Mr. Mander: I very much hope that my hon. Friend is going to accept this Amendment. If for any reason he cannot go quite so far as this, I would remind him I have an Amendment on the Paper which deals with it in an alternative way. It is not so satisfactory, perhaps, but as the Home Secretary did not adopt any of my previous Amendments, I hope he will adopt this one. I hope he is going to adopt it for this reason: I am not going into its merits. They have been argued amply, but we have had examples day after day here of the whole of the Committee on one side in favour of improving the Bill. The only people who have been resisting the Committee are the Government themselves, and this really cannot go on indefinitely. It is really an indecent scene to see the whole measure of public opinion, and it is public opinion, wasting itself here on these matters of immense importance. The Government must take notice of it. I hope the Government will feel that this is an occasion when they can make a concession. It is a very minor concession. The hon. Gentleman must bow to the will of the Committee.

Mr. Wakefield: I find myself in some little difficulty after listening to the statements made by hon. Members. The hours of beginning and of finishing work are laid down as the same for all periods of the year. It seems to me quite clear that for young persons to start work at 7 o'clock on a cold December's morning is unthinkable, but at the same time I feel that to start work at 7 o'clock on the morning of a lovely June day is quite a different proposition, especially if starting at that early hour would enable the factory to be closed at a correspondingly early hour in the evening. If, on the other hand, there could be a later start on the dark winter's morning then, of course, it would be necessary to have a correspondingly later finish in the evening, and might I suggest that perhaps some alteration of hours to accommodate the situation could be proposed? Some of the difficulties of an early start on a cold winter's morning could perhaps be obviated, and the extra hours in the evening could be enjoyed, with an earlier start on a glorious summer's morning. I put forward these suggestions to see whether there is anything possible which can be done to overcome the difficulties which I am sure other Members may feel on this particular point.

Mr. Gibbins: I agree with what the hon. Member has just said, that it is too late for children to be working after 6 o'clock at night, and I tell the Committee quite frankly that there are few crimes that I would not be prepared to commit to prevent my children going to work at that time of night. Let hon. Members on the other side bring it down to a human problem. That is the only test. It is all very well talking about the needs of industry. If industry depends upon sapping the lives, limbs, and minds of these children, it ought to fail. Cannot some of the Members opposite have a little less fear of the Home Secretary, of the Under-Secretary, and of the Government and vote with their conscience and, for once, try to demonstrate that they believe this thing is right? If it is right, they should vote with us and support us against the Government.

We have got practically nothing from the Government out of this Bill. Since the Bill was introduced, what concessions have we got? We have seen the cleverness of the Home Secretary used on every

occasion to thwart the whole business of the Committee. What grounds have we for opposing this? What reasons have we got? The hon. Member never gave any reasons why they should be working until 8 o'clock. Is there any reason against this from the point of view of industry? I have heard none yet. In my own experience of industry years ago—and I have had a fairly long experience and a bitter one—I saw no reason why they should keep a boy of 14 to 16 at work in that way. As I heard the hon. Member for London University (Sir E. Graham-Little) saying, most of these boys at 14 to 16 are not doing such terribly responsible and important work. Then why keep them there? I should have thought that hon. Members would have supported us wholeheartedly in our desire to give them a chance. You have blocked out the possibility of a 40-hour week. They have got to go for 48 hours. I am quite sure that if Members in this room had to go to work now, had to be at work at 7 o'clock in the morning, stop there all day, and clock out at 7.30, none of them would vote for it.

Lieut.-Colonel Sandeman Allen: Did not the hon. Member support the Motion for the suspension of the Eleven o'Clock Rule?

Mr. Gibbins: There was no Division. Even supposing we did, it might be funny, but it does not suit this serious question. The hon. and gallant Member knows, and we all know, that if we do not want to be here, we need not be here. There is no one watching every movement that Members of Parliament take, everything they do, every action they make and every time they speak. Cannot we try to face up to this question with a little humanity? If we turn this question to ourselves, not one Member will oppose it, and that should be the test. That should be the test of our political life. In my view the concession for which we are asking is a very simple one and one that would not be very costly. I know that excuses will be made that the work has to be done by this or that particular type of child, but no work ought to be done by a child of 14 at that hour. I hope the Minister will be able to agree with us; otherwise we shall have to fight every Clause and line of the Bill. So far we have been getting along very quickly, and for fear of putting

the Bill in jeopardy, we have been trying to be conciliatory; but we are being misunderstood, and if the opinion of the Committee is to be flouted continually, we shall have to change our attitude.

Mr. Lloyd: In reply to the hon. Member for West Toxteth (Mr. Gibbins). I do not think the misunderstanding is all on one side. There has been a good deal of misunderstanding of the position in regard to these provisions this afternoon, and I would like to state the reasons the figure is in the Bill and why we think that, from the point of view of the convenience of the workers, we ought not to change the hour. We have heard a great deal about the hour of stopping work, but on an earlier Amendment, on which we were able to meet hon. Members, we heard a good deal about the hours of beginning work. I would point out to the Committee that the hours of beginning and the hours of stopping are essentially related. The hour of stopping is largely governed in practice by the hour of starting. As the Committee knows, we are discussing everything upon the basis of the maximum of 9 hours or 11 hours in any particular day, and 48 hours in the week. Therefore, the question of fixing the stopping hour must be related to the question of how those maxima are to be fitted in in certain circumstances and to the time of starting.

At present, work generally starts between 7 and 8 a.m., with an interval of say, an hour, during the day, and finishes at or before 6 o'clock. If that were the invariable practice, there would be no objection to this Amendment, but, of course, it is not the invariable practice. Hon. Members who have spoken have been thinking of the conditions in their own particular areas and have forgotten that different circumstances arise in other areas. At the Home Office, we know that there is a number of factories where work starts relatively late—at 8.30 or 9 a.m.—or where longer meal times are given, or both; so that work continues until about 6.30 or 7 p.m., or perhaps until 7.30 or 8 p.m. on some days. My point is that in certain circumstances it is for the convenience of the workers that they should start late.

Mr. Broad: Their convenience is considered very little.

Mr. Lloyd: I do not think that is true. I think there was some agree-

[Mr. Lloyd.]

ment in the Committee earlier that, as a general rule in industry, the convenience of the workers is considered in fixing time of work, intervals for meals, and so on. As a matter of fact, I cannot see any very great incentive to the employers to change those hours; as long as they get the period of hours that is agreed upon, I do not think it matters a great deal to them whether the period starts an hour earlier or an hour later. There does not appear to be any occult reason why an employer should behave in a particularly malicious way in this matter. I believe that these conditions are settled largely in consultation with the workpeople. The real point is that, although this Amendment would suit a large majority of workers, there are instances where they want to start late, owing to the circumstances of the factory and the district, and in those cases it would not be possible to work the ordinary hours without going a little beyond the 6 o'clock, or in some cases 7 o'clock, proposed in the Amendment.

Mr. Brooke: Will the hon. Gentleman give an example of how this will work? If the finishing time is 8 o'clock, if they have three quarters of an hour or an hour for dinner and then have a half-an-hour's break in the afternoon, and if they have to work until 8 o'clock, at what time will they have to start in the morning?

Mr. Lloyd: I said at 8.30 or 9 o'clock.

Mr. Brooke: In factories?

Mr. Lloyd: There are some factories in which those hours are worked. It may not be in the great industries with which the hon. Member is familiar in Yorkshire, but it is in some of the other areas.

Mr. Brooke: Where?

Mr. Lloyd: I am informed, for instance, that it is the case in dressmaking establishments. Hon. Members must realise that we are not legislating only for the big textile factories in Yorkshire or the big engineering factories in Birmingham. We have this wide definition of the term "factory," and we have to consider all these various establishments.

Mr. Ellis Smith: Are they all to suffer because of a few dressmakers?

Mr. Lloyd: It is not a question of suffering, for in the majority of cases hardship does not arise. We have to frame this Bill in such a way that it is applicable to all establishments. An hon. Member asked why we could not deal with this matter in the same way as we dealt with the starting period. The reason is that there is a difference in practice. It is comparatively rare for a factory to start before 7 a.m. and it is a practical proposition for the Home Office to lay down 7 a.m. instead of 6 a.m. and to allow exemptions in special cases. I am informed that there is a greater variety of examples where there is a late start and also a late finish. It would be impracticable as a matter of administration to fix an earlier period and then to give a large number of exemptions from it.

I think I shall have a large part of the Committee with me on that practical point, but I think another practical point was made by the hon. Member who moved the Amendment, when he spoke of the education of young persons. Young persons are often allowed to get away early so that they may have an opportunity of attending evening classes, which usually begin at 7.30 p.m. It is not uncommon for groups of subjects to be so arranged that young persons, by attending for two or three evenings a week, may follow a definite course of instruction. In practice, therefore, young persons usually have sufficient time—

Mr. Viant: After 8 o'clock.

Mr. Lloyd: I am speaking generally, and not of the special cases where they work later. Usually they have sufficient time, after leaving the factory, to attend such classes if they wish to do so, and in cases where factories normally work after 6 p.m., at any rate on some nights in the week, arrangements can often be made for particular young persons to attend evening classes. Moreover, there is the growing practice of arranging day classes on say, two half-days in the week. In 1934-35, about 30,000 students were released from employment to attend such classes, the largest number released being in the engineering and allied trades. I am told that special arrangements are increasingly being made to deal with the problem where young people may be kept late on particular evenings in the week.

Mr. Walker: Is the hon. Gentleman trying to prove to us that employers are very much in advance of the Home Office?

Mr. Lloyd: Of course, some are in advance of the Home Office, and rightly so. The principle of factory legislation is not to lay down rules beyond which the employers may in no case go, but to lay down certain rules below which employers must not fall.

Mr. Silverman: On that view of the matter, is it fair to use the practice of those employers who, on the hon. Gentleman's hypothesis, are in advance of the Home Office's proposed legislation in order to defeat proposed improvements in that legislation?

Mr. Lloyd: What we have to do is to frame the best proposals we can, but to leave sufficient elasticity to meet the various conditions which we find in industry. I have been trying to point out that, although, as far as the great mass of industry is concerned, this Amendment would cause no difficulty, there are perfectly justifiable instances where factories begin work late and where they should be allowed to go on later.

Mr. Broad: I am sure the hon. Gentleman has not informed himself on this occasion, or he would not have claimed that it is justifiable for these young people to work until 8 o'clock. I intend to justify my statement that the welfare and interests of these young people are never considered in these particular cases where they work until 8 o'clock. It is always a question of the interests of the employers. The trades where that is the regular rule are generally the trades where the young people have to work in garrets or underground workshops, in London. They are the dressmaking places, the bootmaking places, and so on, and they are mainly in connection with the retail trades. They are small workshops, perhaps doing special jobs, and because the shop is not opened until 9 o'clock in the morning, they do not want to shut the workshop before 8 o'clock at night. They ought to be made to shut the shop at 6 o'clock rather than to keep the workshop open until 8 o'clock.

Moreover, there is another consideration. If these workshops are in London, the young people have to travel a considerable distance to their work, and if

they do not finish until 8 o'clock at night, it is 9 o'clock or more before they get home. If they are given time off in order to attend evening classes on one or two nights of the week, they have to make up that time on other nights of the week. In any case, of what value are the lessons likely to be when they have not the time to do the exercises and homework? Another question that arises is the railway tickets. The railway companies so adjust their workmen's tickets that the latest time for getting into London with them is 7.30 or 8 o'clock in the morning. These young people who start work at 9 o'clock have to come to London with a workman's ticket, and then hang around for an hour before they can start work. There is no question here of meeting foreign competition or of a hard-hit highly competitive trade which must keep its workshops open until 8 o'clock at night to retain our foreign markets. These are to meet the convenience of those employers who are chiefly catering for the luxury trades.

With regard to the 30,000 engineers who were given leave from their work to attend classes, I think we shall find that they were given leave from permitted overtime and not from the regular hours of work. There are very few firms which do that, and even then the classes for these young people are never held in the afternoon because the majority decide, and the majority of young persons can only attend these classes in the evening. That rather confirms my view that these 30,000 young persons in the engineering trade were excused overtime. I hope the Committee will show a little courage on this occasion. It is not a vital issue of principle that divides us; it is a humanitarian consideration. Some hon. Members on the other side have to deal with farms, horses, racing, and so on; I wonder how many of them would put a prize colt on to a full week's work, under unhealthy conditions, before it had developed? They would not do it for the animals; let them not do it for the children of the workers.

Mr. White: I agree with the hon. Member for Edmonton (Mr. Broad) that we are not concerned here with industries up against fierce foreign competition. I think the Under-Secretary had in mind the difficulty arising from such cases as the laundry trade, where the preliminary

[Mr. White.] work is done by collecting vans, and the work cannot start until later in the day. In seeking to rebut the arguments in favour of this Amendment, however, the Under-Secretary relied very largely on a statement of the practice of the best employers, for whom we are not legislating, and I was not convinced by his statement. If he cannot accept the Amendment as it stands, I hope he will accept the suggestion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, East (Mr. Mander) for making the time of finishing 7 o'clock, but I hope he will adopt this Amendment.

Mr. Brooke: I am sure that many Members of the Committee were disappointed by the reply of the Under-Secretary, and particularly the hon. Member for Sowerby (Mr. McCorquodale), because a few days ago I read the report of a speech to his division in which he referred to this Bill as the new factory workers' charter. As I understand it, a charter gives something new and makes concessions. As this Clause was originally drafted, it would make the position worse for thousands of young people and women because until the Amendment for starting at 7 o'clock in the morning was introduced, a 6 o'clock start would have been reintroduced in many industries. I was disappointed at the arguments put forward, and I have never heard the Under-Secretary less convincing and more hard put to it to find arguments for rebutting the claims put forward from these benches than in the speech that he made a few minutes ago. He said that we who had spoken in the Debate represented some of the staple industries where conditions are not the same as in many others, and then he instanced the dress-making industry. I would remind him that the staple industries of this country, for whom we speak and plead in this House, represent millions of women and young persons, an overwhelming number of people engaged in industry, whereas the number of people employed in the dressmaking and kindred occupations is of a very insignificant character. The Under-Secretary is proceeding on the principle of legislating for the few at the expense of the conditions of employment of the many, and it will work out in practice in that way.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the arrangements that can be made by em-

ployers for young people to leave early on certain nights in the week if they are finishing at 8 o'clock. There are plenty of evening schools in my constituency, but I do not know of any cases where employers have willingly come forward and said they would let their young employes leave at 6 o'clock to attend the classes. It may sound all right in theory, but it is not generally done in practice. There is only one way out of this difficulty. The point was mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Edmonton (Mr. Broad) as to the time taken up in travelling. Is the Under-Secretary aware that the general practice in housing schemes is to take houses away from factories, and consequently the workers have much longer distances to travel to their homes in the evening? I hope the Under-Secretary will reconsider the weak arguments that he put forward in support of his case and see the justice of the claims that we are putting forward.

Mr. Lloyd: I may have put my case badly, but I maintain that it is a good case. The arguments that we have heard have been directed not so much to the hour of stopping as to the reduction of the hours of work and the period of employment. They were much more appropriate to those matters than to the actual Amendment that we are considering now, because if we accept the maximum hours of employment and the period of employment as already passed in this Committee, the effect of this Amendment is merely to force many people back to earlier starting times. As long as you accept the hours laid down in the Bill for a working day, if you fix an earlier hour for finishing you are in effect forcing people to start earlier.

Sir E. Graham-Little: Does that mean that they must start before 6 or 7 o'clock at any time?

Mr. Lloyd: No, it does not; but I pointed out that the real reason for keeping the hour in the Bill is that in certain factories they start a good deal later than the normal.

Mr. Brooke: The hon. Gentleman said that 9.30 was the starting time and 8 o'clock the finishing time. Is he aware that the people who are called upon work until

8 o'clock with a later starting time are overwhelmingly in favour of an earlier start?

Mr. Lloyd: I was certainly not aware of that, and I would be interested to learn what grounds the hon. Gentleman has for saying it. If he will let us have the cases, we will certainly look into the matter. Our information is that there are not many cases of that kind. There are, however, many workpeople who would strongly object to be forced to start earlier than their present time. With regard to the workers from 14 to 16, we will certainly consider the latest hour for stopping in connection with the proposal for reducing their hours of work.

Mr. Buchanan: Has the right hon. Gentleman considered the recent Act which we passed dealing with shop hours, the Shop Hours Act, which has forced a great majority of shops to close by 6.30 or 7 o'clock at night? From the point of view of public convenience, they have a much stronger case than the ordinary factory has. The hon. Member for Cathcart (Sir J. Train), who is sitting opposite, knows that in almost every retail shop in his division they close at 6.30 at night. I disagree with the hon. Member when he said that there was no case for the employes wanting this change. Their overwhelming desire is to get away at night. Nearly everybody nowadays has some kind of amusement, and if you make the hour of closing 8 o'clock, you deprive the great mass of labour from any social activity in the summer.

There is this further difference between factories and shops. The average shop assistant can leave his work already dressed to play, but the average factory worker has to clean himself up first. I should say there is an overwhelming demand from them not to work later than 6.30 at night. Indeed the case is often for a much earlier start, and it is not unknown for working-people to cut down their luncheon time by half an hour in order to leave earlier at night. With reference to the thousands of apprentices in engineering shops who are allowed to leave, their hour is not 8 o'clock but often 5.30. The boys mentioned have to attend technical colleges often 15 to 20 miles away. In the city of Glasgow, for instance, they have to come 15 or 20 miles to night school from neighbouring places, and even 5.30 may be too

late, so the employers make certain adjustments to let them go. The people for whom we are legislating here are the people who will not make adjustments to enable young people to attend night schools. That is why we want to make it law.

The dress-making trade, which seems the main contention, is not particularly protected from the trade union point of view. Generally speaking, they work those long hours because it is cheaper to keep people working until 8.30 than it is to employ more people. We are giving a privilege to these people, and I cannot see one bit of justice in it. The case for 6 o'clock in an enlightened age is very strong, when you consider that 8 o'clock in 1937 is equivalent to 9 o'clock for a great number of workers in 1914, for each year sees the working people moving to greater distances from their work, and during the time they are at work they are usually subject to a great deal more physical strain than they used to be.

I think the Under-Secretary on this occasion ought to adjust the matter. If he would even make a condition that for certain months in the year, particularly in the summer months, these people should not work later than 7 o'clock, that would be something to help them in getting out into the fresh air. You give an extra hour in the summer time to give people the advantages of fresh air and sunshine, and by the Factories Bill you deprive them of the very benefits of that Act which you have passed. It seems unreasonable to me. It seems to me that the Under-Secretary in these affairs is not adjusting himself to the modern desire.

Mr. Banfield: I hope that the Under-Secretary will not think we are unduly desirous of prolonging this discussion. We are pursuing this matter because it is very serious. Some of us, including myself, have been engaged in technical education for many years. I have come up against it so many times when young people cannot get away from their work to obtain the education which we as tradesmen and craftsmen desire them to get. Eight o'clock at night is unreasonable. Twelve months back I was giving some prizes away at a technical school in my own constituency. Half the people whose names were called out were not present. I inquired why, and I was told,

[Mr. Banfield.] "Trade is good, and they are keeping the boys at work, so they are having difficulty in getting here." That sort of thing is not good enough. The Under-Secretary, probably speaking from a brief, told us that in these matters the workmen's interests were being consulted, that they wanted to start at 8 in the morning. Will the Committee take it from me, as a man who has interviewed employers and employes in this country, that I have never yet met an employer who has consulted his workpeople as to the time at which they wish to start work?

Wing-Commander Wright: I have.

Mr. Banfield: I am speaking from my own experience, and I say that out of my own experience employers have never consulted their workpeople as to the time at which they wish to start work in the morning. I should like to see some of these factories, and I should like to know how many start work at 9 or 9.30 or even 8.30. The fact remains that if 8 o'clock be the finishing time for young people, I say that the worst people in all branches of industry will be the first to take advantage of it. So far as the great bulk of factory owners are concerned, however, their factories as a rule close at 6 o'clock at night. In this Bill you have got thousands of places which hitherto have been called workshops. I say, without fear of contradiction, that the vast majority of these places which are called workshops are in effect, in the main, sweating shops and they are the places where young people are exploited to the utmost. One thing more than anything else to ensure in this Bill is that that type of employer should have no power to exploit young people as has been done in the past.

Can the Under-Secretary not make some concession? Will he not say that 7 o'clock should be the finishing time? We want to do something for these children. I am not impressed at all by this cry of the Under-Secretary, when challenged, "There is the question of dressmaking." Anybody who knows anything about this great city of London knows as well as I do that if there is one industry more than another in which there are long hours and exploitation of young children it is in the dressmaking industry. Everybody knows it; it is common property. Everybody who has

worked among children and everybody who has inquired into social conditions knows that that is the truth. You are making it possible for a very bad kind of employer to overwork young people until 8 o'clock at night. What sort of chance are these young children getting? Surely the Under-Secretary can meet us somewhere.

We do not want to be foolish or stupid about this matter. We are the first to realise that industry must be maintained. I realise that there are always two sides to all questions and that the employers have got a side as well as the workmen. But in dealing with child life, those who are desirous of giving them facilities for education and recreation are of the opinion that this Committee is going to be unworthy of itself if, on this matter at any rate, it does not take a determined stand. The only people who will be hurt are the people who deserve to be hurt, but you will be doing something to protect the child life of the country and to make it possible for people like the hon. Member for Swindon (Mr. Wakefield) to get on with the good work which they are doing. How can you get hold of the children if they are working until 8 o'clock? It is an absolute impossibility. Those who wish the country well should take the long and broad view of this matter and support the hour of 6 o'clock to the very utmost. At any rate, 7 o'clock should be ample for any employer.

Mr. Lloyd: I do not wish to inflict myself upon the Committee, but the hon. Member makes his appeals with great conviction, and although I cannot go all the way which he would like, I would like to tell the Committee what I feel about this discussion. I have put our point of view in good faith. It seems to me that the proposition is reasonable, and I do think that as long as the hours remain the same, if you force the hour of stopping back, you also force the hour of starting back. On the other hand, while I hold that view, I am bound to say that I have been impressed with the persistence of hon. Members opposite, not in a partisan spirit. Frankly, I have been impressed with the way in which they have put this matter forward. Therefore, I am bound to feel that there may be some circumstances in this matter of which I have not been properly informed. In this Committee we wish to do the best we can and to do it in a practical way. There may

be some cases in which these hours are unjustifiably late. On the face of it, one would not regard a late starting hour as an abuse, but, of course, there may be circumstances in which it is.

I ask the Committee, particularly hon. Members opposite, to allow us at the Home Office to reconsider this matter from the point of view of young persons. At present this applies to women and young persons, and I do not think it is reasonable to say that an adult woman cannot start at 8.30 or 9 o'clock in any circumstances. But, of course, young persons have a special case. If the Committee would allow it, I would pass the Clause as it is, on condition that we reconsider it. We should like the assistance of hon. Members opposite, particularly those who have participated in the discussion to-day, and we should like examples of where this would constitute an abuse.

Mr. Burke: Why not bring it up at the end of the new Clause instead of passing it to-day?

Mr. Lloyd: It would be more in accordance with the usual practice, before we have considered it and made up our minds, to leave it as it is, on the condition which I have just suggested.

Mr. Broad: On that question of procedure, should we find time on the Report stage in the House? I do not think we shall have time to delve into the numerous details which the Minister said he would reconsider at a later stage. The whole of this Clause has been unsatisfactory. I think we ought to have obtained some concession.

Mr. Silkin: As the mover of the Amendment, I hope the Under-Secretary will not shut out the possibility of considering the maximum number of hours. I see his point, and I see that if you are going to stick to 11 as the maximum number of hours, you are in a difficulty of objecting to a later finishing time. But if this Amendment is withdrawn, we think he should reconsider that matter as well as the latest time for finishing.

Mr. Lloyd: I cannot go further than that.

Mr. Short: I am pleased that the Under-Secretary has at last listened to the collective voice of the Committee and at last has indicated his willingness to meet

us. Otherwise, I should have had to indicate in no uncertain language a change of attitude on the part of the Members on this side so far as the future consideration of this Bill is concerned. We have indicated willingness to co-operate with the Home Office and with the Committee in general to improve the Bill, but I am sorry to say that we have been received with very little consideration, particularly upon this Clause. I do not see how we are going to get out of the difficulty. I have in my mind the point raised by the hon. Member for Gorbals (Mr. Buchanan), that we are constantly referring matters to the Report stage, which certainly does not give Members of this Committee any opportunity for discussion. At the same time I do not see how we are going to avoid it on this occasion. I think it would have been much better if my original proposal to the right hon. Gentleman this morning, to take the Clause back entirely and put it down on the Paper, including the Amendment that he proposed, had been adopted. We should then have been in a better position to judge. As it is, with no alternative, I am afraid we must accede to the request of the Under-Secretary.

Mr. Buchanan: Could the hon. Gentleman not accede to our request? He suggests putting down this Amendment for the Report stage, and it is to be reconsidered and readjusted. What is the good of putting it down at the end? It would be much better for him and for us if he did as I suggest. The suggestion of the hon. Member for Doncaster (Mr. Short) is very practical. Everyone knows that on the Report stage half of these things cannot be discussed. It is no use treating us as if we were children and inferiors. Let us discuss this matter here. On a Bill of this size there are plenty of things to discuss. At the end of this Session, when the Government are cluttered up, we have either got to scamp things or not to discuss them at all.

Mr. Ellis Smith: What about the Special Areas?

Mr. Buchanan: Here is a question which really matters. We have allowed other things to go by the board because we have not attached the same importance to them as we do to this matter. It would be better for the Under-Secretary

[Mr. Buchanan.]
and for us all if he followed our proposition, which, to my mind, is a reasonable proposition. I trust it will be considered from a practical point of view.

Mr. White: I cannot help thinking that we are not getting over this difficulty. I think that by this time every Member of this Committee must be getting very anxious about the future stages of this Bill. I do not know on what authority the hon. Member for Gorbals (Mr. Buchanan) mentioned the matters which he did, but there certainly have been at least four or five matters of very great substance referred to the Report stage. There is a great demarcation between the Committee stage of the Bill and the Report stage of the Bill, and there will have to be curtailment of the discussion on Report, which I do not think the hon. Gentleman or his right hon. Leader wishes to bring about at all. One appreciates why this is so. The Home Secretary and the Under-Secretary have been most anxious through the whole of the procedure in connection with this Bill to give full consideration and weight to the points which have been raised. We have clearly been brought into circumstances which may lead to difficulties at later stages of the Session and may lead to a demand for the recommittal of the Bill. Therefore I sincerely hope that we are not going to add this instance to matters which could be brought up on Report.

Mr. Lloyd: I can recall to mind the fact that when this subject was raised once before, my right hon. Friend pointed out that he considered the Report stage of this Bill would be very important, as is evident indeed, from the number of points that we have promised to consider. I quite appreciate the point made by the hon. Member for Gorbals (Mr. Buchanan) that in general it is not a good thing to leave points undecided that properly can be decided here. But in a Bill of this magnitude, when we are trying to deal with it by methods of co-operation and not merely by partisan methods, I submit that there is a considerable case for this method when a point has been raised and pressed and when the representatives of the Home Office feel that they cannot give way, as we have in certain instances. It is not safe, for example, to make a concession at this time, because there may be particular cases which may be badly hit. Surely it

is better to wait. We have got to make inquiries, and surely we may ask for a reasonable delay. We shall look into this matter in the Home Office in good faith. We shall not take up an obstructive attitude. We want to consider any fresh facts hon. Members have got, and I submit that it is reasonable in these circumstances to ask Members to adopt the same procedure as has been adopted in other cases.

Mr. Denman: May I venture to observe that on balance the advantage lies in the course proposed by the Under-Secretary? I agree with the hon. Member for Doncaster (Mr. Short) that we might very well at an earlier stage have passed away from this Clause altogether and withdrawn it. But that course has not been adopted, and we could now only take that course on the Question that the Clause stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Buchanan: This Committee is reasonable. We should not start discussing it all over again. We are not members of the National Labour Party.

Mr. Denman: The new Clause 69 relates only to young persons between 14 and 16, so far as we have as yet been told. The promise given to us by the Under-Secretary relates to all young persons, and I think that on the whole, in these circumstances, I would rather leave it to see that that promise is brought into reasonable effect relating to all persons instead of trying here and now to settle the figure or alternatively waiting for the new Clause, which may not deal with the subject at all.

Mr. Short: There are one or two suggestions that I should like to put forward to the Under-Secretary. As evidence of good will towards Members of the Committee, I suggest that he accepts the Amendment and includes the word "six" instead of "eight". On the other hand, I suggest that we should adjourn in order to afford the Home Office the opportunity between now and our next meeting to consider the whole matter and to put down an Amendment, because we want the right to discuss this question here. We do not want this matter to be taken up on the Floor on the Report stage, when we shall be certainly handicapped and crippled in our debate. After all, the Government will allocate the time, and they are having some difficulty

already. I see no reason, having regard to the time, why the Under-Secretary should not adopt the Amendment on the understanding, of course, that he will submit an Amendment on the Report stage as evidence of good will and that he has been impressed by the collective voice of the Committee. On the other hand, I suggest that we should adjourn to enable him and his advisers to put down an Amendment.

Mr. Lloyd: When the hon. Member puts a point, I must, in courtesy, deal with it at once, especially in regard to the business. I must say that I do not think it is a reasonable proposal, and I will tell him why. This is a matter that we cannot settle by inquiries in an hour or two. We cannot get these details at the Home Office about the position of factories all over the country. Therefore, the question of an adjournment would not really concern us as a practical matter. On the other hand, he wishes me as a gesture to accept this Amendment. I would really put it to him, as a former Under-Secretary at the Home Office, whether he, in my place, would make an alteration of two hours in regard to the compulsory stopping time of young women and young persons all over the country, merely as a gesture.

May I, on the other hand, really emphasise to the hon. Gentleman and the hon. Members on the opposite side of the Committee, and indeed appeal to them, to see that I have met them as far as I possibly could to-day? Instead of taking up a rigid attitude, we were moved to say that we would consider this. We shall examine all the material put before us, and if there is a real case, we shall be perfectly prepared to meet it. But I cannot pledge myself to that in advance of the examination of the material. In view of that fact, I would appeal to the Committee to make a little further progress to-night. I would not ask the Committee to go very far, but there are Amendments of some substance to be considered, and I put it to the Committee that it would be a very good thing if we started an important discussion at our next meeting on the question of overtime. I do not think that that is an unreasonable programme of work.

Mr. Silkin: In response to the plea of the Under-Secretary, I beg to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

5.38 p.m.

Mr. White: I beg to move, in page 56, line 34, to leave out "or young person."

In this Amendment the question of the total hours of employment and the length of shifts of employment is dealt with. This Amendment will avoid the difficulty which has been raised in connection with some earlier Amendments which have been raised. I will draw the attention of the Committee, if I may, to the fact that it is not our intention, in moving this Amendment, merely to take young people out of the protection of this Clause, and the Amendment consequently has to be read in conjunction with another Amendment for the limitation of the hours of work of young people to 3½ hours. I do not propose to trouble the Committee with any arguments in favour of reducing the spell of work which is suggested in this Bill, because all the arguments which apply with regard to physical conditions and mental conditions and all the other matters concerned, apply just as much in this case as in the case of the total hours of starting and finishing work and similar questions that the Committee has had under consideration for so long.

Mr. Lloyd: I think we ought to have heard some rather more substantial reasons from the hon. Member for moving this Amendment. The provisions in the Bill have been put in as a result of the experience of the factory department, in order to provide the intervals which are necessary and the rest pauses which are necessary, but also to avoid making unnecessarily long rest pauses which are inconvenient and very much resented by the workers concerned. If we are to have an alteration proposed, I think we ought to have heard some rather stronger reasons in favour of it, because it must be appreciated that the arguments are not all on one side. Of course you do not want to have a spell so short that it is quite clearly detrimental to health, nor do you want a rest period of such a time that it will keep the workers hanging about the factory longer than they want to be there. As a result of some of the work on the Medical Research Council we have incorporated these proposals in the Bill.

Mr. White: This Amendment does deal with young persons, and its central fact is based on the point that 3½ hours is a

[Mr. White.]
sufficiently long period for any young person who comes straight from school. I do not want to weary the Committee with any of the arguments which have already been given. I should have thought it was a simple point.

Mr. Brooke: I would like to ask the Under-Secretary a question to clear the position. I have been informed that in the textile industry—woollen and cotton—the law at the moment is that there must be, after a 4½ hours spell of work, a break of half an hour. Under the Bill I understand that if there is a spell of 10 minutes, the period of working can be five hours, but I am told that that five hours does not apply to the textile industry at the present time. It applies to other industries, and if it is going to be applied to textiles as an innovation, it is going to worsen the position considerably, especially for women and young people.

Mr. Lloyd: I have been inquiring about the particular point with regard to textiles raised by the hon. Member, and I understand his facts are correct, but, of course, it would be open to the unions to make arrangements in the ordinary way, and I am informed that some of the workers rather object to the rest pause being as long as the statutory period.

Mr. Brooke: If that is so, I would like to inform the hon. Member that I attended a conference of women, the largest of its kind, on Monday, and this point was raised by some of the delegates there. It was made quite clear to me that many of the employers would prefer the present system. I can assure him that people will resist it. They do not like this innovation. They prefer the present practice, because this is going to make the spell of work half-an-hour longer. They will continue right through without any break for breakfast or anything else. Our people resent this innovation. It is really reactionary, and I hope that the Under-Secretary will reconsider it, even if he cannot give any pledge at this moment.

Mr. McCorquodale: The hon. Member has raised an entirely new point. Although I represent a constituency similar to his, I was not aware of the facts that he has stated. If we are going to make an alteration of this sort, it

ought to be inquired into a little more and the consent of the workpeople obtained before it is done. Possibly, if the trade unions made representations to the Home Office, that might get over the difficulty.

Mr. Ridley: Is it proposed to call the Amendment which stands in my name—in page 56, line 40, to leave out “to five hours” and insert “by the length of the interval”?

The Chairman: Yes.

Amendment negatived.

5.46 p.m.

Sir E. Graham-Little: I beg to move, in page 56, line 35, to leave out “four and a half” and to insert “three.”

The object of the Amendment is clear. It is well established that spells of work of more than three hours, especially in the case of young people, are so long that the attention flags, and the incidence of accidents is very largely due to and increased by inattention—involuntary inattention, it may be, but there it is. Practical proof of that fact is to hand in statistics at the disposal of hon. Members. There was a recent case where a break for tea resulted in an immediate fall in the incidence of accidents. A work period of four and a-half hours is too long. A spell of three hours is enough to exhaust the capacity of a child of 14 to 16 and even those who are older, and make them that they cannot give proper attention to their tasks. Consequently, there are more accidents.

Mr. Lloyd: This Amendment deals largely with the same point. It applies also to women.

Sir E. Graham-Little: Is it at all possible to separate women from children? It leaves us in a very difficult position. There is no reason to separate women from men from the medical point of view, but there is reason for separating women from children. We are hampered at every turn by the non-separation of women from children.

The Chairman: We had an Amendment to deal with that, but it was negatived.

Mr. Lloyd: The hon. Member has produced medical opinions that the proposal in the Bill is too long and that three

hours is the maximum that ought to prevail. That was not the conclusion to which the Industrial Health Research Board came when they made a special investigation into these subjects. Their general conclusion, after an examination of sickness records and so on, was that it was impossible to obtain reliable evidence as to a change in the duration of work spells affecting sickness rates. Therefore, in this matter medical opinion is divided, but this research authority which went into the subject came to the conclusion that there was no foundation for any definite view that a change in the work spell had any effect on the sickness rates.

Sir E. Graham-Little: Does “sickness rates” include accidents?

Mr. Lloyd: No, but from the accidents point of view, the reports of the factory inspectors tend to show that it is not at the end of the period of work, even in regard to young persons, that accidents mostly occur. They tend much more to occur somewhere about the beginning of work or during periods of maximum production, when there is a tendency to work too fast. It is rather surprising and against what one would expect, but actually the later period of work, when one would expect fatigue to influence them, is not the period when accidents occur in a specially large number.

Amendment negatived.

5.51 p.m.

Mr. White: I beg to move, in page 56, line 37, to leave out from “rest” to the end of the paragraph.

Seeing that I am in favour of restricting the spell to three and a half hours, hon. Members would not expect me to be satisfied with a provision which would allow a continuous spell of work for four and a half hours or one which would allow a spell of five hours, provided there was an interval of not less than 10 minutes. The arguments which have been advanced in favour of the earlier Amendment apply here, but there is this additional argument, that it is almost administratively impracticable to work in this rest spell of 10 minutes. I have made a good many inquiries, and, whatever objections there may be to working for a spell of five hours they are enforced and augmented by the fact that the arrangements for the extra work

period subject to the interval of 10 minutes could not in practice be enforced.

Mr. Dobbie: I hope the Under-Secretary will accept the Amendment. The experience of those who are engaged in welfare work and of those who have had practical experience in factories and workshops tends to show that four and a half hours is too long a spell, never mind the introduction of the interval, which would bring about a five-hours spell. Those who have had practical experience in factories and workshops know that towards the end of the spell the workpeople become tired and are less able to be alert and to watch the machinery. Therefore, there is a greater tendency to accidents towards the end of the spell. That is our experience, in spite of what the Under-Secretary has said. Then there is the question of speeding-up. Owing to new methods, new machinery, and the application of new ideas to industry, there is continual speeding-up in factories and workshops, and that makes it almost a crime for the Home Secretary or this Committee to agree to any extension in the spells of working. The question of the 10-minutes interval is really too ridiculous for consideration by a responsible Committee in the circumstances in which we are considering this Bill. Having regard to the experience of those engaged in welfare work and those who have had to do with factories and workshops, I hope the Under-Secretary will see his way clear to accept the Amendment.

Mr. Ridley: I should like to draw attention to two points. In the first place, the modification which it is now proposed to eliminate does not provide for special circumstances, but is to be a continuing modification always to be employed. My second point is that the four-and-a-half hours' working period is not a period that separates one meal from another. If that were so, there would be something to be said for four and a half hours, but I would ask the Committee to see what would happen under this Clause, even if the Amendment were carried. There will be, say, a meal interval from 12 to 12.30 and then a work period until 4 o'clock. On the London assumption that it would be at least an hour and a quarter before the young person would get his or her meal, the period between one meal and another would be from

[Mr. Ridley.]
12.30 to 5.15. That is much too long. Members of the Committee, if one may judge from the habits of the House, must regard that period as much too long. If the modification remains, things will become worse than if it is left out.

For what purpose is the 10-minutes interval to be provided? I know of several ways in which for adult men 10 minutes for refreshment purposes could be very usefully and adequately employed, but for young persons it seems to me to be completely useless. To prolong the period of work in that way separates the two meals one from another by a much more unreasonable period than would be the case if the modification were not in the Clause. On the assumption that the 10-minutes interval is no use at all to a young person, it would mean that the period of work would stretch in the second half of the day from 12.30 until 4.30, and on the further assumption, which I think is quite reasonable, that it would take at least an hour in London for a child to get its meal, if not longer, it would be from 5.30 to 5.45, so that the stretch would be from 12.30 to somewhere between 5.30 and 6 o'clock. Whatever the hon. Member for London University (Sir E. Graham-Little) has said from the medical point of view about the increasing strain as the period of work increases, something might be said about the injury done to the digestion and the physical well-being by there being such a long interval between one meal and another.

Mr. Brooke: I should like to support the arguments as to why the Amendment should be accepted. I am particularly concerned as to the effect of the Bill, if the Amendment is not accepted, on the meal time which now operates in large industries like the textile industries. The Amendment which stands in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Clay Cross (Mr. Ridley) does not cover the position, because after four and-half hours we have half-an-hour's break. If that period was to be altered to a 5-hour working with a 10-minutes break, there would be a 40-minutes break instead of the present half-hour break. The practice for thousands of people is that they start at 7 o'clock in the morning, which is the general starting time, and finish at 12, which is five hours, but they work

four and a-half hours and have half-an-hour for breakfast. They have an hour for dinner and start again at 1 o'clock and go on till 5, and therefore put in nine hours. Thousands of women who work in the textile industry in the West Riding are married, and many of them like to go home at breakfast time, during the half-hour break. They rush home to see that their children have had breakfast and to see them off to school.

The point was put to me quite clearly that there are some employments where there is no break for breakfast. Our people are fearful lest the provisions of this Bill will give power to any employer to abolish the breakfast time, which we have always had in the textile industry with a 7 o'clock start. If the Bill is going to be passed without the Amendment which would protect our industry, we shall be in a far worse position than now. I would remind the Under-Secretary that there are thousands of people represented by the Home Secretary whose position in this matter will be infinitely worse than it is now. It is very important, and affects the West Riding of Yorkshire very materially.

Mr. Lloyd: I would like to confer with the hon. Member on this point regarding the textile industry. Our view is that advantage would not be taken of it in the way that he suggests, but it is desirable to see whether that is the case, and we should appreciate an opportunity of conferring with him on this matter. With regard to the Amendment as a whole, I would state the objection to it very shortly. There are in a number of cases arrangements to work only a 5-hour spell in the morning with a 10-minutes break and four hours in the afternoon to complete the nine hours. Under the proposal in the Amendment this would not be possible, and the two spells would have to be of 4½ hours each. We understand that would be resented by the workpeople in a number of cases, and, therefore, it does not seem necessary to enforce this alteration, having regard to the fact that, from a medical point of view, there is not much difference between a 4½ and a 5 hours spell especially when accompanied by a 10-minutes break.

Mr. Brooke: There is, if it stops your breakfast time.

Mr. Lloyd: I quite agree with the hon. Member if that were the case, but it is a different point. The arrangements in industry are, of course, of infinite variation. In some cases there is a two-break system instead of a single break, although the latter is by far the more usual. As I have said, there does not seem sufficient medical reason for differentiating

between the 4½ and 5-hours' spells, and there are many cases in which workers prefer 5 hours in the morning and 4 in the afternoon.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'ten,' in line 38, stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided: Ayes, 22; Noes, 9.

Division No. 12.]

AYES.

Bull, B. B.
Clarke, Lt.-Col. R. S. (E. Grinstead)
Cooper, Rt. Hn. T. M. (E'nburgh, W.)
Denman, Hon. R. D.
Goodman, Col. A. W.
Haslam, Sir J. (Bolton)
Hunter, T.

Law, R. K. (Hull, S.W.)
Little, Sir E. Graham-
Llewelin, Lieut.-Col. J. J.
Lloyd, G. W.
McCorquodale, M. S.
Moreing, A. C.
Palmer, G. E. H.

Rathbone, J. R. (Bodmin)
Reid, W. Allan (Derby)
Rickards, G. W. (Skipton)
Ross Taylor, W. (Woodbridge)
Salt, E. W.
Train, Sir J.
Tufnell, Lieut.-Commander R. L.
Wragg, H.

NOES.

Astor, Viscountess (Plymouth, Sutton)
Brooke, W.
Burke, W. A.

Dobbie, W.
Ridley, G.
Short, A.

Silkin, L.
Viant, S. P.
White, H. Graham

6.8 p.m.

Amendment proposed: In page 56, line 40, to leave out "to five hours," and to insert "by length of the interval."—
[Mr. Ridley.]

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided: Ayes, 22; Noes, 9.

Division No. 13.]

AYES.

Bull, B. B.
Clarke, Lt.-Col. R. S. (E. Grinstead)
Cooper, Rt. Hn. T. M. (E'nburgh, W.)
Denman, Hon. R. D.
Goodman, Col. A. W.
Haslam, Sir J. (Bolton)
Hunter, T.

Law, R. K. (Hull, S.W.)
Little, Sir E. Graham-
Llewelin, Lieut.-Col. J. J.
Lloyd, G. W.
McCorquodale, M. S.
Moreing, A. C.
Palmer, G. E. H.

Rathbone, J. R. (Bodmin)
Reid, W. Allan (Derby)
Rickards, G. W. (Skipton)
Ross Taylor, W. (Woodbridge)
Salt, E. W.
Train, Sir J.
Tufnell, Lieut.-Commander R. L.
Wragg, H.

NOES.

Astor, Viscountess (Plymouth, Sutton)
Brooke, W.
Burke, W. A.

Dobbie, W.
Ridley, G.
Short, A.

Silkin, L.
Viant, S. P.
White, H. Graham

Ordered, "That further consideration of the Bill be now adjourned."—
[Mr. Lloyd.]

Bill to be further considered on Tuesday next.

Committee adjourned at Ten Minutes after Six o'Clock until Tuesday, 27th April, at Eleven o'Clock.

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS ATTENDED THE COMMITTEE:

Lloyd George, Major (<i>Chairman</i>)	McCorquodale, Mr.
Advocate, The Lord	Mander, Mr.
Allen, Lieut.-Colonel Sandeman	Moreing, Mr.
Astor, Viscountess	Palmer, Mr.
Banfield, Mr.	Procter, Major
Broad, Mr.	Rathbone, Mr.
Brooke, Mr.	Reid, Mr. Allan
Buchanan, Mr.	Rickards, Mr.
Bull, Mr.	Ridley, Mr.
Burke, Mr.	Ross Taylor, Mr.
Cartland, Mr.	Salt, Mr.
Clarke, Lieut.-Colonel	Short, Mr.
Davies, Mr. Rhys	Silkin, Mr.
Denman, Mr.	Silverman, Mr.
Dobbie, Mr.	Simon, Sir John
Emmott, Mr.	Smiles, Lieut.-Colonel Sir Walter
Gibbins, Mr.	Smith, Mr. Ellis
Goodman, Colonel	Train, Sir John
Haslam, Sir John	Tufnell, Lieut.-Commander
Hunter, Mr.	Viant, Mr.
Kerr, Mr. Hamilton	Wakefield, Mr.
Law, Mr.	Walker, Mr.
Little, Sir Ernest Graham	White, Mr. Graham
Llewellyn, Lieut.-Colonel	Wragg, Mr.
Lloyd, Mr.	Wright, Wing-Commander

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Tuesday, 27th April, 1937.

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