

*Mr. Allan* : If I might refer to the question Mr. Sidey asked just now with regard to the country retailers, I would like to read this extract : " Napier, 24th July.—At a meeting of the Holiday Association this evening the following resolution was passed: ' That this association enters a strong protest against the Shops and Offices Bill now before Parliament, especially the clause relating to the compulsory half-holiday, and that such protest be wired immediately to the Premier, Sir William Russell, and Messrs. Fraser and Hall.' "

*Mr. Aitken* : I think that what Mr. Sidey meant was this : What would, say, Petone say to the half-holiday on Saturday ?

*Mr. Allan* : I should not be at all surprised if Petone were in favour of it.

*Mr. Taylor* : Do the members of the deputation oppose one half-day in the week other than Saturday being made the optional half-holiday ?

*Mr. Wardell* : No.

*Mr. Taylor* : Would members of the deputation agree to " Wednesday " being inserted in the Bill instead of " Saturday " ?

*Members of Deputation* : Yes.

*Mr. Wardell* : The Wednesday half-holiday gives two classes of people an opportunity of dealing with one another.

*Mr. Taylor* : You want the factory employees to continue to have a different half-holiday from that of the shopkeepers ?

*Mr. Wardell* : Yes.

*Mr. Laurensen* : Mr. Wardell spoke about what he called " legitimate " business. He said that if the Saturday half-holiday were introduced it would prevent a certain amount of legitimate business being done in the town. I want to know what he means by " legitimate. "

*Mr. Wardell* : That opens the large question suggested by Mr. Aitken—that probably Petone shopkeepers would like to see the universal half-holiday on Saturday, because the trade that comes into Wellington on Saturday now would not come in if Saturday were the day for the half-holiday, for the reason that the opportunity would not be there for the people to do the shopping. Therefore, I say that this proposal for a universal Saturday half-holiday is a very serious blow at the larger retailers in the centres of population. I used the words, " that these larger retailers were doing a legitimate business " in this sense : they provide very large facilities, have large stocks to choose from, and their life depends on being able to draw their customers from a distance. If you take away the opportunity for their customers to come to them from a distance you very seriously affect their trade.

*Mr. Laurensen* : In other words, boiled down, it amounts to this : According to you the universal Saturday half-holiday would have the effect of distributing trade among the smaller shops and taking it away from the larger, whereas as the matter stands at present the larger shops have the pull over the smaller ones. The large city shops have the pull over the smaller ones in the country, but under the proposed arrangement the smaller shops would have a better show ?

*Mr. Wardell* : Under the present arrangement we all have a fair chance. Each man has a fair chance to attract what business he can under the present arrangement. If you bring in the Saturday half-holiday you seriously handicap the trader who has his shop in one of the cities.

*Mr. Laurensen* : You do not mean to tell us that if there were a universal half-holiday there would be less meat eaten or tea drunk ?

*Mr. Wardell* : If you compelled our customers to buy their supplies at the smaller shops next door to them, probably ; and I think I am safe in maintaining that the result would be they would pay more for their stores.

*Mr. Laurensen* : At that rate you do not speak so much in your own interests as in those of the customer, whom you wish to see get a cheap article ?

*Mr. Wardell* : Yes ; and, of course, I am defending the legitimate trade, which you appear to be attacking, of the larger retailers in the large centres.

*Mr. Laurensen* : I beg your pardon. I am not attacking legitimate trade. I was anxious to get a definition of the word " legitimate, " and you have given me a very imperfect definition, because if there is legitimate trade there must be some illegitimate trade, and I want to know what you refer to.

*Mr. Wardell* : The effect of this Bill would be as you suggest—that the same amount of trade would have to be done, but it would be better distributed.

*Mr. Laurensen* : Under a universal Saturday half-holiday ?

*Mr. Wardell* : Yes ; that is your contention.

*Mr. Laurensen* : No ; it is not my contention. You say that if Saturday were made the universal half-holiday the large shops in the town would lose business, which would then go straight out among the smaller shops in the suburbs. You said that ; do not put words in my mouth.

*Mr. Wardell* : The large shops in the cities would be severely handicapped. I say that the larger shops are doing a legitimate business in attracting customers from a distance, and they would be prevented from attracting these customers if the people living at a distance had not the opportunity to come to them.

*Mr. Laurensen* : Then the man who is not attracting customers from a distance is doing an illegitimate business ? If you are doing a legitimate business some one else is doing an illegitimate one ?

*Mr. Wardell* : No ; that does not follow in the least.

*Mr. Laurensen* : I am very anxious to get a definition of what you mean by " legitimate " trade. You now define " legitimate " trade as that which consists of large shops attracting any business which otherwise would go into the small shops in the suburbs—attracting and concentrating that business into the large shops in the town. I think that was your definition of " legitimate " business ?