

*Mr. Laurensen* : You do not know what caused it to break down there ?

*Mr. Wardell* : No.

*Mr. Laurensen* : And you do not know what the financial effect of it was on the businesses that tried the experiment ?

*Mr. Wardell* : No.

*Mr. Aitken* : An important question was asked of the deputation which, perhaps, was not quite properly understood by them. It was this : "Supposing the Saturday half-holiday is made universal, will not the same amount of money be spent on food and clothing as is spent now ?" The question being put in that way, the deputation answered, "Yes." I would like to put this aspect of the matter before them, and ask, Would their answer be the same if the hotels are to be open of a Saturday afternoon ?

*Members of Deputation* : No.

*Mr. McLeod* : I would like to answer that question. The contention of the deputation, I think, is that there would not be quite the same amount of money spent on food and clothes if the hotels were open when the shops were shut on Saturday afternoon, because a certain amount of the money would go to the hotels ; consequently, there would be less necessaries bought, I think, and probably less food. The questions have been raised by Mr. Laurensen of the large and the small shops, and legitimate trade. I only wish to refer to a case under the present conditions, and you will see clearly how this Bill would affect the city trade. At the present time the traders at South Wellington are lit up until 9 o'clock at night, while right along the city, almost without exception, you will find closing at 6 o'clock. The contention of certain members of the deputation is this : That if you make Saturday closing compulsory, while at the same time you allow section 14 to be loosely drawn, as it is—a section having no effect at all—it will tend not only to make those now open till 9 remain open—we do not wish anything against the present condition of affairs—but it will tend to create more late shopping ; and we say that is not in the interests of the employees nor the employers—that it is a bad system. If you make this clause 7 effective you must make clause 14 compulsory, otherwise the Bill will be a farce—it will be no good.

*Mr. Taylor* : Does the deputation admit that if Saturday is fixed by statute as the day for the compulsory half-holiday, it shall also apply to the hotel-bars ?

*Members of Deputation* : Most certainly.

Deputation from the Licensed Victuallers' Association of New Zealand, consisting of ARTHUR R. V. LODDER and JOSEPH MANDEL, examined. (Nos. 11 and 12.)

*The Chairman* : We understand that you gentlemen have come to give evidence on the Shops and Offices Bill, and we shall be glad if you will make a statement.

*Mr. Lodder* : We represent the Licensed Victuallers' Association of New Zealand, having been selected by the committee to give evidence. The clause that we want you to take into consideration, gentlemen, is clause 12 of the Bill. Before going into the details of the clause I may state that we are under an Arbitration Court award with regard to servants' hours, holidays, and pay. I have a copy of the award here, signed by the President of the Court, which shows the facilities provided for the servants. I do not know whether the Committee would like the award to be read.

*The Chairman* : You can leave it with us.

*Mr. Lodder* : Very well ; I will leave it on the table, to be perused. [Award produced.] Also a letter which has been received from the Premier in reply to one sent to him. [Letter produced.] Clause 12 is the one that we have come to speak about. It says : "(1.) For the purpose of extending the benefits of this Act relating to the weekly half-holiday and wages therefor to persons employed as assistants in hotels, eating-houses, or restaurants, but for no other purpose,—(a) every hotel, eating-house, or restaurant shall be deemed to be a shop ; (b) every keeper of an hotel, eating-house, or restaurant shall be deemed to be an occupier of a shop ; and (c) every person employed in the hotel, eating-house, or restaurant shall be deemed to be a shop-assistant. (2.) The half-holiday to which a shop-assistant is entitled under this section may be on such working-day as, in the case of each individual shop-assistant, the occupier thinks fit. (3.) Nothing herein shall be deemed to compel the keeper of any hotel, eating-house, or restaurant to close his premises for a half-holiday on any working-day." I may say, having been in business as a hotelkeeper for about fifteen years, that it is a different business from the general business of the city or anywhere else. In the case of a grocer, or draper, or person engaged in any other business carried on in the towns or boroughs, if he sends the servants away for their half-holiday he can close the place ; but in our case, ours being licensed premises, we cannot close them. If we sent all our servants away we could not carry on business. I employ thirty-four servants, and if I had to give, according to this clause in the Bill, all the servants a half-holiday—one half-day in the week each—it would mean that six would have to go off on each half-day in the week for the lot to get a half-holiday. Mr. Mandel will be able to give you further information on the subject. I do not wish to detain the Committee any longer.

*Mr. Mandel* : Mr. Chairman and gentleman,—I indorse the remarks made by our president, Mr. Lodder. I would like to explain that if this Bill is passed and we are not exempt from its operation it will mean a tremendous inconvenience to the general public. I have been in the trade for eleven years, and I keep at the present time, I think I may say, one of the principal hotels in Wellington. I employ thirty-eight servants at present. If we had to give our servants a half-holiday, it would mean that we should either have to give it to them all on one day and practically close up our business from 1 o'clock till the next morning, and the people in the house would have to help themselves then, or we should have to give eight servants a holiday on each day of the week. That, again, would mean that it would be impossible to work our business short-handed.