

Another point is with regard to the small shopkeepers. Now, I consider that in framing laws the principle should be the greatest good to the greatest number; and if we had a late night on Friday and closed at 1 o'clock on Saturday the little shops, especially in the suburbs, would not be injuriously affected; rather the other way. They would do as much business as they were doing now, and it would not affect the larger shops in the centre of the town. These are the only points on which I wish to address you.

*Mr. Morton:* I am a draper's assistant. Most of the ground has been covered by those who have already spoken on this question. I would only add that this Bill has been brought in for the benefit of shop-assistants, and I do not think that there is the least opposition to it from any shop-assistant—certainly not in Wellington. Although some few may have been afraid to sign the requisition, still, I am certain that nine-tenths of the shop-assistants here are in favour of the Bill, and I believe it is the same in other places. With regard to the question of payment for overtime, we do not think that that should be enforced. We think it would be detrimental to the interests of assistants. At the present time they get certain advantages. For instance, they are paid all the year round, whether they are ill or not, and they have other privileges which they would lose if the payment of overtime was enforced. The majority of them think that a permanent salary is better than overtime payment.

71. *Mr. Tanner.*] The first speaker (Mr. Dawson) asked that in determining the matter the shop employees should have a vote as well as the shopkeepers?—Yes.

72. Would you object to a poll being taken of the whole district—say, take the electoral roll, and so decide the question? You will admit that customers have some interest in the matter?—I would prefer that to the present system, but I think it should be left between the assistants and the shopkeepers. You could take round a requisition in favour of closing and get it signed, and so determine the matter of closing.

73. Supposing you took a poll as at an election with ballot-boxes and ballot-papers?—Yes; we should be satisfied with that.

74. *Mr. Bollard.*] You stated in your evidence that if Friday were the late night and shops kept open till 9 or 10 o'clock, and working-men were paid at 1 o'clock on Friday they would do their shopping on that day instead of Saturday?—Yes.

75. Would that be as convenient to a working-man and his wife?—I think it would. I honestly think so.

76. What business are you in?—I am a draper's assistant.

77. *Mr. Colvin.*] I should think that a late Friday night would not be as suitable to these people, for this reason: that the man has to get up early next morning to go to his work, and it would not be so convenient to him to be shopping till 9 or 10 o'clock on Friday night as it would be on the Saturday, because he can sleep in next morning. But, I ask you, how many working-men go shopping with their wives?—Well, you are making these provisions to enable him to go shopping with his wife, but you do not give me five minutes to do my shopping.

78. You have all the advantages of shopping, because you live in the town, and I do not think any employer would stop you going to shop?—I think they would.

79. You say that if a person gets his pay on Saturday at 1 o'clock he does not go home to his family until later. Do you not think that if that man got his pay at 1 o'clock on Friday he would be likely to lose a half-day that day and not be able to go to work on Saturday morning?—I know the circumstances of which I am speaking, and I am proud to say that nearly every working-man has a sense of regard for his billet. When he knows he has to work he provides for it and is ready to do it, but if he gets off on the Saturday afternoon he knows that he has until Monday before he has to go to work again.

80. Take the man who is given to drink. As soon as he gets his money the first thing he does is to go and have a glass of beer. He gets in with three or four others and they go to a publichouse and do not get away from there till late. I do not mean men like myself who can take a drop or leave it alone, but the man who has got the habit and does not go home: is that not the case?—I know that many of these men have their lunch supplied to them at a certain place at 1 o'clock. They have a glass of beer and go back to their work, but if they know that they have till Monday without having to work they do not go home until late. You will find that if they are paid at 1 o'clock on Saturday they will not get home till 7 or 8 or 9 o'clock.

81. He cannot resist the temptation on Saturday, but during the week the wife gives him sixpence or a shilling and then he goes back to his work, but if he is paid at 1 o'clock on Friday will he not do the same as he now does on Saturday?—I have too much respect for working-men to think that if they have work to do they will not provide for it.

82. Would you be willing to take a vote of the district?—What I say is that we should have a voice in the matter. I only agree to taking a poll of the district because it has been reported here in Wellington that the employees are not in favour of the half-holiday.

83. *Mr. Bedford.*] You said, I understand, that you represent the feeling of employees generally when you said they do not want overtime payment?—That is so according to the expressions of opinion I have heard. At the meeting at which we were asked to come and represent the employees here the feeling was unanimous.

84. You think it would be to your advantage to have it left as at present?—Yes; because with overtime payment we should be put in the position of ordinary factory-hands. The shop-assistant has to distribute, and not to manufacture, and he thinks he should be in a different position, and that that position should be a settled one.

85. *Mr. Sidey.*] Do I understand that you, gentlemen, are a deputation appointed at a meeting in town?—Yes.

86. How was that meeting called?—It was called by the shop-assistants.

87. Did it include all shop-assistants?—All shop-assistants were invited to attend the meeting on a Wednesday evening.