

88. I think you told us there were about two thousand shop-assistants in Wellington: how many out of these attended the meeting?—I really cannot say exactly, but I think there were about two or three hundred.

89. Do you consider that all shop-assistants were represented at that meeting?—Yes.

*Mr. Paradise*: With regard to that point, I beg to say that a large number who gave us evidence of agreeing with the course we were taking would not attend the meeting because of the fact that they feared their employers. I say deliberately that shop-assistants are the most subservient servants that exist. They cannot form a union, and they are practically at the mercy of the employer.

90. *Mr. Sidey*.] We have been told in this Committee that a certain proportion of the assistants have their holiday while the others are at work. The factories do not do their work at the same time, and one man may have a half-holiday while the others are at work: is that so?—Yes, and it is very inconvenient. In the establishment in which I am engaged the shop closes on Wednesday and the factory closes on Saturday.

*Mr. Sidey*: Put your own case. You said that you have no time to do your shopping because you are always at work in a shop. If every one has a half-holiday on the same day, will they not all be in the same position?

*Mr. Dawson*: I suppose they would do the same as I do and would shop in their own time. I merely said that I had not five minutes to do shopping for myself and family. I did not make any complaint.

91. *Mr. Sidey*.] As regards country people, I want to know whether it is not a fact that the great bulk of the trade done in the town on Saturday afternoon by shopkeepers is done by people from the country?—I can only repeat that "country" is a very wide term. If you mean country twenty-five miles and further from Wellington, that argument will not stand, because those people do their shopping earlier in the week and like to stay at home on the Saturday.

92. Can you tell us where the people who do their shopping on Saturday afternoon come from?—Principally from the town itself and the suburbs. There is no doubt that a number come from the adjacent towns.

93. Where will they go to do their shopping if there is no shop open?—I suppose they would do their shopping on some other day; and, besides that, there would be an increased trade in the country.

94. You say the trade would be diverted?—There is no doubt that some of the trade would be diverted, but I do not think that the present shopkeepers will suffer.

95. The shopkeepers are of opinion that it will hurt them: do you not think that if the trade is altered from the present arrangement it will affect them?—The shopkeepers argue that they know what they get now, but that if there is a change they will not know what they will get; but we propose to make up for that by keeping open late on the Friday.

96. What is your position, *Mr. Paradise*?—I am in charge of the book department in Whitcombe and Tombs's.

97. You say that there are two branches in the establishment?—That is so. Our business was taken over from Messrs. Lyon and Blair. *Mr. Blair* introduced the Saturday half-holiday some years ago, and when Whitcombe and Tombs purchased the business they carried it on until they had the new building. Then *Mr. Whitcombe* said that it was opposed to the rules in the establishments at Christchurch and Dunedin, and so we kept open on Saturday. As regards the results, they were very much disappointed, the fact being that the Wednesday sales were better than the Saturday sales.

98. How long has the shop been open on Saturday?—Since 1896. All the booksellers on Lambton Quay had agreed before that to close, with the exception of one man, who said that he would not close, and so they dropped the whole thing.

99. *Mr. Kirkbride*.] I should like *Mr. Dawson* to emphasize his former answer. He holds that the shop-assistants should have a voice in deciding which half-holiday should be taken: would the shop-assistants object to this being decided by all the people on the electoral roll?—That, of course, is an alternative in the event of your not taking a favourable view of what the Bill provides at present. We prefer the Bill, and next, as the Government gives the half-holiday, we say that we should have a voice in determining on what day the half-holiday shall be.

100. You recognise that persons who do the shopping should have some say?—I think the first consideration should be the convenience of the general public.

101. In answer to a question by *Mr. Colvin* as to whether a man would spend his money in a publichouse if paid on Saturday, you appeared to think that if he were paid on Friday the fact of his having to go back to work on that day and on Saturday morning would prevent him spending his money in that way?—I only say, sir, what I know to be a fact. I know certain men who get their pay on Saturday and they spend the afternoon and evening away from their homes, and I say that if those men were paid on Friday and had to go back to work, they have such a regard for their billets that they would do their work on that afternoon and be ready for work on Saturday morning.

102. You are in a bookseller's shop, *Mr. Paradise*?—Yes.

103. You said that when the Saturday half-holiday was taken you did as much business on the Wednesday?—We did more.

104. Could you speak for the shopkeepers who supply the people with food?—I can only speak for my own business.

105. It is a matter of great importance to shopkeepers who supply people with food?—There might be some disarrangement of trade at first, but it would soon adapt itself.

106. Do the shop-assistants object to the small shopkeepers in the suburbs being open late on Saturday night?—I have never heard of any objection.