

11. Does she buy his boots also?—We do not deal in that class of goods. Mr. Walker could tell you more about that than I can. Another thing I might say is that it is the women who bring their boys to get their clothes.

12. Have you any documentary evidence to put in in support of your statements?—We have a petition in favour of what I am advocating, and the resolutions which have been read to you were passed unanimously by a meeting of the shop-assistants. I may add that the Trades and Labour Council also passed a similar resolution in favour of Saturday closing.

13. Are these petitions to be presented to the House?—Yes. I may say that we got them up in a week. In August, 1894, we sent down a petition with seven thousand and odd signatures in favour of the Saturday half-holiday, and that was on behalf of the shop-assistants and also on behalf of the labouring-classes.

14. I believe that at one time Mr. Fowlds closed on Saturdays?—Yes; for five or six weeks.

15. Why did he give it up?—Because there were exemptions in those days which do not exist in this Bill. It was in consequence of the *Gazette* notice of the exemptions that he gave it up.

16. Did he not find a great falling-off in his returns, and was not that the reason for his returning to the old system?—I believe there was some falling-off, but I was not in his employ then. You must remember that some places kept open in defiance of the law, and in consequence others suffered.

17. As a matter of fact, all the big drapers in Auckland do close now on the Saturday afternoon?—Not all; the D.S.C., Smith and Caughey, Milne and Choyce, and McMasters and Shalders close on the Saturday.

18. Are they not the principal ones?—I suppose they would say so. Of course, it is this way: we cannot get up any sports, and, as far as Volunteering is concerned, we assistants cannot become Volunteers. And, then, there are many things of which we are deprived by not being able to get away on Saturday. We cannot get to cricket or football, or any other game of that sort on Saturday.

19. As a matter of fact, the shopkeepers are divided in opinion, and those who already close on the Saturday join with the shop-assistants in this matter?—No; I do not think they take much interest in the matter. I think it is those who now close on the Wednesday who desire to close on Saturday. Mr. Walker has a petition from shopkeepers on the subject.

20. *Mr. Hardy.*] You seem to have made out a very good case: is it at the same time popular with the people of Auckland generally?—As far as the working-classes are concerned it is.

21. The buyers as well as the sellers?—Yes.

22. You take the buyers into consideration also?—Yes; because we propose that there should be a late night on Friday.

23. If it is so popular, is there not a diversity of opinion as well?—Yes.

24. Is there not a small section of the community opposed to this movement?—A small section of the community would be opposed to anything the Government might do.

25. I think the question of Government should not be brought into our deliberations here. We do not recognise party in a Committee. As this movement is so popular as you say—and no one wishes to dispute your statement—would you not recommend that the votes of those interested should be taken, because if the question is as you say, then a big majority would carry out your wishes?—We are ready to take the vote of the people as to closing on one day.

26. You would not be opposed to them if they said that Wednesday was the best day?—No.

27. You know that there are other parts of New Zealand which are differently circumstanced from Auckland. In Canterbury we might choose Saturday. You would not object to our having Saturday?—No.

28. Or Wednesday, if we chose it?—No.

29. Do you think it would be the right thing for the Auckland people to take the vote of people as far away from them as those in Canterbury?—No.

30. *Mr. Bollard.*] You spoke of leaving it to the vote of the people: do you understand that the issue would be whether the holiday should be on Wednesday or Saturday, or whether it should be compulsory?—I should leave it to them to say on what day it should be. As local people they would know which day would be most convenient to them. The vote should be taken of the people in the city and of those within a radius of three miles from the city boundary.

31. *Mr. Tanner.*] You spoke of the Saturday-night parade: what does that mean?—It is merely a matter of the people parading up and down the streets. The great majority of people walking about the town are not the purchasers.

32. You do not think the number of working-people coming into the town on Saturday does not assist the takings?—Of course, it must have effect upon trade.

33. But you think there is no perceptible increase in the takings?—I do not think so.

34. What kind of shops take the money on such occasions?—I think they all get a fair share.

35. There is no exceptional amount of money taken on that night?—No.

36. *Mr. Sidey.*] You say you come here in the interest of the employees?—Yes.

37. But not to oppose the employers?—No.

38. You are aware that there are a large number of employers in the colony to whose interest this arrangement would be diametrically opposed?—Yes.

39. Are there any in Auckland?—Well, there are a certain number of small shopkeepers who think that it would be opposed to their interest.

40. In what part of Auckland do you work?—In Queen Street.

41. That is in the centre of the city?—Yes. I am working in the last clothiers' shop towards the wharf.

42. Is it one of the large shops?—It is one of the largest shops of its kind in New Zealand.