

141. What is your opinion as to the day on which the country people do most of their business in Auckland?—Friday; but we get no advantage from it in the Karangahape Road.

142. Then, so far as the Saturday closing is concerned, it would not affect the country trade?—Not the slightest.

143. With regard to the shop-assistants, do you know how their meeting was called?

*Mr. Prosser*: It was called by advertisement, which was addressed to the workers, and the assistants, and the operatives, and those connected with the Trades and Labour Council.

144. Did the advertisement indicate what the object of the meeting was?—Undoubtedly.

145. *Mr. Kirkbride*.] I would ask Mr. Rendell whether the present system works satisfactorily?—There is no fault to be found with it, except this: that some shops close on Tuesday, and some on Wednesday, and some on Thursday, and we think that they should be compelled to fall into line with ourselves.

*Mr. Prosser*: We are in favour of there being an option between Wednesday and Saturday, instead of there being so many days as there are at present.

146. *Mr. Kirkbride*.] You would have no objection to a *plébiscite* of the whole of the inhabitants of the district, including shopkeepers, employers, and employees, and their customers?—I am not prepared to say that. You must remember that majorities often do wrong. I see no reason why the present arrangement should be disturbed. We consider that if the Saturday were made a compulsory half-holiday the amount of business which we would do on other days would not make up to us for the loss which we would suffer by having to close on Saturday.

147. I asked about the *plébiscite* for this reason: that I wished to know whether you would prefer a compulsory half-holiday on Saturday to taking a *plébiscite* of the people as to the day on which the half-holiday should be held?—Certainly not. I do not agree with a *plébiscite*, because many would vote who have no interest whatever in the matter. Still, it would be preferable to compulsory closing on the Saturday.

148. I understand that petitions have been carried round, and the statement has been made that there were sixty shops in Queen Street who were in favour of the optional system: is that so?—Yes.

149. Is it not a fact that for many years past the ironmongers and booksellers have closed on the Saturday?—Yes. I have seen the petition, and the signatures very largely consist of those who already close on Saturday.

*Mr. French*: I may say that some of the larger shopkeepers object to the compulsory Saturday-afternoon closing because of the extra work which it will entail upon them on the previous day. I am sure it will lead to a large amount of evasion of the law, and that there will be a great deal of Sunday trading, and there will be any amount of discontent and trouble.

150. *Mr. Laurensen* (to Mr. Rendell).] In what business are you engaged?—I am a draper.

151. I suppose that you are aware that there has been a great deal of irritation throughout the colony in the case of shops which have also factories attached to them. For instance, in the drapery business the girls who are engaged in the millinery department get away on one day, and those who are engaged in the shop get away on another. Do you carry on the two classes of business?—Yes, we run the two.

152. Would it not be better to have the holiday on the one day for factory and shop alike?—I do not think so. I think people would prefer to carry on the arrangement as it exists at present. For myself, I think that both the factory-hands and the shop-hands should have the holiday on Wednesday.

153. Where a factory and a shop are combined it would be better to have the half-holiday on one day?—I think so.

154. On what day do you close in Auckland?—On Wednesday.

155. Do you know what the day is in Canterbury?—I cannot say at the moment, but there is a list to be found which states the days on which shops in different localities close. I find that there are seventy-five towns in the colony which close on the Wednesday, and thirty-nine which close on Thursday.

156. Would it not be better to have a universal half-holiday?—That would depend upon the day which was chosen.

157. Would it not be better if one day were decided upon throughout the colony?—I do not think so. I think that each locality should have a measure of self-government, and be allowed to choose its own half-holiday within certain limits, because the circumstances of one locality are very different from those of another.

158. On what day do the banks and mercantile houses and wholesale establishments close in Auckland?—On Saturday.

159. When do most of the places pay their hands?—I think it is the common practice in drapers' establishments to pay their hands once a month. Some of them, I believe, pay once a fortnight, but I think the general practice is to pay once a month.

160. When do the factories pay their hands?—I think it is on Friday.

161. And the mercantile houses and wholesale dealers?—I think it is on Friday.

162. So that in that way the late night on Friday would be just as convenient for them for their shopping as the Saturday?—Most emphatically No.

163. Would this change interfere with the volume of trade? For instance, would the people consume less sugar and tea and other necessaries of life than they do at present?—Well, there are many things which we sell which are not absolute necessaries, but people come into town on the Saturday, and they go along the Karangahape Road, for instance, and they see something in my window which takes their fancy, and they come in and buy it. Therefore, although the volume of trade may be the same, and the same amount of money may be spent, I am not sure that the people will come to my shop.