

164. That points to this : that the ladies who see something attractive in your window and go in and buy it are spending money unnecessarily?—I do not see that. Of course, we are dependent very much on the casual trade.

165. Put yourself in the position of the husband of this lady who makes these purchases. Would you not think that it would be a blessing to have shops closed on that day?—That might be so.

166. You understand that we are all anxious to give effect to the wishes of the majority of the people, and that is why we are desirous of getting the information?—I quite understand that.

167. I think it was Mr. French who said that a large number of people came into Auckland from the country on Saturday because of the special trains and the other facilities which are given to them. Supposing these facilities were given on the Friday, would not the people come in on the Friday instead of the Saturday?—No; because the people have to go back to their work next day, whereas in the case of the Saturday they have the Sunday holiday before them.

168. Speaking for yourself, Mr. French, which day would you prefer for the half-holiday, Thursday or Saturday?—I have already stated that Wednesday would be the best day for the retailers, because it is not preceded by a late night. The Saturday half-holiday would not be of nearly so much value, because I should have to work so late on the previous night. The factory-hands can enjoy their Saturday half-holiday because they have not had to work late on the Friday night; but that is not the case with those who are engaged in shops. I may say that in going through Parnell with the petition I spoke to one lady and asked her if she would not sign it, and she said, "I do not like to sign the petition because my husband does not want it. We should do more trade on the Sunday morning."

169. Which day would you prefer personally, the Saturday or the Wednesday?—I say that I prefer the present arrangement. I enjoy my Wednesday half-holiday because I have not had to work late on the previous night; but if I had to work late on the Friday, and work hard on the Saturday morning, I should not enjoy it so much. I believe the same is the case with most retailers, because whatever happens they have to get their business done.

170. Do you not think that the next day (Sunday) being a holiday would make up to him for the extra work he has had to do?—I do not think so.

*Mr. Rendell*: I employ between fifty and sixty hands, and I asked them to say which day they would prefer, Saturday or Wednesday, and they said they would rather have the Wednesday. I merely say that in order to show that I consulted the assistants, and they said they would prefer to have the half-holiday on Wednesday.

171. *The Chairman*.] You prefer that the half-holiday should be either on Wednesday or Saturday?—We prefer that the choice should be limited to those two days.

172. That is to say, that if the shopkeepers in Auckland give a month's notice to the Inspector they can have the half-holiday either on Wednesday or Saturday?—Yes.

173. Do you think that it would work satisfactorily, and that you could change the day on giving a month's notice?—I think so.

174. Do you not think that it would be better to have the Wednesday or the Saturday fixed as the half-holiday for everybody?—I do not.

175. Do you think it is better to have the shops opened on the Friday night?—I think you cannot make the people toe the mark and confine their business to one day. I think it would be better to have a choice between the two days, Wednesday and Saturday.

176. *Mr. Laurensen*.] You say that when the half-holiday was introduced there was a great agitation against it?

*Mr. French*: I do not think there was any great agitation against it in Auckland; but, generally speaking, it was objected to. The objection was to the Saturday half-holiday.

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FRIDAY, 21ST AUGUST, 1903.

MR. ALBERT RICHARDS, MR. E. C. BATKIN, MR. ABRAHAM BERMAN, MR. JOSEPH DOWNES, and MR. WILLIAM GILBERT in attendance. (Nos. 28–32.)

*The Chairman*: I understand, gentlemen, that you desire to give evidence to the Committee with regard to the Shops and Offices Bill. We hope that you will make any statement you wish with regard to the Bill, and we shall be happy to hear anything you have to say, but I would ask you not to repeat what a previous member of the deputation may have said.

*Mr. Albert Richards*: I am president of the Hairdressers and Tobacconists' Association of Wellington. Our chief objection to the Bill is that it proposes to take our principal day of business from us. I may say that not only is it our principal day of business, but we do more business on that day than we do on any other three days in the week. I refer, of course, to the provision making the Saturday half-holiday a compulsory half-holiday. If that is carried it is likely to drive our trade into the old-time practice of Sunday trading, which we have been struggling for years to do without.

1. *The Chairman*.] But the hairdressers are exempted, are they not?—That is the case; but it only practically applies where the hairdresser is not also a tobacconist. I believe there are only four hairdressers in Wellington who are not also tobacconists. As a rule, the hairdressers and tobacconists are a combined trade, and you cannot keep your hairdressing-room open without having the shop in front open also. If we have to keep one part of the place open on the Saturday and the other on the Wednesday we shall have to put up a partition between them, and, to say nothing of the expense, it would be very inconvenient to have one part of the premises open on