

the Wednesday and the other part open on the Saturday. We are not all born saints, and I am afraid that we should be led into breaking the law. For instance, if a person came into the hair-dressing-room to get his hair cut and we offered him change, he might say that he would prefer to take a packet of cigarettes or a cigar; we could scarcely refuse him, and yet if we gave them to him we should be breaking the law.

2. Would others sell them if you did not?—Oh, yes. The clubs and hotels do that, and we have to suffer. We have a petition before the House now with regard to that matter. I am speaking with twenty-four years' experience in the business in Cuba Street, and I can say that we do more business on the Saturday than we do on any other three days in the week. I should like the Committee to understand that I speak from many years' experience in the trade when I say that to compel us to close on the Saturday afternoon and evening would mean ruin to me and to a great many others in the trade.

*Mr. E. C. Batkin:* I am a tobacconist only, and have had fifteen years' experience in the business. I do not wish to take up your time, but there is one point which has been overlooked by the last speaker. The position of the tobacconist at present is that he is allowed to keep open on five days and a half in the week—*id est*, he is compelled by law to close on the Sunday and on the Wednesday afternoon, while his next-door neighbour, a hotelkeeper, is open on every day in the week, and he is able to sell cigarettes and cigars and tobacco to people on any day. That is to say, that he can sell goods by which we make our living on any day in the week, while we can only do so on five days and a half in the week. That is not fair. With regard to the Saturday afternoon closing, what we say is this: that if other sections of the community wish to do so, by all means let them do so, but do not compel us to close when other people who interfere with our trade are allowed to remain open. All we wish is that we should be put upon the same footing as those who can sell our goods on any day in the week.

*Mr. Abraham Berman:* I am a hairdresser and tobacconist. I have been in business for about twenty-two years, and think I ought to know something of the effect of having to close on Saturday. I particularly noticed after the Wednesday afternoon came into force what effect it had upon my business. I took up my books and looked through them to see whether we could not make up the loss on another day, and I found that it was not possible. The fact is that the clubs and hotels are selling our goods when we are compelled to close at 1 o'clock on any day. A customer does not care whether a tobacconist is closed or not, because he can get what he wants at a club or hotel. We have been to the Premier and to the Inspector on the matter; but the Inspector is powerless in the matter. There was a conference in Wellington about a year ago, and they practically recommended that a change should be made by doing away with hotels selling tobacconist's goods. It is very unjust that the Legislature should compel us to close when clubs and hotels can sell our goods when we are closed. Then, again, we are bound by the union laws, and have to give a man a half-holiday on a Wednesday, and if you are going to compel us to close on Saturday you will make it still worse, because under the award of the Arbitration Court we have to give our assistants a half-holiday on the Wednesday. Then, there is a lot of difficulty to contend with in connection with the hairdresser being able to keep open when the tobacconist has to close. Eighteen out of twenty have the two shops combined, and the result would be that we should practically have to close on both Wednesday and Saturday. We should have to keep the saloon open on Saturday and the shop open on the Wednesday; but the award requires us to give our assistants a half-holiday on the Wednesday, so you can understand in what a difficult position it would place those who carry on the two businesses together. As a rule, a customer has to pass through the shop to get to the hairdressing-saloon, and then when he has had his hair cut or had a shave, and you have to give him change, he is very likely to say, "Oh, give me a box of matches," or something of that sort; and if you do so you will be breaking the law, while at the same time the clubs and hotels are selling the goods which are bringing in to you your livelihood.

3. *The Chairman.*] Supposing the hotels were not allowed to sell on the Saturday afternoon?—I say that it would still make a great difference to us, and that we should lose what is equivalent to three days' trade if we had to close on that afternoon, because we do as much trade on the Saturday as we do on any other three days in the week. Of course, if you closed the clubs and hotels on that day it would make a difference, and the hardship would not be so great. But how are you going to alter the award of the Court? We have to stick to that, and the result would be that we should have to come to Parliament to get it altered.

*Mr. Joseph Downes:* I am a hairdresser and tobacconist. If the compulsory half-holiday on Saturday is carried it will practically mean ruin to the tobacconist and hairdresser. I can speak from sixteen or seventeen years' experience in Wellington. I know very well that Saturday is looked upon by hairdressers and tobacconists as the day on which you make up for the losses of the rest of the week, especially if it has been wet weather. Another thing, I think, is that it will lead to assistants going round to shave people on the Saturday and Sunday morning. It is already being done by some assistants since the Wednesday half-holiday has been introduced. They finish with their employers at 1 o'clock Wednesdays, and the next thing they do, as we know, is to go round with their bag to the hotels and other places and shave people. One or two have already established a trade in that way, and if the Saturday closing is enforced it will simply mean ruin to the tobacconists and hairdressers. Where the two classes of business are carried on together it would be almost impossible to carry on business under those conditions unless you put up a partition between the two portions of your business premises. There is no doubt that it would lead to a great deal of illegal trading. And then, with regard to a large number of retail shopkeepers, they have had experience of the Saturday closing, and I do not think they care for it, because they have gone back to the closing on Wednesday, or another day. I think in this respect Wellington is situated differently from other places, because some who have businesses on Lambton Quay do less business on Saturday, while those who are located in Te Aro do the largest of their trade. There is more done in Te Aro on the Saturday than there is on Lambton Quay, and that is why the