

29. If the larger shops are closed on Saturday afternoon, how can the trade go to the larger shops? The people cannot do their shopping on that day?—Of course, the people have got to do their shopping within certain hours, and they will go to the big men for preference when the small shops are not open on Saturdays.

30. *Mr. Atmore.*] Your contention is that the inclusion of Takapuna and Devonport in the area has brought those districts under the Saturday-closing conditions, as to which they have not had a chance to vote upon?—That is quite right.

31. The difference between those who voted for and against the proposal was four thousand?—Yes.

32. There are about twelve thousand extra voters in those districts?—Yes; there would be fifteen thousand to twenty thousand extra voters if all the districts were included. The different districts are Takapuna, Devonport, and Eden Terrace. Eden Terrace, as you know, is only a small Road Board district. All the others have to close, but this little Road Board district in the centre does not have to close.

33. *Mr. Glover.*] You remember, Mr. Tutt, the day this poll was taken, when there were so many issues put to the electors—the City Council, Shop Hours, Harbour Board, and Hospital and Charitable Aid Board elections—all on that particular day, which was a very wet day indeed?—Yes.

34. How many persons recorded their votes?—There were sixteen thousand recorded their votes out of about forty-five thousand on the roll.

35. I presume, then, considering that only sixteen thousand out of forty-five thousand people recorded their votes, that the people would not come out to vote on account of the inclement weather? Is that a reasonable assumption?—Yes, that is so.

36. They did not take that interest and energy in the proceedings that no doubt they would have done had the day been a fine one?—No.

37. You think it would have made a great difference if it had been a fine day?—Yes, I do.

38. You remember when you had the Saturday closing or the Wednesday closing in Auckland. I think it is your desire to go back to that principle. I am not speaking as to the whole of the Dominion, but I am speaking of Auckland from that particular standpoint. You would like to go back to the optional system of either Wednesday or Saturday closing?—We would, sir.

39. Have you any evidence to produce before the Committee to show us the amount of loss that has taken place?—We have circularized members on the subject giving them particulars.

40. The members have already seen these circulars?—Yes.

41. Does the circular show a loss or otherwise?—A very big loss.

42. And what do you think, Mr. Tutt, if this Act is not altered to give you an opportunity of having either Wednesday or Saturday, will be the consequences of the trade of the small shopkeepers? Do you think it will detrimentally affect them? Will it mean the closing of some of the shops?—I think, sir, that out of the eight hundred shopkeepers affected there is no doubt but that three hundred of them will have to go through the Bankruptcy Court.

43. You think you can state with confidence, Mr. Tutt, that it would be a matter of ruin to some of these people?—There is no question about it.

44. *Hon. Mr. Massey.*] In the forty-five thousand you mention as being eligible to vote you did not include the Takapuna district and Devonport?—No.

45. Have you any idea as to how many there are in those districts?—Twelve thousand.

46. You add that on to the forty-five thousand?—Yes.

47. And that gives you fifty-seven thousand?—Yes.

48. If we could get Eden Terrace in on top of that it would mean about sixty thousand?—

Yes.

49. Ten thousand voted for the proposal and six thousand against it out of forty-five thousand?—Yes.

50. *The Chairman.*] You are supporting this petition which represents some fifteen thousand people?—Yes.

51. Naturally they are not all shopkeepers?—No, the petition is not from the shopkeepers alone, but from the public; and if we had had time—we received word that this Committee was meeting soon—we could have got another ten thousand easily.

52. Do you think it was to the advantage of the large shopkeeper in the city who employs a number of hands to have this Saturday closing? Do you think it would divert trade from the small shopkeeper to the large shopkeeper?—I do, sir, because one large shopkeeper in particular would certainly not have used his energies in favour of it in the way he did if it had been otherwise.

53. In what way?—In trying to induce people to vote for the Saturday closing. Circulars were sent out with every parcel for months previous asking the people to vote for Saturday, and yet that firm has not always closed on Saturday.

54. What firm is that?—John Courts (Limited).

GEORGE TUTT re-examined.

Witness: I would like to answer that question from Mr. Anderson. He asked Mr. Coates whether we did not try and oppose the Saturday half-holiday at the poll. We did, sir. The shopkeepers of Auckland spent about £175, but Mr. Coates, being exempt, and a number of other shopkeepers, they naturally thought if the other shops were closed that their business would improve considerably, and therefore they voted against us; but now they find that they have fallen in just as badly as we have. You will understand the trouble we had. We spent the money, but we could not get the people out to vote, because it was such a wet day.