

what you wish to say?—I should like to say that if you are going to make all shops close at 6 o'clock it will simply mean that some of us will have to close altogether.

2. Why?—Because the people in Newtown do most of their shopping after 6 o'clock, and if we have to close at that hour they will go to town in the daytime, and as they would have a better choice in the big shops we should lose a very large amount of trade. That is the only objection I have with regard to the provision for closing at 6 o'clock. I should be only too pleased if we could close at 6 o'clock, for no one would enjoy the evening's rest after the day's work more than I would.

3. You have a small shop?—Yes; and I have a family to support.

4. *Mr. Colvin.*] In what business are you?—In the drapery business.

5. And you think that if you were compelled to close at 6 o'clock you would have to give up business?—I am sure it would ruin my business. I know the business very well, and I may tell you that my principal trade is done between 7 and half-past 8 o'clock in the evening. I do more business then than I do during the whole of the day.

6. How would a half-holiday on Saturday affect your business?—At first, no doubt, I should feel it, but eventually it would remedy itself, because if we were allowed to keep open in the evening on five days in the week people would do their business then, and it would be better for us.

7. Do you manage all the business yourself?—No; I have an assistant. I have spent a lot of money in establishing my business, and it would simply ruin me if you compelled me to close at 6 o'clock.

8. *Mr. Barber.*] How long have you been in business?—Ten years next October.

9. Have you got any statement showing the receipts at night as compared with those in the daytime?—No; I had not thought of making out such a statement, but I can assure you that I do far the greater part of my business in the evening. Some people do come in the daytime, but as a rule those who can do so go into town to the big shops where they can get a greater variety, and the small shopkeepers suffer. I know that I should suffer if I had to close at 6 o'clock.

Mr. W. J. LANKSHEAR in attendance and examined. (No. 16A.)

*Mr. W. J. Lankshear:* I represent the large employers on Lambton Quay, Wellington—Kirkcaldie and Stains, Whitcombe and Tombs, and others. I may say that Mr. Kirkcaldie would have been present to give evidence, but pressure of business prevented him. Those whom I represent are strongly in favour of the Saturday closing. As it is we are obliged to have some of our employees back on the Wednesday, although our places of business are closed, and the employer has to remain at his office both on Saturday and Wednesday. We contend that if Saturday afternoon is made compulsory it will be a great advantage to both the employees and the employers. We freely admit that the Saturday closing may cause some inconvenience and disarrangement of business at first, but we say that it will cause no loss to persons in business, and any inconvenience will soon be overcome.

Mr. GEORGE MEE in attendance and examined. (No. 17.)

10. *The Chairman.*] You desire to make a statement with regard to the Bill which we are now considering. Will you please make any statement you wish, and the Committee will be pleased to hear you?—Mr. Chairman, I may say that I am a chemist and druggist carrying on business on Lambton Quay. I have been in business in Wellington for over twenty years, and have been in business in other parts of New Zealand for another twenty years. My staff consists of myself, three assistants, and two errand-boys. The clauses of this Bill seem to me very peculiar. Under the present Act we close compulsorily on Wednesday, but are allowed to open for two hours on that evening. The result is that we are able to meet the wishes of the public in cases of emergency. The fact, however, is that under the strict interpretation of the Act nobody but the master of the shop is allowed to be there during those hours; but we have a sensible Inspector here, and he allows us to keep our assistants during those two hours. In the proposed Bill there is a special provision with respect to chemists. I allude to clause 8, subsection (e), which provides, "In the case of a chemist's shop, for the supply of medicines and surgical appliances certified by a duly qualified medical practitioner to be urgently required." Under that provision we are only allowed to supply those requirements which are certified by a doctor; but, as a matter of fact, all chemists have hundreds of requirements, which they have to supply in those hours, and which are not certified to by any doctor. There are not more than 50 per cent. of the required remedies which are certified by a medical practitioner. After the shop is shut up somebody has to be there to meet these requirements, which are certified to by a medical practitioner; but if a person comes in with a cut finger, or something of that sort, we are not to be allowed to attend to him without a certificate from a medical practitioner. Further than that, some years ago we made objection to this provision for closing, and then we were relegated to the class of fruiterers, fishmongers, and confectioners, and we were allowed to keep open provided we gave our assistant a holiday on some other day. That worked very well, but it seems to me very curious that while these fishmongers and fruiterers may keep open without any restriction, we chemists and druggists cannot supply what is absolutely required without a certificate from a medical practitioner. I cannot understand how that clause came into the Act in the form in which it stands. Going back a little and referring to clause 6 subsection (f), we find that it provides "No premium in respect of the employment of any shop-assistant"—and that includes apprentices—"shall be paid to or received by the occupier, whether such premium is paid by the shop-assistant employed or by some other person; and if the occupier commits any breach of the provisions of this subsection he shall be liable to a fine not exceeding ten pounds." That is to say, that in my business we cannot take any premium with an apprentice. It seems to me that the result would be that we should have to get our assistants from some other place; bring them in from the other colonies, for the simple reason that no chemist would be bothered with apprentices if he could help it. Ours might almost be called a profession, and it has always been the practice of the trade for people to pay a premium