

a third way, and that would be to leave it to the employers and employees?—That is my idea; but I would be quite willing to take a general vote of the people if that were not done.

166. Provided the Legislature did not see its way to definitely fix Saturday as the half-holiday a *plébiscite* should be taken by the public?—My reason for making the suggestion was that it has been stated about here that the bulk of the assistants are not in favour of a *plébiscite*. We say that failing our having a voice in settling the matter it should be left to be settled by a *plébiscite*.

167. Coming to the contention that all the shops in town should be closed on Saturday afternoon, and that no places of business should be kept open, would that lead to more being spent by the working-classes than if the shops were kept open?—I do not think so.

168. There are certain classes of business such as barbers' shops, fruiterers, chemists, and so on: should not these be allowed to open on Saturday afternoon?—Yes.

169. And they should be removed from the vote of the people?—I think that the few should suffer for the benefit of the many, and that barbers' shops and the other classes of shops which you have mentioned should be allowed to remain open.

170. You do not think it would interfere with the volume of business done?—The total volume of business done would be the same.

Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon: I wish to put the same question to Mr. Paradise.

Mr. Paradise: There might be a little unpleasantness at first, but it would very soon come down to the ordinary level. It would right itself in a twelvemonth.

171. If the pay-day was on some other day than Saturday, would that give more of the wages to the working-man's family?—Yes. If a man is at work until 5 o'clock he goes straight home, but if he is paid on the Saturday he knows that he has the whole of the afternoon before him and he takes his time.

Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon: I would ask you the same question, Mr. Morton.

Mr. Morton: My opinion is that Friday would be the best pay-day, for the reasons stated by Mr. Paradise.

WEDNESDAY, 19TH AUGUST, 1903.

Mr. MACKINLAY, Mr. DICKSON, and Mr. WALKER in attendance. (Nos. 22, 23, and 24.)

The Chairman: I understand you wish to give evidence on the Shops and Offices Bill. If you will be good enough to make a statement one at a time the Committee will be happy to hear you.

Mr. Mackinlay: Mr. Chairman and gentlemen,—I beg to say that I represent the shop-assistants of Auckland and its suburbs, and have been sent here to place their opinions before the Committee and ask the Committee to recommend the Government to make the Saturday a compulsory half-holiday. It is, in our opinion, an anomaly that a large majority of the business community, banking, shipping, and many wholesale businesses should close on that day without any loss to their business and that shops should not be able to do so. It has been contended that the closing on Saturday would result in loss to the trade and in inconvenience to the public, because as it comes immediately before the Sunday there is greater amount of business done on that day than on any other day in the week, and that it is more likely to be enjoyed by the public, because the next day being Sunday they will feel more at leisure. I wish to say that that has not been the case in Auckland when the rule was to close the shops on the Saturday afternoon. I have with me resolutions which were carried unanimously by a meeting of shop-assistants in Auckland, held on Tuesday, the 28th July, and with the Committee's permission I will read them. They are to this effect: "That the Government be asked to proceed with the resolution making Saturday a compulsory half-holiday, for the following reasons: (1.) That it is already observed by a very large majority of the community. (2.) That, as banking, postal, shipping, and wholesale businesses are closed on Saturday, the observance of different days by different trades results in inconvenience and loss to all. (3.) That the Saturday half-holiday interferes less than any other with the continuity of work. (4.) That coming immediately before the Sunday it is a greater boon than on any other day. (5.) That Sunday is likely to be more rationally enjoyed by those who have not been working until 10 o'clock or past on Saturday." That is all I desire to say at present, but I shall be happy to answer any questions which the Committee may desire to put to me.

Mr. Dickson: On behalf of the shop-assistants we have been sent for the purpose of asking the Government to make Saturday a compulsory half-holiday. I consider it would be a benefit to the employers as well as to the employees. We look upon it that the present Government is desirous of studying the interests of the shop-assistants, and with that object in view has introduced the present Bill. The original Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, which was introduced by the Hon. Mr. Reeves, was intended to make the Saturday half-holiday compulsory. That was the intention of the Government, but the Bill was cut down by the Upper House, and then the Government said it was better to take half a loaf than no bread, and so the Bill was passed in its amended form. We think the assistants should be considered in the matter, and we are quite ready to answer any questions or statements that may be made or have been made with regard to the effect upon employers. We are in no way antagonistic to the employers when we say that we think that Saturday is the best day for closing provided that Friday is made the late night of the week. Friday is the market-day in Auckland. Mr. Bollard and other Auckland members will recollect that it used to be Saturday, but we got it changed to Friday. The country people would come in, stay later to do their shopping, and as far as the horse and market sales are concerned, it would not affect them in the least. We therefore think that Saturday should be the closing-day, and that Friday should be the late night. I shall be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Walker: I am a shopkeeper, and I am in favour of Saturday being the half-holiday. I may say that this question of the Saturday half-holiday has been agitated in Auckland since 1894, and 339 shopkeepers signed a petition affirming the principle that Saturday should be the