

65. *Mr. Colvin.*] What business are you in?—I am in the boot trade.
66. You would leave it to a referendum?—Yes.
67. Do not a large number of country people come in on the Saturday to do their shopping?—No; it is on the Friday that they do it, and early in the week.
68. Do you now speak for the general workers, or is it simply for the shop-assistants?—I believe that the bulk of the people are in favour of it.
69. Do the workers get the Saturday half-holiday?—Yes.
70. And they are anxious that the shop-assistants should get it also?—Of course, there is a diversity of opinion, and that is why I think there should be a referendum.
71. Of course, you can get any amount of signatures to a petition so long as they have nothing to pay?—I think the matter should be decided by the peoples' vote, as that may be regarded as their absolute conviction.
72. Then, there is not much stress to be laid upon a petition? As long as there is no expense attached to the matter people will sign anything?—I do not believe that there is going to be the loss to the trade that there is supposed to be. If there were, I am one who would be absolutely ruined; but I have proved satisfactorily to myself that the loss of Saturday's takings would be made up on Friday.
73. *Mr. Davey.*] Do you come down almost on your own responsibility?—I came more especially to represent the interests of the workers. I may say that in former years I was secretary to the Knights of Labour Early-closing Committee, who were in favour of the closing on Saturday. In September last year I got up a requisition to close two nights per week at 6 o'clock, and I got twenty-two out of twenty-seven to sign it; but because the other five would not agree we were not able to close, which shows the necessity of legislation to protect majorities.
74. You represent yourself alone?—No; four or five other shopkeepers asked me to come down, and contributed towards my expenses.
75. You suggest that it should be left to the vote of the people. In discussing that matter did it suggest itself to you as to what should be the roll?—No; but I think it should be referred to the general roll—the parliamentary roll.
76. *Mr. Barber.*] You said that you would be willing to take the vote of the people of the district. Would it not follow that certain districts would have one afternoon and others another? Supposing that Auckland agreed to have Saturday, Wellington Wednesday, and Wanganui Thursday, there would be a dislocation of business? Is it not necessary to make the half-holiday colonial, or there would be different arrangements in different places for the paying of wages, the running of cheap trains, and the other facilities which are given on half-holidays?—I do not think it would make any difference to Auckland if Wellington had the half-holiday on Wednesday and some other place had it on Thursday.
77. If you want to make the half-holiday compulsory you must pay the wages on some other day than Saturday, and cheap trains must be run on some other day, and all these other facilities which now exist for the public on the half-holiday would have to be altered. I understand that the recent trial made in Auckland has not been a success?—The law was imperfect, so I think the decision should be left to the people of the district, but that the area of the district should be large enough to avoid anomalies. The keeping of the Saturday half-holiday had not a fair trial in Auckland.
78. Which is the half-holiday in Auckland now?—Wednesday.
79. I should like to ask those who represent the shop-assistants whether in the event of their being another holiday in the week the shop-assistants lose the Wednesday half-holiday?—Yes.
80. Would the factory people still have their half-holiday on the Saturday?—Yes.
81. Therefore it is a disadvantage as far as the shop-assistants are concerned; that is to say, at Christmas time, with the Boxing Day holiday, you have to work later, and you lose your usual half-holiday?—Yes. The fact of the matter is that we fear a public holiday, because it means our losing our customary half-holiday and working later at night.
82. Do you not think it would be an advantage to make the half-holiday colonial?—I have been sent here to advocate the compulsory half-holiday, but if that is not carried, then we should be ready to submit the question to a vote of the people of the district.
83. *Mr. Hardy.*] About losing this half-holiday, you say that if a holiday is proclaimed in the week you lose the half-holiday?—Yes.
84. Is it not according to the law that you should get it?—According to the law if there is another holiday in the week we lose the half-holiday.
85. Then, the factory people have a greater advantage than you have?—Yes.
86. Are they not generally pieceworkers, who get paid according to the work they do?—No; according to the Arbitration Act most of the piecework has been done away with. The bulk of the factory-hands are now paid weekly wages.
87. Then, you think they have an advantage over the shop-assistants?—Oh, yes. They get the half-holiday as well as the public holiday, but we lose the half-holiday and have to work later.
88. You would be perfectly satisfied if this matter were left in the hands of the people, and that they should take a vote upon it?—Yes, as long as the shop-assistants had a say in the matter.
89. Of course they are on the roll?—Yes.
90. *The Chairman.*] To make the matter clear with regard to pieceworkers, I would ask you whether it is not customary to stop a man's wages if he is absent for a day, and is not a deduction made if he is absent for half an hour?—Yes, with the exception of boys and girls employed in a factory.
91. Another point is this: that the shop-assistants desire that the Bill should go through as printed?—That is so.
92. And if they cannot get that?—We should prefer to have a referendum to the people of the district.