

23. What about the Judge's decision?—Mr. Grenfell and myself waited on the Hon. Mr. Millar, Minister of Labour, who told us he was going to consult the Crown Law Officers with regard to Mr. Justice Denniston's ruling, but I do not know what has occurred since. No one likes to be brought before the Magistrate and be made a butt of, and we are waiting for some reply from the Labour Department as to what ground they are going to take up in regard to the matter.

24. Assuming that the law were such that you could employ your hands up to 10 o'clock at night by arranging that not more than fifty-two hours a week should be worked, would not that really defeat the real objects of the Shops and Offices Act?—It would not mean employing the assistants longer hours, but it would mean that the shops would remain open later.

25. Do you not think it would lead to abuses?—The Act as framed has been leading to abuses, and the abuse has been going on and extending every year. In fact, the Act has become a farce as far as its provisions apply to us. You have only to go through the streets of Wellington at night to see it.

26. But I am speaking with regard to this alternative of yours to work your hands up to 10 o'clock?—Personally I would rather see the 6-o'clock movement protected; but if the assistants are not allowed to come back after 6 o'clock we shall have to make them junior partners. We do not want to go into the Bankruptcy Court, but if we desire to protect ourselves we shall have to do something of that sort.

27. *Mr. Fraser.*] Which alternative do you prefer?—I prefer the early closing and the one proprietor.

28. *Mr. McLaren.*] Do you think it would bring about a more general standard with regard to closing?—I think so. There are many shops open now, and it tends to create a night trade.

29. *Mr. Fraser.*] You think it is unfair to you to be compelled to close at 6?—Yes.

30. *Mr. Fisher.*] Have you read the Sunday Labour Bill?—I did not know there was such a Bill in existence.

HERBERT HENRY TOMPSITT examined. (No. 20.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You reside in Wellington?—Yes.

2. And your business?—Draper. I am manager of Te Aro House. I have not much to add to what Mr. Bush has said. He seems to have voiced the feelings of myself and a great many more people in Wellington in regard to this matter. With regard to one point, that of members of the family being employed to work at night, I know it has occurred and is still occurring where men employed in business have members of the family to continue the work of the staff from 6 o'clock until the business closes. That, we contend, is unfair trading in its worst form. I do not know that there is anything I can add to what Mr. Bush has said; but for myself—and I believe I am voicing the views of a great many more—I would strongly prefer closing at 6 o'clock.

3. How many employees are employed in your establishment?—About eighty.

4. Do they commence at 8 o'clock in the morning?—At half past 8 and 9, by arrangement.

5. And leave at 6 o'clock at night?—Yes.

6. And on the late night at half past 9?—Nine o'clock.

7. If this suggestion that has been made were put into law, and one person were registered as the proprietor of the shop, how would it benefit your establishment?—It would mean that a great many shops that can only be kept open with one or two men would have to close. The man employing members of his family would have to close down.

8. It would not benefit you?—No, but it might reduce the evasions of the Act.

9. So far as your establishment is concerned you would rather have the universal closing?—We should strongly prefer it. It would make the trade more even and fair.

10. *Mr. Fraser.*] You told us of the method of working in some of the shops: is it possible that a man in a small shop would have, say, two of his sons working in a large drapery establishment until 6 o'clock and that they would then go back and work for their father up to 10 o'clock?—It might occur.

11. And you want to prevent that?—Yes. It is quite possible they would not start working at 6. The man might have a paid staff, and then after 6 o'clock he could employ the members of his family.

12. That is what I mean—members of the man's family can come in and keep the shop going?—Yes, that is done now.

JOSEPH DWYER examined. (No. 21.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are—?—Proprietor of the Club Hotel, Wellington. I wish to speak about how this Bill affects me in this particular hotel. With regard to the provision for fifty-six hours a week for housemaids, that, to my mind, is clearly unworkable, because the girls, while working that length of time, are not engaged in hard work. They are simply kept on duty to answer bells and get a cup of tea for people who come in late after their ordinary work is done, and therefore it is quite unreasonable to cut the hours down to such a margin. They are simply standing-by a good deal of their time. With regard to the night-porter, if we have to take on a stranger every fortnight to allow the night-porter to go off, it will mean placing the care of the house in the hands of a man whom perhaps we have not sufficient confidence in, and in a house like mine, which is a wooden house, there would be great risk of fire. I want a man on whom we can depend when the people in the house are asleep, and to ask me to let my porter away every fortnight and to bring in a man I know nothing about I think would be clearly dangerous. In cutting the hours down I should have to employ the extra labour of three men, and it would make