

" Clause 5 : Section 3.—Clashes with definition of 'shop-assistant' as defined in clause 2.

" Clause 6.—This clause enables a butcher's employee to commence work at 4 a.m. Suggested amendment that it be 6 a.m., also that closing-hour should be 5 p.m., which were the times stated in Auckland butchers' awards for thirteen years.

" Clause 8B should be amended so as to limit hours on half-holiday to five, and clause 8C amended to provide for a breakfast-time before 8.30 a.m.

" Clause 17B should be amended by striking out 'butchers.' There is no reason why butchers should not have Saturday half-holiday when carried by a poll of electors.

" Clause 25.—A man hawking meat for an employer would be in the same position as a registered occupier of a shop. In the case of a worker this is wrong.

" Clause 43.—This clause should be struck out; not required. If not struck out it should be stated that the quarter of an hour is to be reckoned in usual day's work—i.e., nine hours.

" Clause 55 : Attendance on horses.—Should be made clear that the quarter of an hour provided in clause 43 shall not be used to evade this clause.

" Clause 7.—The total number of hours to be worked on Christmas or New Year's Eve should be limited to eleven."

Witness: Yes, that is practically the evidence that I was sent here to give, and I was to lay particular stress upon the closing-hour. At the present time in Dunedin most of the butchers close at 6. Some close at 5.30, but the majority at 6. All the employees connected with that particular trade commence work not later than 7 a.m., and very often before—some at 4.30. We contend that if a man in a particular trade is compelled to be at work an hour, or two hours, or two hours and a half before other trades he should get off earlier in the evening. There is no reason at all why a butcher's shop should not be closed at 5 o'clock. It has obtained in at least two of the four centres for years. Drapers and other such trades do not commence work until the shop opens, but they all close at 6, exactly the same as the butchers. The employers say it is necessary for the butchers to be at work early in the morning, and I believe it is, especially in the summer-time. Still, they do not want to be at work at both ends of the day if they can possibly avoid it. That is practically the evidence I was sent here to give, and I will not take up any more of your time.

WILLIAM MORGAN EVANS examined. (No. 23.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Fruiterer and confectioner, Queen Street, Auckland.
2. You want to give evidence on behalf of—?—The fruiterers and confectioners of Auckland.

3. Have you got your authority?—No, I have none.

4. Do you wish to make any statement in reference to this Bill?—Yes.

5. Will you please state your views as briefly as possible?—The only point I wish to speak about is the hours of employment for males.

6. *Mr. Davey.*] What particular clause?—The schedule at the end, providing for 10.30 on week-nights and 11 o'clock on Saturday night. I may say that this has been the law for the last three years, but it has not been enforced. If it is enforced now it will mean that I shall have to take charge of my shop at 10.30 till 11.30, which means that I shall have to serve perhaps two hundred customers between 10.30 and 11.30. The Auckland members no doubt know the big trade I do. I employ six or seven hands through the summer months. All places of amusement come out at from 10.30 to 11 o'clock, and the people pass my shop going to the railway and the ferries. I suppose three or four thousand people come down my way between 9 o'clock and 11 on Saturday night. We want an extra hour.

7. You want 11.30 for the late-closing night?—Yes. With regard to clause 5, I should like an extension till 10 o'clock for female labour. With reference to employing female labour at nights, if I put a table in at the back of my shop with a teapot on it I can keep a girl there till 12 or 1 o'clock, but as I have a fruit-shop and sell drinks she has to be out of the shop at 9. She cannot serve a drink in a fruit-shop after 9, but she can serve out tea in the back shop. I think that is very wrong. Fruit-shops should come under the same heading as restaurants. In Sydney under the last labour laws they allow the fruit-shops to keep open on Sundays. As you know, fruit is a catch line. I think we ought to be left entirely alone from all laws. If we send our hands off we cannot supply the public, and the result is loss all round, to the growers and the dealers. I may say that the number of male employees in the fruit business in Auckland is about twelve—I mean in the retail. It is chiefly female labour.

8. If the fruit-shops were kept open on Sunday as you suggest, what about the labour employed therein—how would you pay them?—They would come under the same clause, I suppose, as hotels or restaurants.

9. Then if the fruit-shops were open on Sunday you would have to give a whole holiday a week to your employees?—Yes. We are not asking for Sunday trading. I am simply telling you of the liberty they have in Sydney.

10. *Mr. Glover.*] Do you agree to forty-eight working-hours a week for girls?—No.

11. You were speaking about closing when the theatres and places of amusement come out at 11 o'clock at night. Do you think that would be detrimental to the travelling public who go home by the trains at 11.20? And the people travelling by the ferries would be inconvenienced?—I could not serve them if I had to be in the shop alone.

12. You could have no assistants there whatever?—I might bring my daughter along, but she would not like it. Anyway, it would be useless in a shop like mine. I want four or five hands.