

not need to commit that breach or be challenged. If we followed the provision in the Bill which says that you shall not work your men for more than five hours without allowing them one hour for a meal, it would simply mean that a butcher would have to work his shop-assistants from 6 o'clock to 10.30 or 11, and then let them off for an hour at the very time when everybody is clamouring for their supplies for the midday meal. There can be no unreasonable oppression of the workers by the insertion of the words I am now asking for, because we suggest that it be by mutual agreement, and if an employer were in any way to trade upon that and harass a worker all the worker would have to do would be to tell him, "You keep your work and I will seek employment elsewhere." With regard to subclause (3) of clause 8, it provides that overtime may be worked only for special purposes—"stocktaking or other special work." I respectfully urge that the words "for the purposes of stocktaking or other special work not being the actual sale or delivery of goods" be deleted. My reason for asking that is that difficulties would arise with our shipping trade. A vessel is in, and it is desirable that a man should be sent, perhaps at half past 5 in the morning. It would give us the opportunity of exercising that privilege a little before 6 o'clock.

2. *The Chairman.*] Is there not provision made in the Bill for shipping?—Not that I am aware of—only for the half-holiday.

3. *Mr. Veitch.*] Are you satisfied with the last part of this subclause?—Scarcely. I would prefer to have butchers' shops excluded, so that they should have the right to work extended hours, to meet the exigencies of their business, at overtime rates.

4. Without any limitation as to the number of hours?—Yes. Of course, it is for this Committee and the House to determine, but I urge that, at all events, not less than what is stated there shall be granted. With regard to clause 43, "If any shop-assistant is employed at any work in any shop, or in connection with the business of any such shop, later than fifteen minutes after the prescribed time, the employer commits an offence": we object to the limitation to fifteen minutes. We ask that it remain at half an hour, as in the present Act. So far as our trade, at all events, is concerned, it has never been made a general practice to keep the hands. It is only done to meet the exigencies of the shipping.

5. Can you suggest any safeguard to prevent it being made a regular practice?

6. *The Chairman.*] Are you asking for that half-hour's grace for all the employees in the butchery business?—Yes. In answer to Mr. Veitch I should like to say this: if at any time the attention of Parliament were directed to any serious oppression under this provision, then, I submit, it should be altered, and not until. Nothing of the kind has taken place, as far as I know, whilst the thirty minutes' grace has been the law. With regard to clause 55, "Exception as to tending horses," I respectfully urge that that clause should not under any circumstances be deleted from the Bill. I think that is all it is necessary for me to say on behalf of the butchers at this stage. My instructions were to give this evidence, since I was coming down on other business, and then ask for leave, later on perhaps, for one of the master butchers to come and answer any questions. It may not be necessary for him to come, but I ask leave.

(In the brief space allotted to me in giving my evidence to-day in connection with the Shops and Offices Bill, and in my anxiety to save the time of the Committee as much as possible, I inadvertently omitted a very important point from my evidence on behalf of the Auckland master butchers. I now refer to section 24, subsection (1), *re* closing by requisition. The butchers ask and respectfully urge that the words "in the evening of," after the word "closed" in the third line, should be deleted, and the word "on" substituted in lieu thereof. The reason for this request is that in the Act as it now stands—section 25, subsection (1)—and in the Bill in the clause here referred to—namely, section 24, subsection (1)—it is prohibitive for any body of shopkeepers by a majority of votes of the occupiers to fix the hours of closing except in the evening, and this prevents their making provision for closing for the half-holiday by requisition on any other day than that of the statutory closing-day. Will you therefore please permit this requisition to be included in my evidence of to-day.—C. GROSVENOR.)

TUESDAY, 26TH AUGUST, 1913.

ANDREW M. LOASBY examined. (No. 28.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you by occupation?—A chemist.

2. Whom do you represent?—The Christchurch Retailers' Association.

3. Have you an authority with you?—No, except that I wrote up telling you I would come.

4. You wish to speak on the Shops and Offices Bill?—Yes.

5. Will you lay your views before the Committee as briefly as possible?—With regard to clause 12, subclause (1), we think that you should have a larger radius than you have at the present time. Take a city like Christchurch. Greater Christchurch goes as far as May's Road on the Papanui Road. Beyond May's Road to the top of Papanui there is, I suppose, fully a mile of closely settled district with shops: that part is in the Waimari County, and they are shutting on the Thursday and keeping open on the Saturday. Then we have a glaring case in Wilson's Road. On the one corner of Wilson's Road there is a grocer who has been doing a large business; on the opposite side of the road there is another man in a small way who is in the Heathcote County: the Heathcote County man keeps open on the Saturday, whereas the other man has to close. We think that the radius should, if possible, extend to ten miles from the Post-office, and include all Greater Christchurch. My association wishes New Brighton and Sumner exempted. We realize that, these being seaside resorts, it is necessary for people to be able to go down there and get their provisions on the Saturday.