

18. You would be quite satisfied, then, if provincial polls were taken and the two alternative days were offered to the people to vote upon?—I think it would be a very much better idea than what we have at present.

19. At present it is not necessary to have a poll every two years, except by requisition of 10 per cent. of the electors: would you favour that being retained or having a compulsory poll every two years?—I should be in favour of leaving it as it is.

20. That is to say, a fresh poll could only be taken by requisition of 10 per cent. of the people?—Yes.

21. At present the townspeople alone have the right of exercising a vote. Would you object to the whole of the people having a vote—farmers and others who trade with the towns?—That would be covered by a provincial vote.

22. You would not object to that?—No.

23. Rather favour it?—We would be in favour of that.

24. *Mr. Okey.*] If you take these provincial polls do you not see the difficulty there will be in getting the 10 per cent.? Would it not be better to have the polls compulsorily every two or three years than to have to get the 10 per cent.?—I should say that if the people were satisfied with the Saturday half-holiday they would not trouble about attempting to upset it. Personally I think the matter is very well left as it is.

25. That is, to have to get the 10 per cent. before you can take a poll?—Yes.

26. *The Chairman.*] When you say you are in favour of a universal half-holiday you mean a universal shop holiday?—I mean a universal Saturday half-holiday.

27. Do you mean for all people concerned in all trades?—Yes.

28. Would you close down everything without exemption—publichouses and all?—Yes, except, as I have already stated, we think the chemists should be exempt.

29. When you speak of a universal half-holiday do you mean that everybody should have a holiday?—Yes, I would be in favour of closing everybody.

*The Chairman.*: I mean that every branch of industry would be closed. That is what I understand by a universal holiday.

*Mr. Davey.*: That means trams and steamers and trains, and everything else.

*Witness.*: I mean a universal Saturday half-holiday as we know it at the present time. It would hardly include trams or trains, would it?

30. *The Chairman.*] A universal holiday would?—Then I am not in favour of it.

31. Do you not consider that people employed on trams and trains have as much right to a half-holiday as any other men? Their work is quite as arduous as shop-assistants' and office-assistants'. Do you not realize that in order to give these latter people a holiday you make the others work harder and very often make their hours longer?—It is a very difficult question to answer. I take it that the business of the country must be carried on, and we must get about. The men who go into that particular class of work are, I take it, aware of the conditions when they enter it.

32. *Mr. Anderson.*] You have got the Saturday half-holiday in Christchurch now?—We have.

33. Does that apply to pork-butchers?—No, they are exempt.

34. Is your business a large business?—Yes.

35. Do the small grocers approve of the Saturday half-holiday?—I think the majority of them do.

36. Do you know for a fact that they do?—Yes, I should say that they do.

37. There are no objections?—There may be objections, just as there are amongst the larger firms.

38. We have had witnesses from Auckland, where Saturday has been carried, and some of them have told us that their businesses will be ruined—businesses on the outskirts. Have you any such cases in Christchurch—say in Sydenham or Richmond?—No; speaking generally, I do not think that is the case in Christchurch. You hear objections here and there to the Saturday half-holiday; but, as I have already stated, some of the strongest opponents of Saturday in Christchurch are gradually coming round, and are beginning to think that it is not such a bad thing after all.

39. Do you speak for the Sydenham grocers?—No, I am a town grocer.

40. Do you speak for the Richmond grocers?—No, I am not speaking for any particular section. I am only voicing my own opinions, speaking with knowledge from meeting these different people and hearing their views.

41. Are those grocers in Sydenham, and Papanui, and Richmond, and all round, are they in your association?—Some of them are. We have one of the principal grocers in Richmond.

42. I am not talking of principal grocers, I am talking now of the small men?—This one is only a small man, and he expressed himself to me in favour of the Saturday half-holiday. He said he was perfectly satisfied.

43. *The Chairman.*] I think the whole point is this: you are representing an association, and you know nothing about the people outside your association—the suburban shopkeepers—is that the position?—I am only representing the association, as far as that goes.

FRANK COOPER examined. (No. 37.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Secretary of the Christchurch Grocers' Association. I would just like to say that I have been at all the discussions of the master grocers in Christchurch, and what they seem to want to arrive at in connection with this Bill, and want to try to help you to arrive at, is something that will prevent them from having to commit offences against the law. I may say that the Labour Department are very good in a way and recognize that it is not