

refusing to sign. I think that while we can see they are here and can take them for what they are worth, it would be a great deal better if the evidence was brought here.

*Hon. Mr. Massey.*—About bringing witnesses here: While I have no desire to rush the Bill through the Committee I would like to remind members that I have two very big Bills waiting until this one is disposed of. So it is necessary that we should curtail the evidence, while giving reasonable opportunities for both sides to be heard.

*The Chairman:* I do not see any objection to these documents going in. I recognize that they do not form valuable evidence, but there is no reason why they should not go in as expressing the opinion of the people interested. No doubt a great many people are satisfied with their conditions, and no doubt there is a great section that are not satisfied. Some people treat their servants well and some the reverse, and when people are treated well they will sign a document like this. I do not think I can exclude these documents.

36. *Mr. Pryor* (to witness).] Did you get the signatures personally from your employees?—I got them from my employees. I got a young lady to go with me so that I should have a witness to their signatures.

37. What did you say to them when you asked them to sign: did you explain what was in the Bill?—I told them what the proposition was. I said, "There is another Bill coming up before the House that will cause me to go to considerable expense, in this way: you girls are to have a fortnight's holiday every three months, or a whole day every week." And they immediately turned round and said, "How on earth are you going to work it? How is it to be done? An absurd idea!" And they made other remarks of that nature. I said, "I am going up to Wellington over the business and am going to try to stop it. I should be very pleased if you would sign a document to the effect that you are satisfied with your employment." And they one and all said they would very gladly do so.

38. That was all the pressure you brought to bear on them?—Yes, as far as I was concerned.

39. With regard to the increased cost of commodities, have not wages increased during recent years?—We used to pay a waitress 12s. a week and could get them to do almost anything you liked. Now a waitress is getting £1.

40. And does what she likes in most cases?—Mostly.

41. And other sections of workers have their wages increased?—All wages have increased.

42. Cooks' wages?—Cooks' wages.

43. How much have cooks' wages increased during the last few years? When I started in business six months ago I paid £2 10s.: I am now paying £3.

44. You were connected with the business three or four years ago?—I can hardly speak on that point as far as cooks are concerned.

45. The hands are working shorter hours now than they were a few years ago, are they not?—Yes. A girl would start in the morning and she would finish at night. Now they are off in the morning, in the afternoon, and after tea. A man with a pick and shovel goes to work at 8 o'clock and does a solid eight hours. With our business we have to cut in bits and cut out bits.

46. In any case the hands in houses like yours are working shorter hours now in actual work than they did a few years ago?—Certainly.

47. You say that if you were to raise the tariff it would simply mean that people would go to other places?—They would go down a step.

48. Does increased cost not come in in this way, that boarders are demanding a higher standard of living than previously—the boarders themselves want more for the money?—It comes in in this way, that you have got to cater in a better manner for the people before you can get them. It is like fishing: you have got to put a better bait on.

49. And these things all make for increased cost?—Yes.

50. *Mr. Veitch.*] You stated that your waitresses do as they like, principally?—I think that every gentleman here will admit that the servant problem—

51. Do you mean to say that your staff do as they like, principally?—If you go and complain twice or three times to a girl the first thing you know is that she has gone upstairs and packed her kit and gone. Go to any private hotel in this country and ask the same question, and they will tell you it is the truth.

FRIDAY, 8TH AUGUST, 1913.

GEORGE TUTT examined. (No. 4.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Your name and occupation?—George Tutt, tailor, hatter, and mercer, Auckland.

2. Will you make a statement, Mr. Tutt?—Yes, sir. I wish to speak in support of the petition with reference to the Saturday closing in Auckland. I am representing the shopkeepers of Auckland City and suburbs. Now, we are strongly opposed in Auckland to the Saturday closing. We have now had two months of it, and it is materially affecting our returns. All the members of the House know what the position is, as we have circularized them, and if they have perused the circular they will see what a vast difference it has made in our business. This Saturday closing is detrimental to the smaller shops. We have about eight hundred and forty shopkeepers in Auckland selling clothing, merchandise, and different kinds of goods, and I can safely say that it affects about eight hundred of them; and some of them it affects very seriously indeed. Now, I would like to say that the number of assistants that will benefit by the Saturday closing will be something like six hundred, so that you are penalizing eight hundred shopkeepers for the benefit of these six hundred assistants. You are penalizing them on the day of the week that they can take more money than they can on any two or three other days in the week. We often even take more money on the Saturday than we can during the rest of the week. So you