

to vote at an election that man's signature should be valid on a requisition for a poll to be taken, as he is allowed to vote at it? If a man signs a petition to become an elector in a town surely that man's signature should be good, when you have got to take the signature for the roll. We submit that this is a very easy way to get over it: "For the purposes of this subsection the electors shall be deemed to be the persons whose names are on the main and supplementary rolls which are to be used at the election at which the poll is to be decided."

57. *Hon. Mr. Massey.*] No. What you want to get at is the names of the electors whose names are on the main and supplementary rolls at the time of the signing of such requisition?—There is no supplementary roll.

58. How are you going to get it if it is not issued?—We only want it for the check. We do not want it for the issue. When we come along with our petition we say, "Here are our seven thousand signatures." They remain with the Town Clerk until he has time to check them. How long has the supplementary roll got to be out before the election?

59. *Mr. Hindmarsh.*] A month, I think?—If it has got to be out a month before, we submit it will be fair if you make it that the signatures shall be checked on the main roll, which is the old roll of the last election with the defaulters struck off, and the new supplementary roll containing the names of people who have asked to be allowed to vote.

60. The way to put it is this: if one-seventh of the people entitled to vote—actually on the roll—sign the petition—?—It is not sufficient, for this reason: that was very similar last time, and they contended that our petition had to be in thirty days before the poll was to be taken. A supplementary roll was not issued until just after our petition was put in. Then the contention came through the Municipal Corporations Act as to which roll these names should be checked off. We say that if a person is going to vote at that election his signature should be valid on this petition. We say that if you insert the words "on the main and supplementary rolls which are to be used at that election" there is no avoiding it.

61. That is what I said—it should be one-seventh of the people on the rolls?—Five per cent., we say. Clause 17: I have asked previously for 12 o'clock to be the hour of closing on the half-holiday. I would just make the remark that this clause would require to be altered in that case. Clause 18, subclauses (a) and (c): This clause proposes to re-enact what has been the law for some years—that if a shop-assistant has a holiday in a week he shall not be entitled to his regular holiday. We trust that subclauses (a) and (c) will be deleted. In nearly all other countries shop-assistants do not lose their half-holiday because another holiday has taken place in the same week. Under the Saturday Half-holiday Act in Sydney the shop-assistants still retain their regular half-holiday, no matter how many holidays occur in the same week. We consider that the same state of affairs should apply to us in this Dominion, and it could be so without any inconvenience, as no business is ever done when the shops are open on the ordinary half-holiday as at present. I think you will find that the drapery employers will back me up in this contention, that it is a perfect waste of time to keep business premises open on a Wednesday afternoon because there has been another holiday in the week. People get used to Wednesday afternoon holiday, and the shops do nothing at all.

62. *Mr. Clark.*] Why do they not close?—You cannot make them close unless you get them all into line. The majority of the drapery employers in Wellington are prepared to-morrow to accept the Saturday half-holiday if you can get them all into line; but they will not accept it on their own initiative. When our dispute came before the Conciliation Council we debated this point, that the assistants should not lose their ordinary half-holiday if another holiday occurred in the same week. The employers said then that it did not make a great deal of difference because they never did any trade on the Wednesday afternoon, and they thought they could reasonably give it; but, unfortunately, we could not come to an understanding, and the thing was thrown out. Yesterday I was talking to a very large employer of labour in Wellington, and he assured me that he recognized that this clause was one that required deleting altogether. When I was in Auckland some years ago the shopkeepers always closed on Saturday, and it did not matter whether we had a holiday in the week or not we used to get off on Saturday just the same. The provision in the Bill is no good. It is old and rusty now. It is time it was deleted and something fresh put in. Clause 43: We wish to enter our most vigorous protest against the clause being inserted in the new Act. As mentioned in the memorandum to this Bill, the provision in the old Act does not allow for any extension for assistants in the shop, as per decision of the Chief Justice in *Archer v. Le Cren*, April issue of *Labour Journal*, 1912. This has caused no inconvenience to employers in this city, as very few indeed ever made any attempt to keep assistants after 6 p.m. or 9 p.m. Those firms that did have since been brought into line with those that were closing. But if this clause is inserted it will lead to a general application of the use of the fifteen minutes, as the shopkeepers who close at 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. will be compelled for self-protection to extend their closing-time. If it is thought necessary to have a clause of this description inserted we have no objection, provided that it specifies that the extra fifteen minutes shall only be made use of to allow an assistant to finish attending to a customer whom he is attending to at the hour of closing.

63. *Hon. Mr. Massey.*] That is the intention of the clause?—It does not read in that way. The old Act respecting the half-hour was used in Wellington by George and George—Mr. Rowley will bear me out in this—for half past 9 closing for nine long years. The girls and men worked till half past 9 till we got an industrial union, and we made them stop it. I ask any member of the Committee, What can a shop-assistant say if an employer says, "I have got the right to keep you fifteen minutes"? We say, "Let us attend to the customers we are serving, but if we have no customers to serve let us go home." We do not want to evade any work that is put upon us, but we do not want an employer to be in a position to say, "You must stay behind for fifteen minutes. I have the right to keep you." And they have said that to us before to-day under the old Act—until the *Archer - Le Cren* judgment.