

clean up? It is only a question of habit. In reference to clause 55, "Nothing in this Act shall render the occupier of a shop liable to any penalty in respect to the employment of any shop-assistant in feeding and attending horses used in the business of the occupier in excess of the hours of employment allowed by this Act, provided that such employment in excess shall not exceed one hour per day and overtime shall be paid for such excess at the rate of time and a quarter, with a minimum of ninepence per hour": That clause is a great improvement on what we have hitherto had, but it does not appear plain whether this clause is exclusive of the quarter of an hour included in clause 43. The question is, Can an employer send a man to look after a horse and claim the quarter of an hour given by the clause 43? Going back for a moment to the question of occupier, the clause says, "For the purpose of this section the wife or husband of this person and the members of his or her family shall be deemed to be a shop-assistant." Well, that clause makes a wife or family a shop-assistant.

*Mr. Rowley:* That is just what it does not do.

*Witness:* If you take English as I know it it cannot have any other meaning. If my interpretation of this clause is correct a registered occupier may be a shopman, and the employer may have the benefit of a shopman's wife's services. I have tried to fathom it in connection with the previous clause 3, which provides for the registration of the occupier, but have not succeeded. In connection with the hours of work I ought to mention that for the last thirteen years the Auckland butchers have been governed by an award under which the starting-time is 6 a.m. Now, according to the Act we have gone back to 4 a.m. I have left this clause 4 to the last although it was an earlier clause in the Act. Clause 4 deals with the records to be kept. The words we take exception to are these: "The entry of the particulars hereinbefore referred to shall be signed by the assistant at the time of the payment of his wages, and such signature shall operate not only as a receipt for such payment, but also as a certificate of the correctness of the particulars entered with respect to that assistant." Now, if that clause is going to become law, or if it had been law, not a case which has been taken by my union would have been taken; because, though clause 42 provides a penalty for false entries, Inspectors must take records as correct which have been signed by an assistant, and cannot go any further. I will give you an instance in point: Some time ago a man came to me and said his employer had treated him badly. That was a matter of opinion. He said, "Anyway, he has only been paying me £2 5s. instead of £2 11s." I asked him what he took it for. He said, "He promised me a rise later. I was hard up for a job." There was only his word against the employer's. I rang up the employer and he said he would come and see me. The man came round thinking I was going to discuss dismissing the man without notice. I said to the man, "Ask Mr. R—— in my presence about the £2 5s." R—— was taken by surprise and admitted it. He was fined £10 and costs. The Magistrate thought it was a serious case, and no doubt it was. The man's misfortune had been taken advantage of, and the wages-book was never kept properly. Very often a man will sign a wages-book in a hurry to get his wages, and the book will be filled in afterwards. I think the words "certificate of correctness of the particulars entered with respect to that assistant," &c., should be struck out entirely. They will have exactly the opposite effect to what is intended. Clause 25 makes the driver of a hawking-cart an occupier. It says, "Every such person shall be deemed to be the occupier of a shop, and every assistant employed by him in or about such business shall be deemed to be a shop-assistant within the meaning of the Act." That does not apply to Auckland because there are no hawking-carts there. I interpret that clause as making the man in charge of a cart an occupier. The same argument applies to that as to the man in charge of a shop. As a rule he gets £3 a week, and if he is to be a worker under the provisions of this Act it is exempting a person who should not be exempted. He is simply retailing meat for an employer as in a butcher's shop, and I contend that it is fair to include him in the provisions of the Act. The first clause in the Act deals with the date: "This Act may be cited as the Shops and Offices Act, 1913, and shall commence on the first day of April, nineteen hundred and fourteen." We submit that the date should have been made the 1st January. Surely employers should be in a position to comply with the Act by that time.

1. *To Mr. Bollard.*] I represent the butchers' employees. I am not a working member of the union; I am a paid secretary. I was a butcher for over twenty years before I took that position. I was working in New Zealand in the trade for seven years, and during that time was in charge of shops in Auckland—the Meat Company and Hellaby's. Butchers deal in perishable goods, but that makes no difference. In the event of Saturday being made a half-holiday they should close the same as other people in summer as well as winter. They have Saturday closing in Melbourne and Brisbane where it is far hotter than here. At present, such a thing as a loin of beef is got in in a small shop on Tuesday, and is kept for sale on Saturday—that is nearly a week. Weather has nothing to do with the question. In summer as well as winter nine-tenths of the meat is distributed before dinner.

2. What about the wives of working-men who have got to do their shopping on Saturday afternoon?—They are not going to make two shopping expeditions. Half the trade, or more than that, is delivered at the door. The custom is to give the Saturday and Sunday order on Friday.

3. What about the other half?—They get their meat in the morning. Saturday afternoon was never a busy time for the butchers. When the evening trade was in existence before the Saturday half-holiday the rush was always between 8 and 9. In the Old Country the evening rush generally lasted two hours. Now they have closed there is no rush in the afternoon. You have got to study the habits of the people, and Saturday afternoon is not a great shopping-time. In Auckland, if it went to "one man one vote" amongst the butchers, Saturday closing would be carried. There are about sixty in the town, but two butchers in the town have thirty votes between them, and they are against it. Hellaby's are not in the association. It is no use doing