

anything without Hellaby's consent. The small butchers are desirous of Saturday; the large ones are not. They give you the reasons always given against curtailing the hours of business. I advocated the Saturday evening closing for years. They would not do it, but now they find they are better off with it.

4. Well, your statement is directly opposite to my information about the butchers' anxiety to keep open till at least 9 o'clock on Saturday?—I have an agreement in Gisborne. There the closing-time was 6.30. A good many of the order-men had no work to do during the afternoon. Some of the employers said, "We do not want you kicking about here." Other employers would not give any concession, and kept their men till closing-time. That does not say it is required.

5. Do you positively state that the majority of the butchers in Auckland are anxious to close?—I do. The majority of butchers I ask say, "You have only the big butchers to blame for it."

6. *Mr. Clark.*] You made the statement that one butcher took £40 cash: was that in the morning?—He reckons he takes £33 in the morning and the remainder after 12.30.

7. *The Chairman.*] Where is the shop located?—In the Dominion Road, Mount Eden Borough.

8. *Mr. Clark.*] Does the proprietor want to close Saturday afternoons?—No.

9. Did you get your information from the employer or an employee?—From an employee.

10. Do you think it a fair thing to get the information and make it public?—Well, I do not know. It is this way: in most of the shops in Auckland I could generally get an idea of the takings. It is not kept very secret: there is no necessity. As a rule butchers can tell you pretty well what every shop does.

11. Do you think it right to use it publicly?—I gave the general information, then I was asked for the name of the firm, or I would not have given it to you.

12. *Mr. Hindmarsh.*] Do the butchers voluntarily close in Wellington at 5.30?—They do.

13. Do they close on Saturday afternoons now?—No, they close at 7. They are not under this Act, I think. The Saturday half-holiday is uniform under this Bill—that is, shops that have any half-holiday at all. The tendency in the butchering trade is to reduce hours, with apparently no loss in custom.

14. The Wellington butchers closed on their own motion, did they not?—That is so; but it is generally in conformity with an award. Generally they have been consenting parties. Agreements in Auckland have always been voluntary until the present one. What the employers have agreed to for thirteen years must surely be all right.

15. You say the master butchers themselves have been agreeable to closing earlier in many places, and apparently do not lose in business by it?—Yes, that is so. We start work in Auckland under the present arrangement at 6 a.m., but one or two of the butchers, since the award was disturbed, have got into all hours, simply because of bad management. They get no more trade. They simply follow one another. My union reckons that 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. is enough. If a man cannot do his business in those hours he ought to be out of the trade altogether.

16. Is there any overtime?—Well, it is done, and not paid for. At the present time we cannot sheet cases home. You ought to make it as easy as possible to get evidence. Of course, there must be a certain amount of latitude, although if businesses were properly managed there would be no necessity for it at all. Of course, I do not expect to get all my own way of thinking, but if you give a twelve-hours day in which to do nine hours' work it ought to be sufficient.

17. *To Mr. Glover.*] Up to last year we were working under the award. While the original Act gave considerably more latitude than the award my experience is that it is not working at all. There is trouble about the pork-butchers because the employer makes them his excuse. He says, "You close the pork-butchers, we will close too." That is their strongest objection. I sympathize to some extent. The pork-butcher, on the other hand, says, "I do a large trade on Saturday night." Still, it must be remembered that the other butchers give the pork-butchers four hours every evening and five hours on Saturday night. It shows they can afford to ignore the pork-butcher. My union is not satisfied with clause 7, fixing the hours for Christmas and New Year's Eve. I am not going to suggest making any special provision for butchers, but just to limit the hours to the universal long day. The people had got into the habit of not doing their shopping after 6, but the employers do not like the Legislature interfering with existing arrangements. Mr. Grovenor had said, "We do not object to the hours, but we object to an Act of Parliament interfering with whatever we agree to." Therefore the question of justice or fitness did not come into it. They feel they must make a protest, and we are suffering for it. Some question has been raised about the working-man's wife not being able to do her shopping till Saturday afternoon. All I can say in reply to that is, "Let the wife of the man who enjoys forty-four hours a week do her shopping at the proper time."

18. *Mr. Okey.*] This Act proposes to start work at 4 in the morning. What is the first work of a butcher in the morning?—As a rule the shopman probably sets out his window, and the shopman breaks up his meat for delivery or sale. The delivery did not start generally till about 8 o'clock. In some cases a man goes on his round about 7.30 to collect orders.

19. Then there is no object in starting at 4?—None that I know of. The trade is gradually becoming a cash trade, because the butchers charge a halfpenny a pound for delivering. It is very difficult under the present system for men to get breakfast, and unless a shop is doing a trade employing three or four hands they never get breakfast. Very few butchers are keeping the Act and getting a meal every five hours.

20. Would it not be better to make it 6 o'clock in the summer months and 7 in the winter?—No, I do not think so. Habit is everything; light and dark make no difference.

21. *Mr. Wilkinson.*] That quarter of an hour trouble: what would happen if the shops were full of people—would they have to close right up? Would you favour that?—Yes, I would. It is the habit of the public to come at the last minute. The sooner they get out of it the better,