

2. There is no such proposal that I am aware of?—As regards closing by requisition, we are liable at any time to be called upon to sign a requisition to close on any day for early closing. We think this should only occur once a year. They are a source of annoyance to us, these requisitions continually coming round; we have lately had experience of that in Wellington. There is another thing, relating to the employment of assistants after the prescribed time, clause 43: we prefer to have it as at present—half an hour after the prescribed time.

3. We have that already noted?—Or as an alternative we are quite satisfied with 6 o'clock, provided we are allowed, as far as the drapery and clothing trades are concerned, to keep our assistants till half past 9 on one night. We do not want to keep them any longer. The only time is on a late night.

4. *Mr. Anderson.*] You would keep the doors open?—Yes. That is, I think, a fair suggestion. We are allowed to keep our assistants fifty-two hours, and the majority of us only keep them forty-six and forty-eight. That is really all that we wish to point out. We are very pleased to note in clause 14 you have stated that in signing the requisition for a half-holiday by a poll all those signing should give addresses and occupation. We think it very necessary, and are very pleased to see it in the Bill.

5. In answer to a question of mine you said that you would keep your shop open till half past 9. Supposing any fresh customer comes along?—They will come in, but the assistants cannot serve them.

6. Do you think it would work at 9 o'clock, say, to shut your doors, and give permission to serve those already there, but lock the doors against any further customers?—That is to finally close up for the night? That would be too early.

7. I do not say any particular hour—whatever hour the Bill prescribed. Do you think it would work to close the door and serve the customers you have in?—Not at that hour; if 10 I would say Yes.

8. I do not say any particular hour. Do you think it would be a proper thing to shut the door, serve those customers already in, and let the assistants go when they were served?—That would allow the shop to be reopened by the shopkeeper when they were gone.

9. *The Chairman.*] I understand that there is no grace under the 1910 Act; the fifteen minutes is only a concession. You say you keep your shop open during that fifteen minutes?—Yes.

10. *Mr. Anderson.*] And anybody from the street can come into it?—

11. *The Chairman.*] They can keep the shop open as long as they like as long as the assistants are gone?—I forgot to mention we are pleased to see that the wife and family are still allowed to work in the shop after the assistants have left.

12. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] You would insist upon every employee serving any customer of yours up to half past 9?—Yes; as a concession we would not mind letting an assistant away sharp at 6.

13. Do you know that has been settled by the Court? Nine o'clock was the closing-hour, and the Court held that the man had to close at 9: they had to serve any one on the premises, but could not admit any one later. Is not that satisfactory?—That refers to the working-hours of assistants?—We are asking that the closing-hour should be half past 10. What you say would mean that the closing-hour would be 9 or half past 9.

14. *Mr. Grenfell.*] You are giving your evidence on behalf of your association: would you mind expressing your personal opinion?—Personally I am rather in favour of the hour as stated in the Bill in clause 23. Some of the smaller shops want the longer hours.

15. In connection with the case decided by the Judge, his decision was chiefly to the effect that the half-hour's grace only applied to workers outside the shop?—No, they could finish serving, but they could not take on fresh ones.

16. *The Chairman.*] You think that the conditions applying to the large shopkeeper would apply equally to the small shopkeeper?—Yes, I think so.

17. Do you not think any legislation that would restrict the hours would have a tendency to restrict business altogether?—Yes, it would.

18. In the course of time there would be no such thing as private enterprise?—No, it would make a monopoly for the big shopkeepers.

JAMES DOWNIE examined. (No. 46.)

Witness: My name is James Downie. I am manager of the People's Palace.

1. *The Chairman.*] You do not rent it?—No, I am manager of the hotel for the Salvation Army.

2. It has been stated that you give your employees a whole holiday every week, that you pay them the standard wages, and that you are making considerable profit out of the business on a 5s.-per-day tariff. Do you mind telling the Committee the value of the premises that you occupy?—They cost about £33,000, I have heard, but do not know for certain.

3. What rent do you pay?—There are six shops in the building; of course, I only pay for the private hotel.

4. I see: the shops are included in that £30,000?—The top is separate, but all part of the building.

5. And the receipts you get from letting those shops assist you?—No.

6. You say your 5s. tariff pays all the expenses?—I say the 5s. tariff pay all the expenses of the hotel.