

7. Do you speak from the point of view of the farmer particularly?—No; I am appearing before the Committee on behalf of the tradesmen and general inhabitants of the district.

8. Have you had any letters from shop-assistants in the district?—Not directly from shop-assistants. The only representation made to me is that the people of the district are opposed to the compulsory Saturday half-holiday. I have not had one communication in favour of it from any class of the community there.

9. How many are there against it?—Some petitions have been sent to the House against the compulsory Saturday half-holiday, but I cannot say how many signed these petitions. However, the matter was very fully discussed.

10. From where do the petitions come?—Chiefly from Hamilton and Cambridge.

11. From any particular class?—From tradesmen generally. I could not say what proportion of shopkeepers and of shop-assistants signed the petitions.

12. Have you had means of testing the feeling of your constituents on the subject?—I have never made any particular inquiries into the matter, but these petitions show that my constituents are opposed to a compulsory Saturday half-holiday.

13. What is your own opinion? Do you see any objection to it?—Personally, I do not see any objection to the half-holiday on that day if the people wish it, but in my electorate there is no desire whatever for it.

14. Do you see any objection to a *plébiscite* of the people being taken to settle the day for the half-holiday. I should prefer to see it left optional as it is at present.

15. But supposing the district were made larger?—That is a question which I would have to consider. It might be that one portion of a large district would over-ride all the rest.

16. How far are you from a large centre?—From Auckland to the centre of our district is about a hundred miles.

17. Then you are almost entirely a country district?—Yes. There are only two boroughs in it with a population of under two thousand each.

18. *Mr. Kirkbride.*] I suppose your constituents are perfectly satisfied with the present optional system?—Yes.

19. And they wish it to continue?—Yes.

20. *Mr. Tanner.*] Then you are in favour of the optional system?—Yes.

21. Had the farmers any voice in fixing the half-holiday?—I am not sure whether they had or not.

22. Who fixes the half-holiday?—I cannot answer that question. I presume it was done in the usual way.

23. You say that on one occasion it was fixed for Saturday?—Yes.

24. Was that long in existence?—It was kept up for a few Saturdays, and then the tradesmen found that it was ruinous to their trade. I do not know who took part in fixing the half-holiday for Saturday, but they came to the conclusion after a trial of it that it was ruinous to trade.

25. Then the people who fixed the half-holiday for Saturday in the first instance, and afterwards changed it, were not the farmers?—I cannot say.

26. Have you any knowledge of whether the farmers were consulted?—I take it for granted that all the people who have business to transact in the towns were consulted. I have only come before the Committee because I have been asked to do so by my constituents. They have asked me to oppose the compulsory Saturday half-holiday, and no one has approached me on the other side.

27. *Mr. Ell.*] You say you have no objection to a *plébiscite*?—I do not think there would be any objection to it in an electorate, but in saying that I am not speaking with any authority from my people.

28. Do you think that an electorate or a county would be the more suitable area for a vote?—Counties, of course, would multiply the districts, but it is a matter of opinion on which I am not prepared to express myself now.

29. *Mr. Barber.*] Do you think that if the steamer and railway arrangements were made to suit on another day in the week, as they are now made to suit Saturday afternoon, and if there were cheap fares on that other afternoon, it would not be well to have one compulsory half-holiday generally?—That might apply to towns, but I represent a country district, and I can say that it would have no beneficial effect on such districts. I am not desirous of preventing people having a half-holiday on Saturday if they wish it. All I say is that the people in my district do not want it, and the only borough in the district which tried it gave it up.

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