

261. How many shopkeepers does it embrace?—We had not time to ascertain the number, we had to come away in such a hurry.
262. How many shopkeepers do you represent? How many shopkeepers are there in the association?—I cannot really tell your from memory.
- Mr. Sneddon*: I think there are from twenty to thirty in the association, and all who employ labour are, I think, in the association. Perhaps it would be thirty-five.
263. *Mr. Alison* (to *Mr. Sneddon*).] You represent thirty-five shopkeepers?—Yes, speaking from memory.
264. Why do you desire that clause 3 be retained?—We think it better for the whole community, and the whole of the shopkeepers too.
265. You think it would be in the interests of the community and in the interests of the shopkeepers?—Yes. The community try by every possible means to accommodate themselves to the shopkeepers by purchasing in time, and they are quite agreeable to any hours that we want fixed for closing.
266. In your opinion it is in the interests of the people of New Zealand that all shops should be closed at 6?—I cannot speak for the other districts, but I should think that if it is good for one district it should be good for another.
267. When you said "Let all the shops be closed early," did you mean not only the grocers' but all the other shops?—All in our trade, but I could really say that the drapers and the butchers are with us. As to hairdressers and chemists, however, I cannot say.
268. Are you authorised to represent the butchers?—No, but I know their feeling in the matter.
269. Did they authorise you to speak on their behalf?—No, but I might mention that I saw two Dunedin butchers along the town just now, and they said they thought it would be an inconvenience to them if they had to shut at 6, because they shut at half past 5.
270. Do you speak on behalf of all business men, or do you speak only on behalf of the grocers?—On behalf of the grocers only.
271. As far as the grocery business is concerned you say that clause 3 would operate beneficially?—It would.
272. In the interests of the community, the shopkeepers, and the employees?—Yes.
273. You are aware of the strong feeling that has existed throughout the colony with regard to the enforcement of clause 3?—Yes, I have heard something about Wellington. I think Auckland is in line with Dunedin.
274. At what time did you close your shops before clause 3 became law?—We opened at 8 and closed at 6. We have done that for years and years.
275. Then the passing of clause 3 made no difference to you or to those whom you represent as regards the hour of closing?—It made no difference to me personally, but of course it brought into line some others who had hung out. They are all in line now.
276. As far as you are concerned, you closed at 6 prior to the passing of the Act?—Yes.
277. Has the Act been enforced in Dunedin?—Yes, lately.
278. Rigidly enforced?—Yes, very rigidly too.
279. Have there been any prosecutions?—No, we did not need that.
280. Are all the grocers' shops closed there at 6?—As far as I understand.
- Mr. Wilson*: All those that employ labour are.
281. *Mr. Bollard* (to *Mr. Sneddon*).] You said that you represent thirty-five shops, I think?—Something like that, I expect.
282. Can you tell us how many grocers there are in Dunedin?—It would take time to count them all up. I think there are thirty-five any way.
283. Is not that only a small proportion of the grocers in a large city like Dunedin?—No, there are not many more here.
284. Are there not five times as many as you represent?—No.
285. How many are there?—There might be ten or twelve more small shops. There are numbers of other shops, of course, that sell vegetables and such things.
286. I mean grocers' shops, in Dunedin?—It is hard to define grocers' shops—like the Chinamen's shops in Wellington.
287. What class of men are they in the association which you represent?—A good, healthy class of people, and a good business lot of men too, and they know what they want. They want the shortest hours possible, and the best work. They know they can get better work out of a man when working shorter hours.
288. Do I understand you to say that you represent every grocer who employs assistants, in Dunedin?—Very nearly the whole lot.
289. You cannot tell us how many there are?—There might be about half a dozen that are not in the union, and we cannot tell; but they have fallen into line lately since the Act was passed. I can tell you that some of the grocers—and large grocers too—who are not members of the association are very much in favour of early closing. They closed at 6 p.m. for years before the Act came into force.
290. I understand that the association you represent wish that every grocer close at 6 p.m.?—Yes, that is our view of the matter.
291. Whether it be a small man employing one assistant or otherwise?—Certainly; we want that.
292. *Mr. Hardy*.] How many hands do you employ?—I have three.
293. You would not be considered one of the very big grocers?—Yes.
294. And you think, as far as you can judge, that there is fair unanimity amongst the trade generally on this question?—Yes, there is.