

72. Not in the Newtown business ?—No. Both shops are opened exactly at the same hour.

73. You would not allow latitude to the grocer to open in order to supply people with articles for breakfast ?—I am only speaking for myself. If my wife forgets to get anything she wants she has to go without it.

74. *Mr. Hardy.*] Have you any objection to an exemption being made to certain people in your business—the widow, for instance ?—I would have no exemption at all.

75. You would have no exceptions ?—No.

76. Then, no matter what the business was, you would like to have them all brought in whether they were widows or not ?—Widows or not widows, I should say 6-o'clock closing.

77. You think that every one in connection with your trade should be brought into line ?—Yes, I think that was the evil of the Act. If every one in New Zealand were brought into line it would be better. I would have no exceptions.

78. Have you had any experience outside the city yourself ?—Only in the suburbs.

79. You would not make a law on any question that you did not understand ?—Certainly not.

80. You think it would be better for the Labour Bills Committee to legislate after taking evidence ? You have told us that you have had no business experience outside Wellington ?—That is so.

81. Then the answer you gave to me in reference to New Zealand is incorrect ?—It only applies to Wellington.

*Mr. Bolton :* I was at Feilding, and we closed at 6 o'clock every night, and at 9 o'clock on Saturday.

82. *Mr. Hardy* (to *Mr. Bolton*).] Is Feilding the whole of the country districts ?—I can only speak for Feilding.

83. *Mr. Barber.*] The grocery business is more easily conducted with the head of the family than any other business : a mother could send her child with a slip of paper and get what she wanted, without the personal attendance, that is required, in any other trade of the head of the family ?—In some respects it might be.

84. Is it not easier for a mother to give a note to her child and to get a pound of tea or butter, than it is, say, to get a pair of boots for the father ?—It depends upon the size. It may be, of course, that the shopkeeper might give her something bad.

85. *The Chairman.*] Have you had any experience in the boot trade ?—No ; I have been in the grocery trade all my life.

A deputation of hairdressers and tobacconists in attendance.

86. *The Chairman.*] I understand that you have come this morning, gentlemen, with a view to giving evidence in connection with the Shops and Offices Bill, as showing the effect it would have upon the tobacconists' trade, and the hairdressing also, in Wellington. Is that so ?

*Members of deputation :* No ; in New Zealand.

87. *The Chairman.*] Have you your speakers selected ?

*Mr. Cusack :* Yes.

*The Chairman :* Very well. We shall be pleased to hear you. Our time, like your own, is limited, but I have only to request that you will not repeat each other's statements more than is strictly necessary.

JOHN CHARLES CUSACK examined. (No. 95.)

88. *The Chairman.*] You are a hairdresser ?—Yes.

89. And tobacconist ?—No ; a hairdresser only.

90. Your place of business is— ?—In Manners Street.

91. Have you an association in Wellington ?—Yes.

92. Do you represent the association ?—We represent the association.

93. And you say that you have had communications from other parts of the colony also ?—Yes ; from Dunedin, Christchurch, and Auckland.

94. And you speak on their behalf ?—Yes.

95. Will you just make your statement now in your own way ?—We wish to point out that, as far as our trade is concerned, we are on a totally different footing from any other trade in the colony. We have to cater for the travelling public on the same lines as the hotelkeepers, and so forth ; and our trade is done principally of an evening, after half past 6. We have to cater for the working-men also. There are blacksmiths, bootmakers, foundry hands, and men engaged in other trades of the kind, all of whom must go and wash, and change, and clean themselves before they can possibly be attended to. We would like to point out that, as far as we are concerned, it is impossible for a shop-assistant, who leaves his business at 6, to be attended to by a hairdresser and tobacconist if the latter has to close at the time specified in the present Act—viz., 6 o'clock. I wish to speak now on behalf of the Dunedin Association. At present they have there forty-nine shops. They have altogether twenty men and seventeen apprentices, the total number—masters, men, and apprentices—working in the saloons and shops being eighty-six. Their trade is done principally of an evening. Their best time in the evening is from half past 6 to 8 o'clock. They have at that time to cater for the public who wish to attend concerts, theatres, balls, banquets, &c., and who want to get dressed and prepared for them. The members of the association maintain that if a time is fixed for closing there should not be any exemptions whatever in the trade. There should be no distinction made between a man who employs hands and a man who works by himself only, because the man who pays a heavy rent should really be the man to get consideration from Parliament. They have asked that in the event of clause 21 being kept in there should be a special clause inserted dealing solely with our trade—that is, hairdressers and tobacconists—and that the hairdressers and tobacconists alone should vote on the question ; I mean that if the time of closing is to be fixed, they should say what the hour should be, and that no Chinaman or hotelkeeper should have a right to vote. Clause 21 of the Act reads as follows : " On the requisition