

21. *Mr. Kirkbride* (to *Mr. Garrett*).] What are the hours per week that butchers are now working ?—According to our log they are fifty-six. We work about fifty-four hours now, allowing an hour or two for attending to the stables on Sunday morning, but generally only one man comes back for that; so we are as a rule an hour or two to the good each work. I believe that under our award the time is not up till 10 on Saturday night; but we shut at 9.

22. You stated that at the present time you start at half past 6 and close at half past 5 in the evening ?—Yes.

23. Do you not, then, work more than fifty-four hours or fifty-six hours a week ?—No. There are the usual hours off for meals. We have about an hour to the good I think.

24. Under the Bill your hours would be curtailed by four ?—Exactly, if the Bill were enforced in its present form.

25. *Mr. Tanner* (to *Mr. Garrett*).] You say that at the present time under your award you commence work at half past 6 in the morning and knock off at half past 5 in the evening ?—Yes.

26. Do those hours suit you ?—Very nicely.

27. In Christchurch it has been represented to me that it would be far better if the butchers were allowed to commence work much earlier in the morning—say, as early as 5 or even before that—and that they would be willing to take that time off the later part of the day—to alter the time but not work a greater number of hours ?—We have threshed the thing out in our union, and our trade agree that from half past 6 in the morning till half past 5 at night on week-days, and from 6 in the morning to 9 at night on Saturday, suits them very well.

28. Half past 6 is sufficiently early ?—Exactly.

29. Yours is mostly a town trade: you do not carry the meat to a great distance, do you ?—To the suburbs.

30. Where do you get the meat from ?—It all comes in of a morning.

31. It is brought in ?—Yes.

32. You do not fetch it yourselves ?—No; it is delivered by the wholesale butchers or the abattoirs people.

33. How would it be if the men bought their own stock and had it killed at abattoirs some miles off ?—I think the hours would suit them very nicely. I do not think we can improve on them in Wellington.

34. Of course, you are speaking for Wellington ?—Yes.

35. *Mr. Bedford*.] I would like to ask if these gentlemen represent the small butchers to any extent ?—*Mr. Barber*: The whole of them.

36. And you are all agreed on the advisability of closing at half past 5 ?—Yes.

37. You also think it would be workable to have a universal Saturday half-holiday ?—The majority of our trade think that. *Mr. Garrett*: Provided, of course, that fishmongers and others were closed.

38. *Mr. Bedford*.] And are you satisfied with the fifty-two hours for shops ?—*Mr. Garrett*: No; we are satisfied with the fifty-six provided for under our award.

39. You would object to reducing them to fifty-two ?—Most decidedly.

40. *Mr. Ell*.] Do the deputation represent the butchers in the suburbs, in Newtown and the outlying districts of the city ?—*Mr. Barber*: Yes; all the butchers of Wellington, with the exception of perhaps three. There are three who are not members of our union.

41. *Mr. Laurensen* (to *Mr. Garrett*).] Do you all know that an award remains in force, even if its date has expired, until a fresh award is made ?—Yes.

42. *Mr. Alison*.] With reference to a universal half-holiday on Saturday, I understand this gentleman to say that the association were in favour of a Saturday half-holiday, provided all the shops were closed on Saturday afternoon: Is that so ?—*Mr. Garrett*: Yes.

43. But if all the shops are not closed, what then ?—*Mr. Barber*: We want to come in under the exemption.

44. Do you consider there should be an hour fixed for opening at all ?—No; but we do not want it fixed at later than half past 6.

45. Do you all represent the association ?—Yes.

46. Do you desire that there should be any hour fixed for opening in the morning ?—In the interests of the trade in other centres we would say, fix the hour not later than half past 6; as early as you like if desired in other places. We do not know the conditions there. Make it not later than half past 6 and we shall be satisfied.

47. You really desire that there should be no restriction with regard to the hour of opening your shops ?—That is so.

48. *Mr. Bollard*.] Do any of you gentlemen know anything about the climatic conditions of Auckland regarding the difficulty in keeping meat at certain seasons of the year ?—*Mr. Garrett*: Yes. I think they are far worse than in Wellington. The climate is warmer, and you want almost to cut the meat up when it is killed.

49. Do you think that half past 6 in the morning would suit the butchers in Auckland ?—No; it is very likely the Auckland butchers would want to start an hour or so earlier than we.

50. Do you think that a butcher doing a large retail trade could supply hotels and boardinghouses in time to get the meat ready for breakfast, if he only opened at half past 6 ?—He would have a pretty tough job in a place like Auckland, where it all has to be done of a morning. It is only the larger hotels in Wellington, where the people want to catch the early trains, that we supply at this hour of the morning.

51. Do you think it would be better not to fix any hour in the morning ?—It would certainly suit the trade throughout the colony to fix no hour at all. This Act would, no doubt, apply to the whole of New Zealand. The conditions in the North are more severe, as regards weather, than they are in the South.