

8. Was it your executive that appointed you to come here?—Yes.

9. Was the executive unanimous in regard to this matter?—Yes.

10. Have Civil servants tried to introduce any scheme of the kind—I mean for the working of the Departments?—A number of us have had the matter under consideration for some time. A number of us arranged, before we saw this Bill, to endeavour to get petitions in circulation asking the Government to move the hours of business an hour forward in the summer months. But, as your Bill was then notified, we suspended action. We understood that possibly if petitions were sent in simultaneously from all Departments it would be simply a matter of issuing an Order in Council to alter the hours of Government business. It would not mean an alteration of the clock. We could not see that any public inconvenience would be caused in this way, because the greater number of the Government offices are closed to the public at 4 o'clock. 10 to 4 is the usual time. I speak particularly for the Survey Office.

11. *Mr. Fraser.*] Would you propose, then, to make the hours for the public from 9 to 3 in reality?—They could stand at from 10 to 4, because the officers would not leave till 4. We could attend to the public till the actual time of closing.

12. *Mr. G. M. Thomson.*] I understand that if the Government were to alter during the summer months the hour for opening all public offices by making it one hour earlier, you would achieve the same results?—As far as we are concerned, certainly, and the possibility is that other places of business might follow. But there is one great objection to that: there is so much legislation that refers explicitly to hours of work: Of course our own case would be dealt with at once if the Government brought down an Order in Council.

13. *Mr. Sidey.*] Speaking of the Civil servants who are not members of your association, have you had opportunities of testing their feelings?—Yes, I have personally, and I think most of us have consulted Civil servants generally irrespective of whether they belong to the association or not; and personally I have never met any one who has objected to the proposal.

14. *Mr. G. M. Thomson.*] Can you give us any reasons from a scientific point of view in favour of this proposal?—I am afraid the reasons in favour of it are those regarding its effect on the general health of the community, and so on. From the scientific side I do not know if there is any reason why we should have one time more than another. We have an arbitrary time now—11½ hours ahead of Greenwich. Of course there would be the constant break at the two half-yearly periods, in addition, but I think our safety lies in the fact that we are so isolated.

15. But every advantage that could be brought about by this Bill could also be affected by simply altering the hours of work?—As far as we are concerned, certainly.

16. *Mr. Neuman.*] I suppose you have not considered what the effect of this Bill would be in regard to our connection with Australia, for instance?—I do not see how it could affect it in any way.

17. Would it not have a very considerable effect if we had one time and Australia another?—We have a different time now—different from Sydney, different again from Melbourne, and different again from Perth. They have a variety of times there, and, so far as any ordinary business is concerned between the two places, in the case of a steamer journey, an hour is absolutely insignificant.

18. *Mr. Fraser.*] Would it not affect the telegraphic news from Australia? Instead of an hour and a half difference there would be two hours and a half?—The time would have to be corrected an extra hour.

19. I mean that in respect to news telegraphed across from Australia, you would close an hour earlier in the afternoon, and so would not get the news you now get?—Our telegraph-offices are open continuously, are they not?

20. We had evidence to the contrary?—I understood it was so. Well, it would put us an hour earlier in everything.

21. *Mr. Sidey.*] You said that it would suit you just as well if the Government were to bring you to your offices an hour earlier and allowed you to cease work earlier. Have you considered what effect that would have on the community? For instance, you would have the same meal-hours as before?—Well, assuming school-hours were not altered, that would be a convenience in a way, because the school meal-hours do not suit the office meal-hours at present.

22. In order to bring the community into line, you would have to alter the meal-hours too, would you not?—It would certainly hardly do to make the morning longer than four hours. Five hours would be rather a long interval between meals.

23. *The Chairman.*] You recognise that the idea of the Bill is the creation of uniformity?—Yes.

24. And, although it is possible to carry out this reform in sections of the community, it is far preferable to have a general Bill that will create uniformity throughout the Dominion?—I think it would be much simpler to alter the clock.

25. *Mr. Sidey.*] You think it would be much more simple to alter the clock than to ask the people to change their habits?—Undoubtedly; besides, it keeps every scrap of legislation effective—every special set of hours prescribed everywhere.

26. *Mr. Fraser.*] If sections of the Civil servants, or of various classes of the community, were to adopt this experiment, would it cause confusion amongst the rest of the public, do you think?—I should think not. Those offices in the Government which deal with the public would have, I presume, to keep the same hours for their convenience. Otherwise I cannot see how it would affect the public in any way.

27. Would it not perhaps be advisable, then, to experiment before making a sudden departure such as this for the whole community?—I certainly think, as far as I know the Civil servants, they would be quite willing to carry out that experiment.