

know, of course, that according to law the people have the right to say when the shops shall be open and when closed. Now, will you tell the Committee, supposing the Government was able to alter the existing law, would you consent to another poll being taken, say, three months after a poll had been given in your favour? If a poll was given in your favour, would you consent to another poll being taken in, say, three months to alter that?—Well, if the other side could bring forward evidence and could make out a good case, there would be no alternative.

6. But do you not see what a state of things this would lead us into?—I do not think so. A great injustice has been done to the City of Auckland and the suburbs shopkeepers, and you would not be doing wrong in trying to protect them. Surely legislators do not wish to drive the shopkeepers of Auckland into bankruptcy.

7. Your suggestion is that the Government should be asked to pass legislation putting you back to the position you were in before the poll was taken?—Yes, because the districts have been altered since. The boundaries have been altered considerably. There has been another twelve thousand electors taken into the city.

8. Do you think it would be fair to alter the law? You know that the law states that another poll shall not be taken for two years: do you think it would be fair to alter that?—I think so, sir, under the circumstances.

9. Would it be a proper thing, for instance, to tell the people of Wellington to close on Saturday, after they have said no?—I do not think myself that this matter applies to Wellington at all. They know what is best for themselves, and we know what is best for ourselves.

10. You think that the Government should pass legislation in accordance with the views of the shopkeepers, so that, in each locality they could keep open on the days which suit them best?—Yes, I think that would be only right. I think that each district should choose the day for closing which suits their business best. We would like you to place yourselves in our position. Would it not be a hardship if we were to come to you and tell you to close your business on a certain day, when on that day you can take more money than on any other two or three days of the week?

11. Do you not think the people—not the shopkeepers themselves or their assistants—do you not think the people, who really keep both, should have some say as to when the shops should be open for business?—Yes.

12. Is not that the result of the poll? Have they not said by their vote that they think the shops should be closed on Saturdays?—Well, they have in a sense decided that way, certainly; but then it was such a very small poll on account of the wet day, and again you must take into consideration that the boundaries have been altered so much since then.

13. I was thinking of the position at Christchurch. They have decided to close there by a huge majority—two to one, I believe—on Saturday?—Yes, but they are feeling the effect of it.

14. Yes, the shopkeepers?—Of course. What we would like is to revert back to the old order of closing on Wednesday or Saturday.

15. *Mr. J. Bolland.*] I understand you suggest, Mr. Tutt, that there should be another poll, on the grounds that the area should be extended?—The area has already been extended.

16. It has not been extended to Road Boards?—No. We would like to see Road Boards included.

17. Do you think the people, when the last poll was taken, really realized what they were doing?—No, I do not. I think the public have been so inconvenienced that, if they had another opportunity, there can be no question about who would win. In fact, there are many shopkeepers who are exempt, and who thought it would be a good thing for them, who find it has been disastrous to them as well as ourselves.

18. You would rather go back to the old order of things, which left to the shopkeeper the choice of closing either on Wednesday or Saturday?—Yes.

19. *Mr. Hindmarsh.*] Do you suggest that this money is not spent somewhere? Is not this money spent in some other shops eventually—say, in some of the country places?—I do not know. I could not say anything with reference to the out-districts.

20. Probably the shopkeepers out there do much better?—I think myself the money is diverted to the larger shops in the city.

21. The larger shops?—As I have explained in my evidence, I think the trade is going to the large shopkeepers.

22. But they also close on Saturday afternoons?—Yes, that is so; but most of them have always closed on Saturday. It makes no difference to them.

23. But when the people come into town to buy, your shop is open as well as the larger shops?—Yes, but you must understand that the suburban shopkeepers do a working-class trade. If we open our shops and close at the same time as the average working-man knocks off work, where is he going to spend his money?

24. Well, perhaps he does not spend it. He may put it into the bank or save it in some other way?—I think it goes into other channels. I think myself it goes largely to the hotels and picture-shows.

25. What sort of a shop do you keep?—Tailor, hatter, and mercer.

26. Do you suggest that the people go without mercery and hats?—No, I should not say that they go without.

27. *Mr. Clark.*] Do you not think it is only fair that the majority should rule?—Certainly.

28. Was it not decided at the poll that the shopkeepers should be compelled to close on Saturday?—That was certainly carried at the poll; but, as I have already explained, there was so many election matters to be decided on the day, and as it was such a teeming wet day, that it was not really a fair decision. Since the poll was carried we have had two other large districts brought into the area, and there are more electors in these districts than those who voted at the poll. You must remember that only ten thousand voted out of forty-five thousand on the roll.