

32 There is a large number of employees in your industry who are at present not covered by any award of the Arbitration Court at all?—Yes, there are. They are only covered by awards of the Court in the four centres.

33. You could bring them in if necessary?—Yes; but it is a terrible job to get them organized. This Bill would cover the lot.

FREDERICK REYLING examined. (No. 2.)

1 *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Secretary of the Trades and Labour Council.
 2. And appointed by the Trades and Labour Council to appear before the Committee?—Yes.
 3. You have heard Mr Carey's evidence?—Yes.
 4. Is there anything you wish to add?—I did not intend to add anything except this that the Council approves of the main provisions of the Bill as a whole, with the exception of clause 7, and it thinks the half-holiday should be granted. Of course, I am not interested personally in the industries that are to be covered by this Bill, but with regard to anything that is for the betterment of the workers concerning their hours, or anything of that sort, I always try to do my little bit for them, and the Council always upholds my action. Mr Carey has entered so fully into the matter and is so conversant with it, that I do not think it is necessary for me to add anything more.

5 And you acquiesce in everything he has said?—Yes, I do.

THURSDAY, 6TH OCTOBER, 1910.

ALBERT HUNTER COOPER examined. (No. 3.)

1 *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Secretary of the Wellington Butchers' Union.
 2 How many members are in your union?—280-odd—between 280 and 290.
 3 And have they passed a resolution with regard to this Bill?—Yes, in regard to one particular amendment.
 4. In addition to which you represent the employees?—I represent the employees, but I may say that Mr Rod, on behalf of the master butchers, was to have met me here at half past 10 o'clock this morning, to give evidence in the same direction as I am giving it. We are at one on the question.

5. You are at one as to the evidence?—Yes. I may say that the only matter which has caused us any anxiety is contained in the schedule—the proposed amendment to section 18—the latter part of it dealing with the definition of 'fishmonger'. In the present Act, a fishmonger is defined as "a person who sells fish or shell-fish." It is proposed to extend that to make it read, "fresh fish, smoked fish, shell-fish, poultry rabbits, mutton-birds, and other perishable goods of a like nature." There has been some doubt in the minds of our members as to the exact definition of the proposed amendment, but from whichever point we look at it, we consider the amendment would be unfair to the butchering trade. We are not quite clear as to whether it will be necessary for a fishmonger to sell the whole of the various commodities to come within the definition, or whether a person who sells any one of them could claim exemption from the half-holiday provision under the section. At the present time any fishmonger who sells rabbits or poultry has to observe the half-holiday provisions, the same as a butcher, but if this proposed amendment is carried into effect it will mean that the whole of the pork-butchers of the city who sell poultry will be exempted from the half-holiday provisions—that they will be able to keep open. If that be not so, it will mean that the fishmonger will be able to sell poultry on the half-holiday, and the pork-butcher will not. The same thing will occur with regard to rabbits. A system has grown up here of a number of men hawking rabbits regularly through the city, with hand-barrows, and small carts drawn by horses. We think that they will be able to compete on the Wednesday half-holiday with the butcher. If it means that that is not so, it means that the "Rabbit oh" man will be put off the street, and the fishmonger will be able to sell rabbits in his shop. For the last twelve months the butchering trade in Wellington has been in a very bad state—employers are suffering from the high prices of stock, and are in a very bad way. Four or five have closed, and one of the oldest establishments has been shut down. As employees, we want to place the competition on fair lines. We do not wish to allow the provisions of the present Act to be so extended as to increase competition in an unfair way. We think, if these laws are going to be placed on the statute-book, they should operate equally all round and treat all alike, so that no one section should get an advantage over another. We think that the present definition is unsatisfactory, perhaps with this exception: that a fishmonger who sells rabbits has got to close on the half-holiday; but one who does not can keep open. I think, if an amendment is put in the Act to the effect that the sale of rabbits or poultry was prohibited on the half-holiday but that the sale of fish was permitted, it would meet the whole case.

6. I suppose that only applies to pork-butchers that the ordinary butcher does not sell poultry or fish?—The ordinary butcher sells poultry at certain seasons of the year—at Christmas and certain seasons. The majority do not keep poultry, but at these seasons they do—turkeys, geese, fowls, ducks, and so on. That is all I wish to state.

JAMES ROD examined. (No. 4.)

1 *The Chairman.*] I understand you represent the employers?—Yes.
 2. And you agree with what has been said?—I fully indorse all that has been said.
 3. Do you wish to add anything?—I do not think I need go over the ground again. Mr Cooper's views are those of the majority of the master butchers.
 4. *Mr Fraser.*] Did I understand the last witness to say that if a fishmonger was prohibited from selling poultry and rabbits on Wednesdays, it would meet the case?—Yes.