

31. When you said you were being harassed by Labour Department officials, did you mean when you were keeping retail shops?—Yes. When I built these places there was no such thing as we have now. We have rules and regulations and restrictions of all sorts now.

32. And you found that if you were to obey all these rules, and so on, you could not make money?—I do not say that; but I am too busy a man to answer all the inquiries and to put up with pinpricks and disputes.

33. Do you think this legislation has added anything to the price of fish?—When you have threats of a summons every day it is time to get out of the business. These men who are now running my places were men who were in my employment, and they formed an arrangement which would not be possible to me.

34. They are working on the co-operative system?—They are working amongst themselves. It is a partnership, and they can work as long as they like.

35. *Mr. Veitch.*] You say there is a combine on the part of the small boats catching fish, and on the part of the retailers, but there is no combine in that portion of the trade in which you are engaged?—There is no combine in the trawling. We catch as many as we can and put them on the market. I do not say there is any combine amongst the retailers.

36. Do you not say they are working together to get over certain difficulties?—I was only talking about the men to whom I let my shops. There are plenty of other fish shops and hawkers, and there are Chinamen too.

37. Do Chinamen sell fish?—Yes. They are a great institution. If people can buy fish at a penny cheaper from Chinamen they will take it.

38. Is that going on?—Yes; but it is not so great now as it was before.

39. Where do they get the fish?—On the open market. They have as much right as any one else to get it.

40. *Mr. Fairbairn.*] Could you give us any idea of the average price of flounders of fair average size spread over the last twelve months?—I could hardly answer that straight off, but I should say that for average-size flounders, taking good, bad, and indifferent, the average price would be about 4s. per dozen. The hotels are being supplied at somewhere about 4s. per dozen. Of course, if a man wants a single fish, and wants it rolled up in paper and sent home to his house on three months' credit and 2½ per cent. discount, and the money to be called for three times before it is paid, he expects to pay only the same rate as the man taking fish by the dozen.

41. I am talking about the general trade?—Family trade in New Zealand is much higher than the class I quoted. Families buy by the shilling's-worth, and have it sent to their homes. They mostly order by telephone. A great many people order who live in Roslyn and Mornington, and they think they are getting a shilling's worth of fish. They are not: they are getting fourpence worth of fish and eightpence worth of service. Any of these people can go to the market and bring their own paper and piece of string, and the auctioneer is quite willing to sell to them.

42. *The Chairman.*] You think it is very desirable to have a market for fish?—It is desirable to have a wholesale market for fish, where fish can be sold to the retailers.

43. But not to have a retail market?—Yes, if you could get the people to go there and pay cash and take the fish home with them. Fish is a perishable commodity, and if the people do not come along and buy it, what are you going to do at the end of the day with what is left over?

44. *Mr. Fairbairn.*] The whole secret is distribution?—Yes.

45. *Mr. Macdonald.*] What particular Government regulations do you object to?—The whole "shooting-match." Before we had this legislation every man and woman in my employment was working for one end, and that was to make a profit for the concern they were employed in. They recognized that a profit had to be made, otherwise they could not get their wages. Since these other matters have been introduced you cannot trust any one of them.

46. *Mr. Veitch.*] That is rather strong, surely?—That is my opinion. I was asked my opinion.

47. *Mr. Macdonald.*—What particular regulation did you find offensive?—I will not say any one in particular: it was the whole lot.

48. *Mr. Robertson.*] Did you find the closing-hour regulation oppressive?—Yes. As soon as a fishmonger sold a fowl he ceased to be a fishmonger, and had to close for the weekly half-holiday. My name is still on the records of the Court as having broken the law in regard to compulsory closing.

49. *The Chairman.*] You desire to run your business in your own way?—Yes.

50. *Mr. Robertson.*] You stated that you had put engines into fishing-boats: have you any interest in these boats which fish with hook and line?—I have until the engines are paid off; after that, none.

51. Do you sell the catch of the hook-and-line men?—No. They are consigned to an auctioneer, and I do not touch them in any way.

52. You have an interest in the boats?—I have a bill of sale, which any one is at liberty to take up from me. While these men are owing me money I hold a bill of sale, but at the same time they can send their fish where they like.

53. Is it open to any member of the general public to go to the market and purchase fish?—Yes.

54. You know of no means of artificially maintaining the price of fish in the market?—None at all, excepting that the fishermen regulate the supply.

55. You mentioned about a limit of two dozen proper for a boat. If that limit was put on, would it mean the limit of fish for that boat?—No; only of that class of fish.

56. *Mr. Veitch.*] Are all the fish caught by the trawlers put on the market, or are any thrown overboard?—None are thrown overboard that are of any value. Dogfish we throw away.

57. *Mr. Hall.*] Is there ever such a surplus of fish as to be able to use them for manure purposes?—Very seldom. Once or twice in my whole career we have caught a larger quantity of fish than we could deal with, for the reason that we could not get the labour to deal with them while fresh. Trawlers are working under an award of the Arbitration Court. The hours are fixed, and the catch, be it large