

preceding the half-holiday, whether such employment has been on consecutive days or not, and whether the wage-earner has been continuously in the service of the occupier or not." Does your Council think that that will work out in equity and justice in all the branches of industry in the colony?—Well, I am afraid that clause is a little stringent. I certainly think if a man has worked five days in the week that he is entitled to the half-holiday on the Saturday, and I think that is the mind of the Council in the matter.

117. You see, the trouble is this—and you know it perfectly well: that once a law is enacted it becomes drastic in its operation. That is the technical meaning of it, but the words are too often taken. Now, the case you cited might not be complained of. It would be easy to give him a half-day to enable him to work the full week; but a Judge or a Magistrate would interpret this clause as follows: Because he has worked five days the employer has got to give him an extra day's pay for which he (the employé) has not done a single hand's-stroke?—That certainly does not seem fair. But where men are working continuously in the service of an employer we think it is a fair thing that they should have a half-holiday, and also in the case where a man is taken on. There is some difference between a man who does work just now and again, and one taken on for a week or a fortnight. In the latter case I think it is a fair thing for the man to get the half-holiday, although I see the point that you have made. If an employer had nothing for the man to do on the half-day in the last day of the week, it certainly does seem, and is, a hardship that he should be compelled to pay him.

118. Supposing he only did two hours' work on the Friday: he is entitled to the two hours on Friday, and for what he did not do on the whole of Saturday, if he has done four days and six hours at any time during the month previous intermittently. I can hardly imagine that the Wellington Trades and Labour Council thinks that honest and fair?—I have said what I think about it. There are other members of the Council present. I do not know exactly whether they hold a different opinion on the matter to me or not.

119. *Mr. Arnold.*] You have stated, Mr. Naughton, that the workers as a whole would prefer doing away with overtime altogether?—That is what we have always said, Mr. Arnold.

120. With regard to your evidence concerning the Government employés: I understand that that evidence is only your own opinion?—Yes.

121. It is not the opinion of the Trades and Labour Council?—Oh, no. I said that it was my personal opinion.

122. And the other evidence is the view of your Council?—I would say that the Trades Council latterly has never passed a direct resolution on the matter, so that I could not sufficiently say that this is our wish—I am speaking on behalf of the majority of the Trades and Labour Council—that we are in favour of the Government employés being brought under the Act.

123. The other part of your evidence in regard to this Act is the opinion of your Council?—Yes.

124. Of what is your Council composed?—Trades and labour unions.

125. About how many are there?—Sixteen or seventeen.

126. Could you give us a rough idea of how many members there are in these seventeen unions—in the aggregate, I mean?—About eighteen hundred members altogether.

127. You really voice the opinion of about eighteen hundred men altogether?—Yes.

128. You quoted, Mr. Cooper, the case of a flour-mill in Russia: can you tell the Committee where to look up the authentic document in regard to that case?—I quoted from the *Melbourne Age*, but can forward the extract from the paper to the Committee. I have not got it with me now.

129. *Mr. Bollard.*] With regard to overtime, Mr Naughton, do you think that any employer is anxious to work overtime unless he is compelled to do so?—No, I do not think he is.

130. Do you think it is necessary to restrict the hours, then?—Yes.

131. Why do you think so?—Unless the hours are restricted the overtime will not be restricted.

132. You said it would not be to an employer's advantage that he should work any overtime: why do you want to impose restrictions on him, then?—I think that overtime work is unnecessary where an employer by taking on more hands might do the work without working overtime.

133. He does not want to work overtime unless he is compelled to do so?—He may not. But one can easily see it means increased wages—viz., time and a quarter and time and a half. But there seems to be a disinclination for the employer to make further accommodation in his factory in order that overtime can be abolished altogether. We find men out of work in these trades. How is it they are not employed while men are working overtime?

134. You say personally you do not approve of the labour laws applying to Government employés?—No; I do not think there is the necessity for it.

135. If you were not in the Government employ do you think you would be of the same opinion?—In my own trade the conditions we are working under are quite superior to what they are working outside. We work forty-four hours a week, and outside they work forty-eight. If one is in a Government department, and he is sick, and has been working there for two years, he gets a month's full pay and half-pay for another month, which is not received by employés in outside concerns. The Government employés obtain every holiday. They get all the statutory holidays, and get paid for them. That does not obtain outside in my trade.

136. I was referring to you as president of the Trades and Labour Council—that is, independent of your being in the Government employ: would you be of the same opinion?—Yes.

137. Simply because your own trade was not affected?—Yes. But there are a number of trades exactly similar to my own. The only case where I see it would be an advantage for the Government employés to be under the Act would be in the case of the railway employés and casual labour; they all get a certain rate of wages. I would not like it to be understood that I oppose it very greatly. I do not think it would make a very great difference one way or the other.