

116. Well, then, if it never spoils the horses by giving them too good food, how are you going to spoil your men by giving them too much wages?—Well, we do, to a certain extent, I find.

117. You have been in business a good number of years?—Yes.

118. Have your hands as a rule stayed for long periods with you?—There is one man there now who was in the same business when I was a boy.

119. There is a good feeling then, between yourself and your men?—Yes.

120. In years gone by there has been a good feeling?—Yes.

121. Is there as good a feeling since the labour legislation has been passed, as there was in the past?—No.

122. *Mr. Bollard.*] I understood you to say that what the butchers in Christchurch want is exemption?—Yes; it would suit us better than anything else.

123. Supposing you do not get exemption, what hours would suit you for opening and closing?—We open now at half past 6 in the morning.

124. Is that early enough?—It is early enough for us, but some shops require to open a bit earlier. It depends on what you have to do. Some of the trains start at half past 7 and some at 8. We have to send small goods on nearly every train that goes out. If we did not start at half past 6 in the morning, or something like it—on Saturday morning we might start a bit earlier—we could not fulfil the orders on hand.

125. Supposing you were carrying on business in a part of the colony where it was very difficult to keep meat at certain seasons of the year, and you were supplying hotels and boardinghouses who would not take overnight the meat for the breakfasts of people who wanted to go away at say, 6: how would you manage if you only opened at half past 6, if the law prevented you from opening your shop before?—You might as well shut the shop altogether.

126. Then, as far as half past 6 in the morning is concerned, you are not prepared to say that it would suit the whole colony?—No. In Auckland a man might have to kill some of the stuff in the morning, and he might have to start at 5. Each place has its own requirements. Where the weather is warm I do not know how they do. I was in Sydney a short time ago and I saw the carts taking the stuff about at all hours of the day. It was killed the same day as it was sold in the shops.

127. *Mr. Alison.*] You consider it essential to the working of a butcher's business that the work should be started early in the morning?—Yes.

128. And in the warmer parts of the colony at an earlier time even than in Christchurch?—Of course they know their requirements better than I could explain them.

129. But it would follow?—Yes, naturally.

130. Has the Act been enforced in Christchurch?—No.

131. Have there been any prosecutions under the law?—I do not think so.

132. Under the existing Act could a butcher's business be carried on so as to meet the public requirements and to enable the shopkeeper to run the establishment?—No, not now the present Act has come into force.

133. You are positive of that?—Yes, positive.

134. Are the whole of the butchers opposed to the early-closing clauses of the Act?—Yes.

135. The whole of them?—Yes.

136. Are the butchers all opposed to the provisions *re* the hour for opening shops—8 o'clock in the morning?—Well, I should think so. No man could conduct his business. He would have to close.

137. Do you think there should be any restrictions as to the hours at which butchers should open?—No; that should be left to the man himself.

138. You are working under an Arbitration Court award, fifty-six hours a week?—Yes.

139. Do you consider that an award of the Arbitration Court is the best and fairest way of determining the working-hours and the hours of closing?—Yes; the matter has been thrashed out before the Court from both sides, and if they had not been satisfied you would have thought the men would, if they could have condensed the hours at all, have wanted to do so.

140. Do you consider it in any way necessary, either as affecting employees or employers, that as far as butchers are concerned there should be legislation fixing the hours of opening or closing their shops?—I do not think so.

141. How long have you been in business?—I have been in one shop about thirty years.

142. How many employees have you?—Fifteen.

143. Prior to the passing of this Act, did any one of your employees or the employees of any other butcher's establishment, as far as you now, complain as to the hours they were working during the day or night?—I think they were, before the award came into force, but none of them have complained since the award was made.

144. They were quite satisfied with the decision of the Arbitration Court?—Yes, perfectly satisfied.

145. As regards the hours of closing and opening, the wages, and all other matters?—Yes.

146. *The Chairman.*] How did you come before the Arbitration Court on the last occasion?—Did you take the men there or did the men take you?—They took us there.

147. Why?—Because they thought they were not getting enough wages.

148. And because of the hours of labour?—Yes, I think so.

149. You told Mr. Alison just now that there was no dissatisfaction at all since the award was made?—There was not before last year.

150. *Mr. Alison.*] I said prior to the passing of the Act. You have been working under an award for how long?—Three years—since 1902.

151. *The Chairman.*] You see the fact of the men taking the employers to the Arbitration Court shows that there was dissatisfaction?—Mr. Alison said, since the award has been in force.