

members, representing all kinds of industries, but they do not sit there as employers—only as members of the association. As Mr. Willis has read to you the report of our joint committee, there is no need for me to go over the same ground. For some months past the Industrial Association of Canterbury and the Trades and Labour Council have been working hand in hand considering the best means of fostering local industry. They have dealt with various trades, and among them there came up for discussion the local implement-manufacturing industry. The course we have taken so far has been to ask the manufacturer, the worker, the seller, and the consumer; to attend our meetings we have certain questions which we ask, and by these means we are able to get the consensus of opinion from all of these. Later we are going to publish the report in full; meantime, at the request of the workers' executive, we have given them our interim report on the agricultural implement machinery question, which you have heard read. I wish to emphasize the fact that the Industrial Association of Canterbury is only too glad to associate itself with the Trades and Labour Council in any movement that has for its object the benefiting of our workers; and I consider this is one of the most important subjects that has ever come before the colony, because it means that if the American trust gets a footing here, five hundred men in Christchurch alone will be thrown out of work. I am sure no one wishes that, and if we can only show the farmer that by patronising the trust he will only gain a little for a little while and lose a lot for a long time, I am sure we will have the farmers with us. I think the fact that the manufacturers have agreed to give a guarantee that they will not raise the price if this duty is placed upon the American machines, is sufficient guarantee to the farmer that he will not be exploited by the local manufacturer.

WILLIAM HENRY UTTLEY examined. (No. 4.)

11. *The Chairman.*] You are president of the Otago Trades and Labour Council, Mr. Uttley?—Yes; but I am not here exactly as representing the Trades and Labour Council. I am representing the workers in the implement industry in Dunedin, together with the Trades and Labour Council. The employees in the agricultural-implement industry in Dunedin sent a note to the Trades and Labour Council asking the Council to call a meeting. In compliance with that request we called a meeting, and there were several resolutions passed there.

12. Was this a public meeting?—Yes; held on last Friday evening in Dunedin. One resolution carried there was that I, as a representative man of organized and unorganized labour, should be appointed a representative on a deputation to come, I understood, to meet the Premier. Giving evidence before the Labour Bills Committee is the thing I was not aware of till I arrived here. I can only emphasize what has been said by the previous speakers. It is no good going over the same ground. There was, however, one point I did not hear mentioned, and that is this: I saw in print a report of an interview that took place in the Australian Colonies some time ago, between a representative of this trust, and either a manufacturer or a reporter, I forget which. This gentleman, during the course of the interview, said that his association were prepared to sink two millions of money to capture the trade of the Australian Colonies. Now, I affirm, that in view of a statement like that—that this association or trust are prepared to spend that amount of money—two millions sterling—protection is scarcely any good to our local manufacturers. That is the way it struck me. The farmers ought to look at it in this way: You may for the time being get your machines cheaper, but as soon as ever the local article is run off, and the trust gets control, the screw is put on. And it will go on as it has been going in some parts of Australia recently and in the Argentine. To bear this out I may state that I have the word of a firm in Dunedin engaged in this business, which firm happen to have been agents for the Deering Company. That machine has been absorbed by the trust. The trust has started business in New Zealand, and as an effect of this the firm I speak of were given notice that their agency would be taken from them as from the 1st October in the centres where the trust had already established offices—Christchurch and Dunedin—and that on any machines which they sold from that date at sub-agencies in the country districts there must be a £5 advance in price—or, the machines that they were selling, and were selling at a fair profit, at £35, must, as from the 1st October, be sold at £40 each. That shows the trust has commenced, and that those are the proceedings it will take, and, if it runs off the local manufacturers here, no doubt it will go on and get any price it likes. The only bright feature I can see about the matter is that in this combination business the trust will get so huge and so unwieldy that the people will rise against it; the machinery in connection with the association will become so great that the Government will have to step in and manufacture the implements themselves.

JAMES HULL examined. (No. 5.)

13. *The Chairman.*] What are you, Mr. Hull?—An ironmoulder.

14. Employed in Christchurch?—Yes. I wish to speak, on behalf of the trade, as the president of the Federated Iron and Brass Moulders of New Zealand. A number of the remarks that I had intended to make have been already made. I wish briefly to state the effect upon those engaged in the industry in Christchurch during the short time the trust has been established there. This is the busy season of the year, and at this time last year every ironmoulder in Christchurch was employed. This year, owing to the number of machines the trust has brought in, there are at the present time from five to fifteen moulders walking the streets. This is just the beginning of the season, and unless something is speedily done to rectify matters by next year more than half the moulders—some sixty or seventy—will be thrown out of employment. The other trades that are directly affected are the blacksmiths, the wheelwrights, and the fitters, and unless something is done there will be two or three hundred men thrown out of employment in Christchurch.