

they could not invest funds, say, in any land exceeding one acre, and it is quite possible that some wealthy unions may have investments by way of mortgage on more than one acre. Clause 21, "Industrial associations": The Council is of opinion that the word "four" should be struck out, and that the clause should stand as it is in the present Act.

11. You mean "two or more"?—Yes, I think that is so; otherwise it would be a great hardship on many unions. The wharf-labourers in Greymouth and the wharf-labourers in Westport, I have been informed by the secretaries and presidents, are seriously considering the question of federating. They are practically in one district, and there is a difference in the rates paid at the present time. They want to federate, and have a uniform award.

12. Would it not meet the view if an industrial union had the same power to vote for the Court as they have for the Board?—That would be better, I think. Then, coming to clause 86, subsection (3), "Power to extend the award," the Council, while admitting it is absolutely necessary that there should be uniformity of conditions of labour and rates of pay throughout the colony, are also of opinion that this power to extend the award ought not to be allowed where there is already an award existing in an industrial district.

13. *Mr. Collins.*] Not if the awards are conflicting?—Well, it would cause trouble and dissension. I understand, as far as our correspondence goes, that for some years—in Auckland particularly—there has been a Tailoresses' Union there, but, strange to say, no inducement whatever can prevail upon the Tailoresses' Union in Auckland to cite cases, or to go before the Conciliation Board or Arbitration Court, in order to bring up the standard of wages to what it is in other parts of the colony—in the South.

14. *Mr. Arnold.*] I do not think that is so, is it?—Well, probably we have been misled, but that is what we understood. And, seeing that they cannot be prevailed upon, the unions found it was detrimental to their own interests. They seek to extend the award into districts where there is no award already in existence. Where there is already an industrial award in existence the Council is of the opinion that there will be conflict.

15. *Mr. Lewis.*] When a certain award expired, what would happen then—say, a different award from the rest of the colony?—They should endeavour to come up with the other parts of the colony.

16. But if that is to be done in eighteen months from now, why not do it at once?—If a union desired the power of extension it should be given.

17. *The Chairman.*] Suppose that the bulk of the colony were bound by an award, and one district were left out; say some ten or eleven formed a union and entered into an agreement for three years, would you prohibit that?—No, certainly not, where there is an industrial agreement. I do not look upon an industrial agreement as an arbitrary award.

18. Has it not the same force?—It is far better this way, that an award of the Court should be obtained. In our opinion an award of the Court is infinitely superior to an industrial agreement between the parties. Unless the agreement is properly looked into the worker goes to the wall. It is infinitely better if an award of the Court be obtained in preference to an industrial agreement. If there were an industrial award in a district, I say extend the award if it is about to expire.

19. *Mr. Tanner.*] Do you think that subclause (3), to which you refer, provides clearly enough for uniformity of awards throughout the colony? Is there any doubt in the minds of your Council on the matter?—There is a doubt in this way, that it does not state specifically how the award will apply. There is a difference of opinion about it, and the Council think it is somewhat ambiguous.

20. Suppose it read "in the colony," would that be clearer?—Yes, provided that it shall not extend where an award already exists—that no existing award be interfered with. In the last clause, No. 113, the Council is emphatically of opinion that the clause be struck out. The Council is of opinion that this Act should be made applicable to the Government employés, and they consider it a great hardship that where there are so many casual hands on public works, railways, &c., the provisions and conditions of award shall not be made applicable to these people. Therefore they say that the provisions of the Bill be made to apply to the Government.

21. *Mr. Hutcheson.*] You do not mean to include Police and Defence Departments?—No, industrial departments.

*Mr. McLaren.*] I do not know whether I am appearing here under false pretences or not. I may state briefly that I am not deputed to represent the Trades Council. Being a new member of the Trades Council, and desiring to emphasize the necessity for certain alterations in the Act, I asked the Council at the last meeting to place me on the list to give evidence here, which they did. I was not present when the Council went through the Act. Whatever evidence I have to give is as secretary of the Wharf Labourers' Union. I would like to emphasize one clause—the interpretation clause. With respect to the interpretation of the word "industry," I am asked by my union to say that we urge upon the Committee to have the Bill passed with that clause as it reads now. It appears to us somewhat of an absurdity that we should go to the expense of £60 or £70 and then have the case thrown out.

22. *Mr. Lewis.*] Before going any further, I should like to ask Mr. Jones a question. Are you willing to have the Bill altered in this way: Where there is no union at present and the employers are powerless—take the bricklayers and stonemasons in Christchurch; there being no union, the employers cannot go before the Board—should it not be competent for the employers to go to the Board and ask them to fix the rate of wages, and if the men do not like to form a union it should go by default? If men will not band together the employers cannot get at them, and it seems to me that so long as men are satisfied they will not band. Should there not be a provision that the employers may take the case to the Court where men will not band together into a union?—I think a provision of that sort would do no harm; it would show the men if they did not set up and defend themselves they would go to the wall. Giving an individual opinion, I should certainly say, by all means, as it would then force men to protect themselves.