

tions (including Wellington) and the Auckland Industrial Association in regard to the operation of subsection (3) of clause 86. We have been told that it is not intended that an award should be made arbitrarily throughout the colony. I take it to mean that the Judge shall in all cases make an award apply arbitrarily throughout the colony. That is what we take exception to. The conditions prevailing in Auckland are very different indeed from those in other parts of the colony. There are different systems adopted in Auckland. We have far more natural advantages in Auckland than they have in any of the other centres. It has been asserted that there would be no other objection to this clause if the articles that are being manufactured in Auckland were not in some cases interchangeable throughout the colony; and it is in consequence of the difference of opinion that exists between North and South that this objection has been created. As regards the other principles contained in clauses 85 and 86, we are in perfect unison with them. In regard to Auckland, I could name about four different reasons why exception is taken: they are, geographical position, climatic conditions, and economical conditions, which latter can be divided into domestic and industrial. From my knowledge of Auckland and other centres I have no hesitation in saying, with reference to wages, that a man in Auckland earning, say, £3 a week, can save money to a greater extent than a man on the same footing, say, in Wellington, particularly. By way of illustration, take the question of house-rent. In Auckland he can obtain a house with sufficient accommodation for himself and his family at a much lower rental than one could be obtained in Wellington. He can get a five- or six-roomed house in Auckland for about 10s. a week, and that house would be in a respectable locality, and quite comfortable and habitable. This is an altogether different state of things to that which prevails in Wellington, as I can state from experience. As to the difference in the method of production, the system under which some industries in Auckland are conducted is altogether different from the southern system, and I maintain that this has a bearing which is pertinent to the question at issue. If there is no distinction to be made between the natural conditions of one part of the colony and that of another, then, I say, we are penalising the progress of the colony—say, for instance, in the case of an award being made in Dunedin and being applied also to Auckland. If you attempt to level down everything instead of levelling-up, it would have a far more injurious effect upon the colony, as it would simply mean that, instead of protecting local industries, we would be opening up avenues for the imported article, and this, I think, is undesirable. It is not a question in our case simply between the employer and the employé; it is the broader question of the promotion of the industries of the colony. It appeared in evidence, in the case of the Tailoresses' dispute recently in Dunedin, that the manufacturers stated that owing to the conditions under which they worked, the imported article was coming into the colony in larger proportions than it should do. It was also admitted in evidence that Dunedin was some twenty-six years behind Auckland in the methods adopted in certain industries. If it is a question of adjustment of workers' earnings, then, in Auckland, I think, the employers are prepared to pay a weekly wage on an equivalent ratio to what is paid in the South. In some, at least, of the factories in Dunedin they work only forty-four hours per week; while in Auckland, where they are also governed by the Factories Act, they work forty-eight hours per week, and the employés are quite content. The forty-four worked in Dunedin is simply an adjustment between employers and employés, and is by mutual consent. In one industry in Auckland there are some four hundred or five hundred operatives, and the number belonging to the union is only from sixty to seventy. This goes to show that they are perfectly satisfied with the conditions operating there. They have never been before the Conciliation Board or the Arbitration Court. Everything has worked amicably; and for the several reasons enumerated the Auckland Association requests me to contest the insertion of this clause as it stands. It has been stated in regard to this clause that it would bear arbitrarily. My suggestion is that the clause should be amended so that, in the event of a demand being made for the application of the spirit of the clause throughout the colony, opportunity should be given to the parties interested, on ample notice, to give evidence before the Arbitration Court in some central part of the colony—say, in Wellington. Of course, it might be in some cases more convenient to hold the case at Christchurch, if the matter in dispute referred only to the South Island.

4. *Mr. Lewis.*] You would object to Auckland being compelled to pay under the Wellington log, we will say, in your particular trade?—In the first place, I should desire to know that the log meant practically the same thing. In Dunedin, in the clothing trade, the log is not on all-fours with the log in Auckland.

5. Would you have any objection to a colonial award being made by the Court?—If the basis of production were the same, then I should say by all means let us have a uniform award. I assert that it is only right that discretion should be used by the authorities in dealing with these various questions.

6. *Mr. Arnold.*] Supposing that the Auckland employers and employés were present before the Court to give evidence; there is no reason why the Court should not make an award that is fair to all parties concerned, is there?—No; if it were based on the cost of production, and so long as all the points in question were taken into consideration, I should think there would be no difficulty in making such an award.

7. I have another question which I wish to ask you; it applies to Auckland. Is it not a fact that in Auckland members are frightened to have it known that they belong to unions?—I cannot say that it is so now, although I recognise that it has been so in the past, but there is a different feeling now. The relations between both sides are more satisfactory. Perhaps up to, say, twelve months ago, such a state of things did exist. There was a certain bitter feeling, but that feeling is very much modified now.

8. You think that the feeling that existed twelve months ago does not exist now?—Yes; at all events, not to the same extent.