

Committee, and not to make any suggestions in respect to the present law. Our suggestions will be found in the annual reports of the conferences of the Trades and Labour Council, which have been placed before the Government.

53. We do not get those. We have to consider this Bill and to amend it if we consider it desirable to do so. Do you not think, following out Mr. Arnold's suggestion, it would have been wise to make some proposals by way of overcoming the objections to the present law?—We shall only be too pleased to make suggestions and bring them along if the Committee will give us permission to do so.

54. *Mr. Ell.*] You are speaking on behalf of the delegates present?—I am speaking as a member of the Parliamentary Committee.

55. You are the chairman?—No, I do not occupy that position.

56. Well, you have gone through the Bill?—Yes.

57. Will you indicate the clauses that you approve of in the Bill?—Clauses 1, 2, 4 (with all the words after the word "Court," in the 22nd line, struck out). We agree to clause 32, clauses 34, 35, 36, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44—subclause (1), paragraphs (b) and (c), also subclause (2)—clauses 55 and 57. Of course, there are a good many clauses that I referred to in my evidence where merely technical objections are adjusted.

58. So, as a matter of fact, you do not condemn the Bill as a whole?—No, it is only the cardinal principles of the Bill.

59. I notice that you have not made any reference to clause 50: what have you to object to in clause 50?—We ask that that be struck out.

60. May I ask your reasons for striking that out?—Well, perhaps it would be better if that question were put to one of the practical men conversant with the matter. That does not come under my notice at all. I do not object to answer the question, but I am not conversant with the matter of permits.

61. *The Chairman.*] Do you mean that you are engaged in an industry in which this is of little or no account?—It is never used in the Seamen's or Tramways Unions, with which I am acquainted. They are all qualified men by Act of Parliament; and Cooks and Waiters also, I believe.

62. *Mr. Ell.*] You are, of course, aware that the workers throughout the colony have asked for compulsory preference to unionists?—Yes.

63. If you have not all workers in the unions, how can you have compulsory preference?—The first thing we have to decide is, what is preference? "Preference" means that a unionist shall receive preference of employment over a non-unionist, all things being equal. That is exactly what is given by the Court to-day.

64. That is conditional preference?—Yes.

65. That is all that you are asking for?—No, we are asking for unconditional preference, the same as the unions had prior to the maritime strike of 1890.

66. Under conditional preference a unionist must be taken before a non-unionist if he is able to do the work?—Yes.

67. If all workers were compelled to join a union, do you not think you would have a better chance of securing compulsory preference?—I will give you a practical illustration of that. It has been admitted all round and cannot be denied that the Seamen's Union have some 95 per cent. of seamen employed in its ranks. It has been on four occasions before the Arbitration Court, and on each occasion asked for preference, and proved right up to the hilt that it had 95 per cent of the seamen in the union. Yet it has not got preference and never will get it from the Court, notwithstanding that before 1890 the union had out-and-out preference, as the Minister well knows—he piloted the union through the maritime strike. I would just like to add this: that we have received numerous complaints from shipowners about certain men getting intoxicated, missing their passages, and putting the ship to considerable inconvenience through additional work being placed on other members of the crew. We as a union have no power against the men for doing that, and when I have received complaints I have said, "You claim the right to employ whom you choose, and that being so, you can put up with the inconvenience until the union gets unconditional preference. When we get that we will undertake to see that you are protected from this kind of thing." What is going on is very disheartening to any man who has to deal with these cases.

68. Do you not think that if every worker was in a union it would strengthen the union and your position in demanding this compulsory preference?—Undoubtedly it would strengthen our hands, but the clause you may be referring to will not put a single man in a union. On the contrary, the tendency will be to take men out of it.

69. *Mr. Hardy.*] What is your reason for urging that officers of the unions should not be workers in the trade?—The reason is this: it is a well-known fact that if a man takes any prominent part whatever in connection with his union, being dependent on his employer for his bread and butter, he will very soon have to find another man to employ him.

70. You wish to have them, then, in a measure independent of their employer?—Yes, that if a union chooses to have its officers independent of the employer, it should be allowed to have that privilege.

71. In New Zealand it is an old adage that "the old order passeth away and the new order ruleth," I suppose?—I do not know anything about these proverbs.

72. Well, are there any changes going on here?—There are changes going on throughout the world.

73. Do you not think the employee of to-day, speaking figuratively, will be the employer of to-morrow?—Not necessarily so. There may be some men working for their living to-day who may be employers to-morrow, but the majority will be workers until they pass away from this earth.

74. But, as a rule in New Zealand, are not the employers men who have been employees?—I cannot say.

75. That does not come within your experience?—Of course, there are men who have been workers in years gone by who are employers to-day.