

therefore recommend the retention of the present Boards of Conciliation, giving to their decisions a greater finality and the full force of an award of the Court. We believe that a workers' representative who sits continually on the Conciliation Board will have a better grasp of procedure, and be of greater utility towards the effecting of a settlement of an industrial dispute than any chance subservient Industrial Councillor. We agree to the appointment of experts to sit on the Board with representatives whenever it is so desired by either party. The Minister in charge of the Bill has lost sight of the fact that there is provision in the Act as it stands at present to appoint special Boards of Conciliation, when the parties deem such Boards desirable, and to add experts to the existing Boards.

2. Enforcement of awards by Magistrates; with rights of appeal to the Arbitration Court.—For Magistrates alone to enforce awards, the practical nature of which they will probably know nothing about, is a clear contradiction in principle of the Industrial Councils proposal, and to allow appeals from fines imposed would probably end in virtually fining any union of workers which dared to take action for enforcement. The mode of enforcement by Magistrates, with practical assessors added, is the better course.

3. Re-enactment of provisions which (according to the decision of the Supreme Court) give power to imprison for non-payment of fines.—The writ of attachment and imprisonment provisions are a disgrace, as, whatever may be said from a theoretic standpoint, we know that in practice none but the workers will ever be so dealt with, and that whilst employers will be held to the law by property obligations, the workers will be held liable on the quasi-criminal basis of attachment of person. We contend that fines should only be recoverable as a civil debt, for only on these lines can we expect equal judgments as applied to employers and employed.

4. Making individual members of unions personally liable for payment of fines imposed on the union of which they are members.—If the personal property of individual members of workers' unions is made attachable for acts of the union, then there will be added a strong inducement for workers to remain out of the unions. At present a person joining a union incurs financial responsibilities in accordance with the union's articles of association—to use a business definition—but it is proposed to add thereto financial responsibilities which the individual never voluntarily incurred, which principle, if applied to general business concerns, would be held as tyrannical and shameless robbery. This, with other sections, makes it appear as if the general object aimed by this Bill was the entire destruction of trade-unionism in New Zealand.

5. Empowering employers to deduct from the wages of any worker in their employ amounts totalling the amount imposed by way of a fine under this Act.—There is no doubt that this proposal calls for the strongest protest which the workers can make. It is an abrogation of the principles of the Truck Act, the Workmen's Wages Act, and the general principles of our labour laws; the treatment of the workers generally as serfs, over whom the employers should hold a power of possession. If ever this is put into force, the workers from one end of the country to the other will be justified in using any means at hand to relieve them of such base enslavement.

6. Special meeting to refer a dispute for hearing to be advertised three times, and notices and proxy forms posted to all members of the union.—This proposal for advertising such meetings, &c., only emphasizes the absurdity of the whole business. What matters it whether ballot-papers or proxy papers are posted, seeing, as the Government well knows, the great bulk of such papers never reach the members they are posted to? The plea of union officers everywhere is "Let us have a little common-sense in these matters." "The assumption which lies at the base of all these petty restrictions—that disputes are forced on by trades union agitators," is mainly noticeable as a lie of long standing. Surely when a union's rules are registered under the Act all meetings held under the rules should be recognised as legal.

7. That the Court may empower any union to collect payments from non-members of same, at work in the industry and district, as if such individuals were members of the union.—This is the Government's answer to our plea for "statutory preference to unionists," and the answer is a straight-out insult couched in the language of bribery. It suggests that the motive actuating the unions is a mercenary one, and that this can be met by giving the unions power to extract money from men who are not in the unions. Our reply to this proposal is that of the decent class of men who are outside our unions we want them and not their money, and of the other class, who are enemies both to unions and themselves, we don't want either them or their money until they change their ways, when we will welcome them as comrades. The unions of to-day make fees far less of a consideration than the unions of 1890 did, when the Minister in charge of this Bill was secretary of a maritime union. We trust that no union will disgrace itself by assenting to this proposal in the Bill, for it appears to us to sound the death-knell of all character in the labour movement of our country.

8. Inspectors of Factories to issue all permits to under-rate workers.—This is a further limitation of the rights of unions, and probably another attempt to undercut the minimum wage principle. The unions must strongly oppose it.

9. Limiting the right of a union, which is a branch of a society, the head office of which is outside New Zealand, to dispose of its funds in its own way.

10. No further registration under "The Trades Union Act, 1878," if this Bill is passed.

11. Prohibiting any one from being an officer or member of the committee of management of a union unless he has been, or is, employed in the industry with which the union is established.

12. That all funds of a union, other than those required for general management of the union, shall be spent in the way of providing out-of-work payments and sick-benefits. (N.B.—This last proposal is not yet in the Bill, but the Minister has informed the Employers' Federation "that the section was being drafted, but had to be held over, as he was anxious to send on the measure to the employers.")