

81. Do you not consider that where a worker is more skilful, or more competent, or more energetic than another, he should have higher wages than another worker?—There is nothing to prevent any employer paying any good man who is an exceptionally good workman twice the minimum if he chooses, or thinks the workman is worthy of it.

82. This Bill makes provision enabling the Court to fix a higher wage for the man who is more skilful, more competent, or more energetic than others?—I think that is a matter which should be left to the employer and the employee. Under present circumstances the minimum is generally the maximum.

83. You say that paying a needs wage is opposed to the interests of unionism?—Yes. The Conference was unanimous against it.

84. Why are the unionists opposed to the provisions of the Bill in regard to the needs and exertion wage?—So far as the needs wage is concerned, if men are working together in any particular line and one happens to be a single man, I fail to see why he should not get as much in wages as a married man. The product of his labour is of equal value to his employer. I think that matter is best left as it is.

85. Why do you refer to married and single men when there is no reference to any distinction in the Bill?—Dr. Findlay dealt with that in his speech at Wanganui, and said that was the object with which the Bill was brought down.

86. There is no reference to single or married men in the clause?—But that is the idea with which this was brought down, and possibly the Minister might see his way to say so.

87. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] That cannot be put into effect without the unanimous request of employers and employees?—That is so.

88. *Mr. Alison.*] Do you contend that the Court should only fix the minimum wage?—Yes.

89. And you are aware that the minimum wage becomes the maximum?—Not in all cases. There are cases where the employers are just enough to realise that there are exceptionally good workmen in their particular line, and remunerate those men accordingly.

90. You consider that should be the only principle upon which the fixing of wages by the Arbitration Court should be done?—We are entirely opposed to the fixing of degrees in the payment of wages.

91. You believe in all employees being paid a similar wage, provided the employer agrees to pay an extra wage if he likes?—As far as I am personally concerned, I am prepared to leave the matter entirely in the hands of the employer.

92. But you object to the Court having any jurisdiction to deal with the wage other than fixing the minimum?—As far as this clause goes the Conference was unanimous in protesting against it.

93. *Mr. Poole.*] Are you of opinion that the delay which has taken place in the hearing of cases is very greatly responsible for the unrest among the unions?—Yes.

94. Do you think there is too much formality about the Arbitration Court?—I do. There are far too many legal technicalities which a layman cannot be expected to be conversant with, and often when a case comes before the Court it is thrown out.

95. Do you know of any cases where that has taken place?—Yes, as far as my union is concerned, with respect to the Engine-drivers' dispute before the Court of Arbitration, when it sat in Auckland the last time.

96. Was it thrown out on a legal technicality?—Yes. The thing was done just to avert the day when some modicum of justice would be meted out to the employees.

97. And how long will it be before the Court hears the case?—It will be getting on for six months.

98. Were the men in that particular industry satisfied with the ruling conditions?—No.

99. Is that the reason why you emphasize the value of Conciliation Boards, to be set up identically the same as the Tramway Special Board, with the least legal formality? Do you consider that would be a solution?—Certainly. The legal formalities in filing disputes are inimical to the interests of unionists, and, in the opinion of unionists, the sooner they are swept out of existence and the procedure made as plain as possible the better.

100. Do you think the Willis blot—clause 60 of the principal Act—has had the effect of destroying the usefulness of the Conciliation Boards practically in certain cases?—Yes, I have not the slightest doubt about it. The Conciliation Board has almost ceased to exist, and Auckland workers regret it very much.

101. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] Has your Council considered last year's Bill?—Yes.

102. And you opposed *in toto* the Industrial Councils?—We opposed the Bill in its entirety.

103. Yet you come and tell us the proper thing is an Industrial Council, and quote the special Tramway Board. How do you account for the change in opinion?—The workers have always held that a Board which will go into the equity of a dispute is the best in their interest.

104. And yet they refused to have practical men on both sides to deal with disputes. If provision is made in this Bill to enable a man to strike, you have no objection to the provision remaining in the Bill that cancellation of the union shall follow?—No, I do not object.

105. You do not believe it is right for men to come under an award and then strike—they should either be inside or outside of the Act?—Yes.

106. *Mr. EU.*] You say you uphold the existing law of fining unionists for breaches of award?—Yes, I have already stated that the present law covers that, and I approve of it.

107. You saw the difficulty that occurred on the West Coast when the Minister tried to collect the fine?—That is a matter I know nothing about.

108. A witness stated in answer to a suggestion made that he saw no objection to a levy on members being made up to 2s. a quarter, so as to raise a fund to be paid into the Public Trust