

Account, to be held there and to be seized in the event of a union striking or being fined for breach of an award—the deposit to bear 3½ per cent.—I approve of that idea.

109. You would rather that than that each man should be followed and the amount deducted from his wages by an order of the Court?—Yes, something in that direction would meet the situation.

110. I do not know how long you have lived in New Zealand?—About thirteen years.

111. You have had experience of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act?—Yes.

112. Has the Act improved the conditions of the workers, shortened hours, limited the number of apprentices, and improved their position generally?—As far as my experience goes it has failed to do that. I can quote one instance where men have been working eighty-four or eighty-five hours a week for years. There are some of our members who are working those long hours, and it was to get something done for these men that we went before the Court last time. I refer particularly to men employed by the Devonport Steam Ferry Company, and also on the Wairoa steamers. I might say that those who conducted the case for the Devonport Steam Ferry Company never in any shape or form attempted to contradict the statements that were made by the various witnesses with respect to the number of hours worked.

113. Do you mean to say there are engine-drivers working eighty-four hours a week in the Auckland District?—They are river engineers.

114. There are other unions working under awards: have those unions gained by the Act?—Yes, there are some small bodies of men who have gained, and could not have obtained what they have got by their own efforts. Large bodies in the past have been able to stand on their own, but in the case of small bodies no doubt the Act has been very beneficial to them.

115. And even larger bodies—do you think they have benefited?—Prior to the Act coming into operation the Seamen's Union were getting better wages. They have only during the last few months got back to the standard they had twenty years ago.

116. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] Which they lost through the strike?—Yes.

117. *Mr. Alison.*] Were you not in the employ of the Devonport Steam Ferry Company and dismissed from the company?—I have been in the employ of the Devonport Steam Ferry Company. As far as the question of dismissal is concerned, if put before a special Board of Conciliation they would be able to consider whether it was a dismissal or not, because I could tell you in a very few words what might have led up to it.

118. *The Chairman.*] I do not think it is necessary, because that opens up another field of inquiry?—I have no desire to do that.

*Mr. Alison:* Statements have been made by Mr. Long which, if put in the evidence, are contrary to fact.

THURSDAY, 30TH JULY, 1908.

E. W. ALISON, M.P., made a statement. (No. 7.)

*Mr. Alison:* Mr. Tanner, I desire to make a short statement, to be placed on record, with reference to evidence given by Thomas Long, the last witness before the Committee on the 28th instant. The evidence I refer to was that the river engineers in the employ of the Devonport Ferry Company worked eighty-four hours per week and were underpaid. After the meeting I wired to the secretary to the company to ascertain whether Long's statements were correct, and to inform me of the average hours the river engineers worked, the wages they received, whether overtime was paid, and if so at what rate, and whether the men received any holidays during the year. In reply the secretary has sent the following information by wire: "Long's statement engineers ferry steamers work eighty-four hours per week is not correct. They receive three pounds ten weekly, and one shilling and threepence per hour overtime after ordinary shift. One week's holiday on pay yearly. Sundays off in rotation. Change from day to night shift in turn. Average does not exceed sixty-nine hours per week." I desire to add, sir, that the employees of the ferry company are, taken as a whole, a fine body of men; that they are well paid—better paid than the men working in any ferry service in the Australian Colonies; that the hours they work do not exceed those provided for by the Arbitration Court in the Wellington Ferries Award—viz., seventy hours per week; that the men in the employ of the company have been so satisfied with their wages and the conditions under which they work that several attempts to form a union have failed; that the utmost consideration, consistent with the public requirements, is extended to the employees; and that employment in the company's service is eagerly sought after. I may mention that there are men in the employ of the company to-day who came into its employ when the company first started.

JOHN JACKSON, re-examined. (No. 8.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You told us in the course of your evidence that you deprecated anything in the nature of sectional strikes?—Yes.

2. But you looked forward to a general superintendence of labour under a Federal Council which would have a restraining influence on the sections?—Yes.

3. May I ask if anything in that direction has been attempted?—Yes. We are attempting a move in that direction.

4. With any prospects of success?—Yes, I think so. There is a general federal movement.

5. You further complained of the general delay which takes place in the administration of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act?—Yes, in so far as it deals with breaches of awards and disputes.

6. It applies to both?—Yes.