

The Conference, despite the good will of its members in their earnest attempt to grapple with the problem, failed to agree upon a unanimous solution. I believe, and my colleagues believe, that this failure may have been temporary only. We think that the results of the Conference, though small on the practical side, were large from other points of view which, if less easy to perceive, are of even greater importance, and we feel that in the good feeling engendered by the last Conference there is sufficient prospect of a further step forward to warrant the calling of another Conference before any final decision is arrived at.

The failure of the representatives of industry to agree after an honest and prolonged attempt to do so, shows the very real difficulty of the subject, and where the experts have failed to point the way it would be rash for anybody less highly qualified to move except with the utmost caution. We have therefore decided to bring the parties together again in the hope that they may this time be able to find an agreed solution which will protect the national welfare as well as preserve their own interests, which as I have stated before, are in the long view, identical. It is proposed to convene another Conference during the summer, and to lay the whole matter again before it with the same object in view as on the previous occasion—that in the interests of the whole of New Zealand they should endeavour to hammer out together a solution of our industrial problems which may be presented to the country as the solution recommended by industry as a whole.

Until such a Conference has definitely failed the Government do not intend to force for amendment on the parties of the amendment enacted last session. We propose to make one small alteration, entirely in keeping with the principle that the agreement of the parties should be the paramount consideration—namely, that should both workers and employers deem a new award they may take the necessary steps to obtain it.