

of Arbitration; that we would have to appeal to them in cases of disputes; and that they would not let these fellows in Wellington legislate for them. They would not listen to our proposal to register.

269. Something was said about your being unworthy to sit in the same room: is that correct?—Yes; that referred to Mr. Burke and myself, who had formed another society, called the Lyttelton Casual Wharf-labourers' Union. Mr. Burke was president and I was secretary.

270. *Hon. Major Steward.*] That was prior to the date of the meeting?—No; we had talked about it prior to that, but we had not formed it; we were waiting to see if these people would register this association. A few days later another meeting was called, but in the meantime the Casual Labourers' Union was formed. At the second meeting of the joint committee the discussion arose as to whether these men had the right to sit on the same board because they were members of the union which had been formed.

271. The position is that immediately after the first joint committee meeting in Christchurch certain members set about forming this Casual Labourers' Union?—That is it.

272. Then, it was at the second joint committee meeting that the chairman mentioned he had read the rules of the new union?—Yes.

273. And he then expressed some opinion as to the disability of some persons present at the meeting to remain there?—Yes.

274. What were the exact words?—Well, one of the employers' members—I do not exactly know which—said that, if the society was formed as contemplated, they would not employ any Lyttelton men at all; they would simply take the unemployed from Christchurch.

275. But did this person, or any person, say anything in regard to the propriety of any one then present who were connected with the Casual Labourers' Union remaining in the room?—Yes.

276. What did he say?—He said he would not sit on the same board with any member who would form a union, or who would be in any way connected with a union, antagonistic to this association.

277. As a consequence of that remark, did anything happen?—Yes; two of us left the room—Mr. Burke and myself.

278. Did you get any work afterwards?—None at all; we were simply boycotted. But for the Government providing labour for us in connection with the railways, I and twenty or thirty others in the same position as myself would simply have perished in Lyttelton. It was our salvation when the Government took their railway-work away from the association.

JOHN CURRIE DEMPSIE was examined on oath.

279. *The Chairman.*] What is your occupation?—At present, a wharf-labourer.

280. Are you a member of the Lyttelton Lumpers' and Wharf-labourers' Association?—I am.

281. How long have you been a member of that association?—Since the strike.

282. Is it your opinion that the association has been a very good thing for the men?—I do not think you could better it under the present circumstances.

283. You do not think, if a return was made to the system by which the large companies employed what men they pleased, it would be better?—I do not think so. Many a man and his family would go without bread and butter; that is my opinion.

284. Do you think the system used by Mr. Barns in selecting the men is pretty fair?—I do not think you could get a fairer man than Mr. Barns, but I do not believe in the under-strappers. I say Mr. Barns is a very fair man, and an honest man.

285. Does Mr. Barns do the whole of the selecting?—At times he does, and things then go much better than when the whipper-snappers under him are doing it.

286. What, in your opinion, would become of the men who form the Casual Labourers' Union? They are not able to get work as lumpers until all the members of the association are employed?—They had a fair share of the work prior to forming this union.

287. After that they had to shift for themselves?—Well, according to the rules of our association, you cannot work for two masters.

288. *Mr. Fisher.*] Why did they form the union?—I do not know.

289. *The Chairman.*] Were you not on the committee when the question of registering came up?—I was chairman.

290. Can you tell us why that association was not registered?—We had a meeting in Christchurch, and the late Mr. Cunningham, stamping his stick on the ground, defied us to register.

291. Although it was the wish of the association?—A few days prior to that we took a ballot, and on the ballot we were defeated. I was one who voted for registration, but we were defeated.

292. We were told it was passed by a large majority?—No, excuse me. The shelter-shed was filled when we took a ballot, and we were defeated, and the gentleman who told you we were not defeated told you a falsehood.

293. *Mr. Fisher.*] Was the majority so large or numerous against the proposition for registration as to leave no doubt in your mind as to what the real result was?—I had no doubt. The men were simply cowed; they were frightened. I must say they wished for registration, but they would not show their hands.

294. The resolution in favour of registration was defeated because the men were cowed?—I think so; I am positive of it.

295. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Prior to this ballot being taken had any resolution been passed in favour of registration?—No.