

President of the Arbitration Court—Judge Edwards—expressed himself in this way, if I may be permitted to quote his words. He said to the mine-owners: "You are not obliged to employ union men. If you object to them you can get men from anywhere, and simply get them to join the union." Now, we claim that our rules are broad on the question. Any person meeting the secretary in the street should be able to join by paying the necessary subscription, for it might be that the man may have work to go to at once.

5. *Captain Russell.*] Do you mean any person irrespective of character? Well, the proposer and seconder would have to certify as to his character. I may say that the Carriers' Union have asked the City Council to refuse to grant licenses to men who are not of good character—men who, perhaps, have been in gaol.

6. *Right Hon. the Premier.*] An interim permit should be given to him, subject to confirmation by the society later on.—Yes, that is so.

7. *The Chairman.*] Do you propose here that, instead of saying "may," we should put in "shall" in the interpretation clause, union members to be employed in preference to non-union men?—We are entirely agreed on that. Mr. Quick, in speaking on the Conciliation Board here, said that the object of giving preference to union men was in part to recompense them for depriving them of the power to strike; that where a union was sufficiently strong in numbers preference should be given to them, because the right to strike had been taken from them, and the only power they had would be to establish preference of employment. Clause 3 of our rules reads as follows: "The objects shall be—(1.) To correct abuses; (2.) To initiate reforms; (3.) To assist employers in every reasonable and just demand; (4.) To assist employers in every case of wrongdoing or dishonesty on the part of employes; (5.) To provide a legal expenses fund; (6.) To inaugurate schemes having for their object the benefiting of members morally, socially, politically, and intellectually; (7.) To assist co-workers in difficulties." Then, again, clause 15 says: "The Committee shall have power to inflict fines not exceeding £10 for unfair practices and breaches of the union rules, and shall have full power of taking evidence, both orally and documentary, in support or defence of any such breach or unfair practice." We claim that an employe belonging to a union will certainly make a better employe than one outside the union. Further, we say there is no employer who will take exception to these conditions and rules. I would like to say this: The Government is now experimenting here in Wellington with their own traps, horses, and men in collecting the mails: the reason being that there was formerly a contract for that work without any stipulations, and for the heavy work the stipulations were, as to wages, the current rate. The employers were employing men and boys at a very small wage, and worked them all hours. We drew the attention of the Premier to this fact. Mr. Seddon, speaking at the Basin Reserve, said it was a most diabolical system of sweating, as bad as had come under his notice. Thus the Government employ their own traps, horses, and men for the mail-collecting; and in regard to the other work a contract was made. In regard to this contract drivers were to work the maximum number of hours per week (forty-eight), and receive £2 5s. We found, however, that the contractors were not paying this wage, and so far satisfied the Government of the fact that last week they (the Government) cancelled the contract. We had two union men working among eighteen or twenty others, and the only men whom we could get to stand by us in this matter were the two union men; and what was the consequence? Why, they were dismissed; they lost their billets through it. We agree with clause 3, "The Minister for Labour shall have the administration of this Act." We consider that the Labour Bureau is the proper department to have control of the Act. As regards multiplicity of unions, this is a matter we are very strong on. Take the Drivers' Union, there are 227 members in its ranks.

8. *Mr. Morrison.*] In Wellington?—Yes. When we were before the Conciliation Board we had nine different awards. The employes claim that their different industries all require to be considered, for one class of drivers were busier at one time of the year than another. The branches are so wide. Compare the cordial-makers with the sand and gravel proprietors of Wellington. These men are in this position: whilst the principal employers sign these awards, there are four or five others who will not sign, and when we come before the Court on Monday we will be told that it is no good (the award) because it has no jurisdiction. We say that if you want to succeed you must have a properly consolidated measure to work upon. If any other drivers want redress, let them come to us and join our union. My instructions have been to always meet employers in every reasonable way, to offer no obstacle whatever, and as a proof to-day there are two agreements duly registered. We consider that, whatever you do, do not have a lot of mushroom unions cropping up; let there be one proper union to carry out the necessary work in each trade and district. Now, with regard to Clause 14, I will say that it is a good clause; for example, supposing the Wellington Drivers' Union here have members of their union working in Palmerston North, who may say, "We feel disposed to form a little branch of our own." Now, whilst we do not want a lot of small unions cropping up, I think that is a privilege which ought to be given. As regards subclause (3) of clause 86, we say that where the Board has been successful in settling a dispute, and, say, one-half or more than one-half of the employers agree that the Board should have extended jurisdiction in that direction, that they could make the others party to the dispute whether they liked it or not. We are very strong on the Conciliation Board being left intact. We consider that if you touch the Conciliation Board at all you are getting at the whole root of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. I may say that Mr. J. J. Curtis, one of the largest carrying firms in Wellington, is to-morrow going to sign our agreement not to go before the Court. Now, our trouble is not as a rule with the large employers. I am speaking for my own union when I say we have no trouble with them, and instead of creating dissension we are on better terms with the larger employers than we were before the union was formed. I say that without fear of contradiction we are brought in touch with the employers much more, and are on a far more friendly footing than hitherto. Clause 37, subsection (7): We think that the time should be fourteen days instead of ten. There is another