1903.

NEW ZEALAND.

LABOUR BILLS COMMITTEE:

REPORT OF THE) ON THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT BILL AND THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR ACCIDENTS AMENDMENT BILL; TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE THEREON.

(MR. J. F. ARNOLD, CHAIRMAN.)

Reports brought up on Labour Department Bill, 13th October and 4th November; Workers' Compensation for Accidents Amendment Bill, 6th October and 4th November; and ordered to be prtnted.

ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

THURSDAY, THE 2ND DAY OF JULY, 1903.

Ordered, "That Standing Order No. 211 be suspended, and that a Committee consisting of twenty-one members be appointed, to whom shall be referred the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Amendment Bill and certain other Bills more particularly referring to labour; five to be a quorum: the Committee to consist of Mr. Aitken, Mr. Alison, Mr. Arnold, Mr. Barber, Mr. Bedford, Mr. Bollard, Mr. Colvin, Mr. Davey, Mr. Ell, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Kirkbride, Mr. Laurenson, Mr. Millar, Sir W. R. Russell, Mr. Sidey, Mr. Tanner, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Witheford, Mr. Wood, and the mover."—(Rt. Hon. R. J. SEDDON.)

TUESDAY, THE 29TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1903.

Ordered, "That the Labour Department Bill be referred to the Labour Bills Committee; the Committee to report thereon within fourteen days."—(Rt. Hon. R. J. SEDDON.)

TUESDAY, 13TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1903.

Ordered, "That the report of the Labour Bills Committee on the Labour Department Bill be referred back to the Committee for reconsideration; the Committee to report within seven days."—(Rt. Hon. R. J. SEDDON.)

TUESDAY, THE 20TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1903.

Ordered, "That an extension of time of seven days be granted to the Labour Bills Committee within which to bring up reports on the Labour Department Bill and the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Amendment Bill."—(Mr. ARNOLD.)

FRIDAY, THE 24TH DAY OF JULY, 1903.

Ordered, "That the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Amendment Bill be referred to the Labour Bills Committee."—(Rt. Hon. R. J. SEDDON.)

TUESDAY, THE 13TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1903.

Ordered, "That the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Amendment Bill be referred back to the Labour Bills Committee for reconsideration; the Committee to report thereon within seven days."—(Rt. Hon. R. J. SEDDON.)

REPORTS.

LABOUR DEPARTMENT BILL.

THE Labour Bills Committee, to whom was referred the Labour Department Bill, have the honour to report that they have carefully considered the said Bill, and recommend that it be allowed to proceed with the amendments shown in the copy attached hereto.

J. F. ARNOLD, Chairman.

Tuesday, the 13th day of October, 1903.

LABOUR DEPARTMENT BILL.

THE Labour Bills Committee, to which the Labour Department Bill was referred for further consideration, has directed me to report that it has duly reconsidered the Bill, and recommends that it now be allowed to proceed in accordance with the amendments shown in the copy hereto annexed together with a copy of the minutes of evidence taken in connection with the same.

J. F. ARNOLD, Chairman.

Wednesday, the 4th day of November, 1903.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR ACCIDENTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THE Labour Bills Committee, to whom was referred the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Amendment Bill, have the honour to report that they have carefully considered the said Bill, and recommend that the same be allowed to proceed without amendment.

J. F. ARNOLD, Chairman.

Tuesday, the 6th day of October, 1903.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR ACCIDENTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THE Labour Bills Committee, to which the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Amendment Bill was referred for reconsideration, has directed me to report that it has duly reconsidered the Bill, and recommends that it now be allowed to proceed in accordance with the amendments shown in the copy hereto annexed together with a copy of the minutes of evidence taken in connection with the same.

J. F. ARNOLD, Chairman.

Wednesday, the 4th day of November, 1903.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

WEDNESDAY, 21ST OCTOBER, 1903.

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had received the following telegram :—

"The Chairman, Labour Bills Committee, House of Representatives, Wellington.

"YOUR telegram yesterday date arrived too late to enable me to reach Wellington by next Wednesday. Unfortunately have not seen either of the Bills mentioned, but would be pleased to have copies. Sincerely trust that further burdens are not to be placed on mine-owners. In year 1900 our companies paid for accident insurance £258 9s. 8d.; this year, owing to new laws, we paid £1,260. The tendency of recent legislation is to increase the cost of production, which ultimately falls upon consumer in every instance, except gold-mining. Gold has a fixed value, and increased cost of production falls entirely upon consumer. Do not make the burden too heavy and cripple a useful industry. Would have been pleased to attend before Committee had it been possible to get there in time. "FREE CONSOLIDATED GOLDFIELDS."

Mr. DAVID GOLDIE made a statement and was examined. (No. 1.)

Mr. Goldie : I am a timber-merchant, and president of the Auckland Employers' Association. In connection with this Bill I may say that the employers in Auckland agree with its provisions generally, but there are provisions in it with which we cannot agree. We have no objection to make to the 1st and 2nd clauses. In regard to the 3rd clause, we concur in the principle laid down in that clause that cases should be tried before a Stipendiary Magistrate, because we do not think that such cases as are provided for under this Bill should be sent to the Arbitration Court, but we do not think that his decision should be final. We consider that such cases as are likely to arise under this Bill should be treated as civil cases in the Magistrate's Court are dealt with, and that there should be an appeal in regard to matters of fact as well as in regard to questions of law. We have no objection to the two-hundred-pound limit, and we say that in taking a case before the Supreme Court the employee should have the same rights as we have ourselves. Under existing circumstances it would be impossible for an employee to take his case before the Supreme Court on account of the expense. The employers would not feel this so much as the employees, and therefore we are of opinion that the fees should be made lower. We think that is the wisest course to take, because the Arbitration Court is already overworked. We also consider that the appeal should not only be in regard to questions of law, but as to every question which may arise in the Magistrate's Court. That would give us a free hand in the matter.

Mr. CHARLES M. MONTEFIORE made a statement and was examined. (No. 2.)

Mr. Montefiore : I am manager of an insurance company, and I am also a member of the Wellington Association of Employers. Mr. Goldie has already said most that there is to be said on this subject so far as we are concerned. The stand which I think the employers take upon this subject is that the Magistrate should not be able to give a decision upon a case without there being an appeal on matters of fact. The clause which gives power of appeal on points of law is simply making a promise to the ear which has no practical effect. There have been several cases where such matters have been brought to the Arbitration Court from the decision of the Magistrate's Court, but the appeal has been absolutely useless. We think that there are reasons why these matters should be dealt with by the ordinary Courts of the colony, and that the Arbitration Court is not the tribunal to which they should be referred. We think that if there was an appeal to the ordinary Courts, and if the matters referred to in this Bill were dealt with in the same manner as ordinary matters, it would be more satisfactory. I may go further and say that had such power of appeal been reserved previously a large number of decisions would have been reversed on appeal or have been given in an entirely different manner. Another trouble is this : that in this colony there is Judge law, and apparently you are going to extend that Judge law to the Magistrates, and you will find that decisions will be given according to the ideas of different men, and they will be very conflicting. I do not see any advantage whatever in the provision made here. Again, there comes in the question of amount, in regard to which the Magistrate has to decide. As a matter of fact, the chief cases in which a sum of money is involved are those in which there has been death. The Court has no power to award and allocate the sum without the consent of the employer. In the case of death the Court has to deal with the amount to be allocated to each person, and it is purely a matter of negotiation. Clause 2 is, of course, intended to deal with the much-vexed question of contractors as against employers. I do not know that as a matter of fact it will be of any advantage. The clause is not very well drafted, and it refers simply to coal and gold mines, but does not deal with the many vexed questions which arise in this respect in other employments. It does not define who is to be considered as a contractor and who is not, and that is just one of those vexed questions which should have been settled under such a measure as this. The conclusion I have come to is that instead of introducing this law, which will be of very little use, it would have been much better if the various mistakes and errors which have been pointed out in the present Act had been gone through and remedied, and the Act made more suitable for the majority of the people. I consider that the effect of this Bill if passed into law will be to very much increase the expenses and the cost of settling claims.

Mr. THOMAS BALLINGER made a statement and was examined. (No. 3.)

Mr. Ballinger: I am vice-president of the Employers' Association. Mr. Montefiore has touched upon the points which I wished to bring out, chiefly with regard to the cost which this Bill will further throw upon the employers. Two years ago the cost to us of insuring our employees against accident was 11s. per £100; but owing to the alteration in the law we are now called upon to pay £1 6s. per £100, and there is no doubt if you alter the law again it will increase the cost to us. As I say, the rate we paid the year before the last Act was put in force was 11s. per £100, and this year it has been £1 6s. We were told by the Government that they were going to bring in a new branch to their Insurance Department and that the rates would be lowered; but we have had quotations from the Government Department, and they show that their rates are the same as that of other insurance companies—that is, £1 6s. per £100.

Mr. HENRY FIELD made a statement. (No. 4.)

Mr. Field: I am secretary to the Wellington Employers' Association. I may say that the Employers' Association entirely approve of the new departure which has been made in legislation in the provision made in clause 3. Hitherto the Arbitration Court has had exclusive jurisdiction in regard to questions affecting workers, and this is a move in the direction of removing cases such as are dealt with in this Bill from the Arbitration Court to the ordinary Courts of the colony. The employers have not made any request in this direction, and that provision is in no sense due to any action that they have taken, but they approve entirely of the new departure taken in clause 3. We do not, however, entirely approve of the method by which you seek to realise that principle. What we wish to see is that all claims for compensation, and all such cases, should be heard by the ordinary Courts of the colony, and that the Arbitration Court shall have no jurisdiction in the matter. We believe the Arbitration Court was never constituted for such purposes, and has no special qualification for dealing with such cases. We believe, further, that the ordinary civil Courts are the proper tribunals to deal with cases which are really only matters of damages—of how much shall be given to a man who suffers injury when he is in the employment of an employer. That principle is already incorporated in the ordinary law, and we see no reason why these cases of compensation for accident should be isolated from the provisions of the ordinary law. We believe also that the Arbitration Court has already plenty to do, and that it is not able to overtake the claims which are brought before it. We therefore believe that the removal of these cases from the Arbitration Court will be a great advantage. We desire, however, that there should be an appeal from the lower Court on matters of fact, and not only on points of law. There is no doubt that the facts influence the decision, and we think that the whole matter should be carried to the higher Court. We do not wish that these cases should be taken to the Privy Council, but that the final appeal should be to the Appeal Court of the colony. It would be in the interest of the workers as well as of the employers that matters of fact as well as points of law should be taken to the higher Court. At present the fees are so high that it would be very difficult for a worker to carry his case to a higher Court, and, therefore, we think the fees should be lowered. I think I have not overstated the views of the employers of the colony.

1. *Mr. Tanner* (to Mr. Montefiore).] I think you said that these matters of compensation had been considered by the Arbitration Court?—Yes.

2. Has there been any widespread dissatisfaction at the decisions of the Arbitration Court with regard to them?—Yes.

3. How many cases has the Court decided?—Between twenty and thirty. It is not only the cases they decide, but the precedent they create. For example, policies have been taken out exactly in the same way as if they were life policies, and then, when the matter has been brought before the Court, the Court has made allowances for persons who were not dependent upon the deceased. The wording of the decision does not always follow actually the evidence as the facts stand. There was one case in which a man had been suffering from epileptic fits for some twelve years. He went to work, and died. At the Coroner's inquest his wife stated that she had asked him not to go to work that day because she was sure he was going to have a fit, but he would go to work. He was wheeling a barrow, and fell down, and had concussion of the brain. When he was picked up it was found that he was quite rigid, and the doctor's evidence showed that it was the result of a fit and not of an accident. Still, compensation had to be paid. That would not have occurred if there had been a power of appeal to an ordinary Court. When that Act was brought in it was decided that farm-labourers did not come under it, and yet in a case it was decided that a man who was only a groom was a farm-labourer. The Crown Law Officer gave the opinion that certain people were not covered by the Act, but the Court held that they were. This man had been escorting a young lady home to her house, and in riding back he broke his leg, and he was compensated. The farmer is liable for the whole twenty-four hours, and there is no conceivable case in which the farm-labourer will not get compensation for an accident, although when he met with it he was not working for his employer.

4. You say that in some cases there has been dissatisfaction with the finding of the Court?—Yes.

5. In what districts was that?—In Wellington and in Dunedin.

6. And yet these decisions came with the approval and actually from the mouth of a Supreme Court Judge?—Yes, but he merely has to put into words the decision that has been come to by two laymen who are partisans.

7. Partisans on each side, if they are partisans?—That is a question of opinion.

8. But would not that neutralise the effect of any partisanship?—Theoretically it should do so; but unfortunately, as far as I know, it does nothing of the kind.

9. *Mr. Hardy.*] You say that farm-labourers are covered?—Yes.

10. But supposing a farm-labourer, after his work is over, goes away to a dance at a town ten miles off, is he still covered?—He should not be, but he generally makes out that he is doing something for his employer. That was the result of the decision in the case mentioned. It was held by the Court that even if he was dancing with a young lady and fell down and broke his leg, his employer might still be liable.

11. *Mr. Laurenson.*] You say there is dissatisfaction with the decisions of the Arbitration Court?—Yes.

12. But is there not dissatisfaction with the decisions of most Courts of law?—Yes.

13. In reference to the time during which the employee is covered, are you aware that a decision was recently given by the highest Court confirming the decision of the lower Court, which made a railway company responsible for an injury received by one of its employees when going to his work?—That is always so as far as railways are concerned. There have been other decisions before that one.

14. The case was carried to the higher Court by the company because they did not think they were liable?—Yes, but the company was liable.

15. I want to ask you, Mr. Ballinger, a question. Mr. Goldie said that the Court should be able to give a decision in regard to a greater sum than £200, and also that there should be a right of appeal, and that the fees should be lowered in order to reduce the cost of litigation; but you can understand this position: that if we allow the right of appeal, eventually the man who gets on top is the man who has the longest purse?—Perhaps; but I think the unions are the people who have the longest purse.

16. Do the unions support an individual in carrying his case through the Court?—They do, and I know of one case in which a union took up the case of a young man who did not belong to the union.

17. You said that the rates were now £1 6s. per £100. Before the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act came into force, what was your custom in case any of your men met with an injury during work?—Before the Act came into force we paid for the whole twenty-four hours out of our own funds. That was before we paid the 11s. per £100 for insurance. When that Act came in the insurance company would not take us for the twenty-four hours, and told us we had no right to insure men when they were not working for us, and now we have to pay £1 6s. instead of 11s.

18. Was that before there was any law compelling you to pay?—Yes. Years ago we had a Sick and Accident Fund, to which the employer contributed 10 per cent. Out of that fund the men got so much per week in case of sickness or injury. I think it was £1 for the men and 10s. for boys, and they contributed 6d. and 3d. respectively to the fund each week. It was a friendly association, and it worked splendidly.

19. If you have, say, fifty men in your employ, and you pay £1 6s. per £100 a year to cover them, that would come to £75 a year. Would not that be lower than what you paid before the Act came into force?—No.

20. Is it not more satisfactory to have a law compelling an equitable distribution of these funds? Take the case of the avaricious employer, who will take no risk if a man is laid up by sickness or injury, is it not necessary to have some such provision in his case? And does not the law help the generous employer as much as the other?—Well, we do not like being told we must do a thing; we like to have a certain amount of freedom.

21. Altogether, you object to the Arbitration Court?—We object to the thing not being carried on through the ordinary process.

22. Have you any suggestion to make by which we could do justice, and at the same time save the enormous expense of the ordinary Courts?—Lower the fees. I see Sir Robert Stout said the other day that the ordinary Court fees practically paid the whole of the expenses of five or six Judges, so they must be very high. In the case of the Arbitration Court the fees do not go to the Court; they go to the unions. Of course, in the majority of cases the union wins in that Court.

23. *Mr. Kirkbride.*] With regard to the raising of the rates of insurance I should like to ask you a question. What is your occupation, Mr. Ballinger?—I am a plumber. I may say, however, that the insurance we have taken out covers more than those who are employed in the plumbing-work in our establishment. We are building just now, and we have a policy which covers those who are working on the building as well as those who are working in the ordinary business.

24. I think, Mr. Goldie, you are a timber-merchant?—Yes.

25. What is the rate of insurance paid for bush-fallers?—I think it is £5 6s. per £100.

26. And for mill-hands?—I am not quite certain, but I think it is about £3 6s. The rates are so high that we do not pay the insurance companies, but we lodge in the bank £900 to meet any losses that there may be. We are informed that at the end of the year there will be a saving of something like 50 per cent. I am informed that in the case of those who insure with companies the cost with one is 32 per cent. and with another 48 per cent. We think, therefore, that instead of going to such expense it is better to pay a clerk a small extra salary to look after these things. It is almost impossible to ascertain what is the real expense you are put to when you insure with a company, because they simply publish the expenses incurred in the office, without taking into consideration the outside expenses. I think that the charge for insuring with the Government Department would be about 48 per cent.

27. Are there not four firms in Auckland who cover their risks in the way you describe?—Yes. We pay our money into the Bank of New Zealand.

28. Do you know of any sawmilling companies who do not pay for insurance, but prefer to run the risk of having to pay for injuries themselves?—As far as I know there are none in Auckland. We are all insured in the way I say.

29. I have heard from M and Broadly that they are not insured. They say that it would cost them £400 a year, and they prefer to run the chance of losing their money in another way?—

Yes, that is so; and you can very well understand why it should be, because these insurance companies who are charging such high rates are making the money for their shareholders.

30. *Mr. Hardy.*] Are you of opinion that there is a ring or combine amongst the insurance companies?—Yes, I believe there is. They had a meeting not long ago, at which the Government representative attended with the others.

31. You think the Government have joined the ring?—I do not know about their joining it, but a Government representative was present at the meeting.

32. And that would tend to harden the rates?—Decidedly.

33. *Mr. Sidey.*] You say that all cases should be brought before the ordinary Courts of the colony: are you aware of the conditions which are imposed upon parties before they can be heard in the Magistrate's Court?—We are prepared to accept the conditions which are imposed in ordinary cases for damage which come before those Courts.

34. Are you aware that in the Magistrate's Court an appeal is only allowed under certain conditions on matters of fact, that the amount sued for shall be over £50, and so on? Would the employers be agreeable to have the cases under this Bill brought under those conditions?—I think that with the modification we suggest all the cases likely to arise under this Bill should be brought before the Magistrate's Court. That is to say, that the appeal should cover the whole case, and not merely a part of it. If the appeal is to be only on points of order then it will simply tend to protract the case, but if matters of fact can also be considered then the whole case can be dealt with at once.

35. But if matters of fact in all cases are to be taken to the higher Court, would it not follow that claims under £50 could be taken to the higher Courts, and would it not be absurd that small matters of that kind should be taken to the higher Courts?—We do not suggest that such cases would be taken to the higher Courts; but we hold that there should be a right of appeal, and that this right should follow in the lines of the ordinary procedure.

36. But the ordinary procedure of the Magistrate's Court does not permit of cases involving over £200 being heard by that Court?—There is nothing to prevent compensation cases being dealt with by the Court.

37. Then, you do not suggest that the cases under this Bill should be placed on the same footing as ordinary civil cases in the ordinary Courts?—Our proposal is that these cases should not be taken to the Arbitration Court, which really has no jurisdiction in such cases, but that they should be heard by the ordinary Courts, and that there should be a right of appeal on matters of fact as well as on points of law, and that the fees should be modified.

Mr. DENNIS QUINLAN O'BRIEN made a statement and was examined. (No. 5.)

Mr. O'Brien: I am a member of the Granity Coal-miners' Industrial Union of Workers. We agree with clause 2 of this Bill. We do not hold with clause 3, because if it were in force it would double the expenses in cases of dispute. We find that the Arbitration Court gives satisfaction, and we should like to see these matters left in one Court. Everything has gone smoothly there, and we prefer that matters should still continue to go there.

38. *The Chairman.*] Have you had any cases before the Court in connection with mining?—There have been no cases of compensation with which we had to go to the Court. Other companies have been before it, and the rules which were then laid down have guided us.

39. Did the decisions of the Court give satisfaction?—Yes; they were practically satisfactory.

40. As far as you know, have miners confidence in a Court which has a Judge as its president?—Oh, yes. There is another matter which we feel very much, and that is that we should have the same power as is given in the case of industrial disputes—that the union should have the power of settling individual cases. That is to say, that if an individual belongs to a union the union should be able to become the prosecutor instead of the individual.

41. Why?—Because we think the society knows best what should be done, whereas now individuals bring matters before us and then take them out of our hands. Our officers know better than they do what should be done, and they could arrange to have a meeting of the Court.

42. Does your union finance cases?—We have done so; we have stood behind an individual when he has brought a case.

43. Do these cases cost the individual much?—They really do. We are about twenty-five miles from the nearest town at which a Court is held, and it is naturally expensive to bring cases before the Court there.

44. Would the cases be very expensive if they went first before the Stipendiary Magistrate's Court?—Yes; very expensive.

Mr. THOMAS YOUNG examined. (No. 6.)

Mr. Young: I am president of the Granity Coal-miners' Union. I do not think I can add anything to what my colleague has said. We agree with clause 2 of the Bill, and do not approve of clause 3.

45. *Mr. Tanner.*] With regard to clause 2, have there been any cases in which small men have taken small contracts in coal and gold mines and have been unable to meet the demand if a man in their employment is injured?—There have been no cases of that kind, but if one did arise there are men who would not be able to meet the demand.

46. Therefore you are in danger every day of meeting an expense for which you could not provide?—Yes, undoubtedly.

47. Therefore clause 2 would put you on a safer footing?—Yes.

48. With regard to clause 3, you are in favour of large cases, up to £200, not being heard by a Magistrate, but of leaving everything in the hands of the Arbitration Court as at present?—Yes.

49. And the reason is the expense to which your union would be put in bringing cases before the Court?—It would double the expense, and we find the Arbitration Court quite satisfactory.

50. Because its decision is final?—Yes.

51. And in the case of appeal from Court to Court, men have been compelled to drop their case through want of funds?—Yes, and we think clause 22 of the Act of 1900 has done harm.

52. Will you explain what you mean when you say that you wish the unions to have charge in case of litigation?—In industrial disputes we never allow an individual to take a case before the Court. We work collectively, and then there is only one party to deal with. We support the man financially as far as we can.

53. As the practice is now, a man can fight his case individually?—Yes.

54. And in the end the union has to come to his assistance?—Yes.

55. The union represents the man and champions his cause before the Court?—Yes; but sometimes the men compromise. I am not speaking about a special society, but there have been unions who have found when they were supporting a man that he had compromised.

56. You stand behind the individual in order to defend a principle on behalf of the whole body of men?—Yes.

57. And if a man acts individually it is possible for him to effect a compromise with the company you are fighting?—Yes.

58. Have there been many cases of that kind?—No; it has not been in operation long.

59. You think it is a very unsatisfactory state of things in which a union has to fight and has to find the means to carry on a prosecution, and then finds that the individual whom they are backing has compromised?—Yes; for then the individual defeats all that the union has done.

60. *Mr. Colvin.*] Do the miners' unions on the West Coast look upon it in this light: that if a Magistrate is allowed to deal with questions of compensation there will be different decisions in different places—one decision may be given in Westport to-day and a totally different one may be given in Greymouth on the same point to-morrow?—Yes, that is quite possible.

61. You want to have the whole thing done in one Court?—Yes.

62. And then the decision will hold good?—Yes; we recognise that at present.

63. I understand that what you object to is clause 22 of the Workers' Compensation Act of 1900, which repeals several clauses?—Yes.

64. And you want the provisions of that clause put in this Act?—Yes; that is what we desire.

65. *Mr. Kirkbride.*] I understand that you prefer that the Arbitration Court should decide these matters because of its technical knowledge, or something of that kind?—Yes; the rules which it lays down become universal, and we find that they are satisfactory.

66. Do you expect that it would be more expensive if these cases were brought before the Magistrate's Court?—Oh, yes; we think so, anyhow.

67. In a case of compensation for accident there should be no clashing; each case is decided on its own merits?—If the evidence is satisfactory there is no reason why the decision should be wrong.

68. *Mr. Sidey.*] Is yours a large union?—Yes.

69. Have you had a meeting with regard to this question?—Yes.

70. And you represent the views of the meeting?—Yes.

71. *Mr. Ell.*] With regard to Stipendiary Magistrates deciding in these cases, you think that it would be more expensive?—Yes.

72. You say you are about twenty-five miles from the Court?—Yes.

73. That is one objection to the Magistrate's Court being used?—Yes.

74. Another objection is that the Arbitration Court, being familiar with such cases, would be better able to judge than a Stipendiary Magistrate?—Yes.

75. And the decisions would be more uniform because there is only one Arbitration Court for the whole of New Zealand?—Yes.

76. That Court decides all sorts of cases, and is familiar with all the conditions in the colony?—Yes.

77. With regard to the union taking action instead of the individual, you say that the individual is barred from taking action in industrial disputes?—Yes.

78. You think that it would be better both for the employee and the employer that the same should be done under this Workers' Compensation for Accidents Bill?—Yes; that the unions shall have power to decide whether a case should go before the Court or not.

79. You are not dissatisfied with the awards given by the Arbitration Court? You think that, generally speaking, they are fair?—Yes.

80. *The Chairman.*] I want to make this point very clear: Although you are of opinion that the union should have the power to represent an individual, do you wish to take the whole power out of his hands as an individual?—I think they should be in the same position as they are in regard to industrial disputes.

81. In every instance the union would review the case?—Yes.

82. And if the union considered it was not a proper case to go before a Court the individual should not be able to take it there?—Yes; they should be in the same position as they are in industrial disputes.

83. *Mr. Kirkbride.*] It has been used by this deputation as an argument against cases going before the Magistrate's Court that it sits twenty-five miles off: does the Arbitration Court sit any nearer?—No; they both sit at the same place.

Mr. WILLIAM NAUGHTON made a statement. (No. 7.)

Mr. Naughton: I am president of the Wellington Trades and Labour Council. We represent the Dunedin Trades and Labour Council as well. We have gone through the Bill, and we are in

favour of it so long as it is made clear in clause 3 that the appeal from the Magistrate's Court shall be to the Arbitration Court only. There should be no appeal beyond the Arbitration Court. We think it would be sufficient if we could get meetings of the Arbitration Court more regularly in the different cities. If the meetings were held quarterly that would be sufficient. The Court could then hear compensation cases and other industrial disputes, and there would be no cases for compensation hanging over for more than three months. If we cannot get more frequent sittings of the Arbitration Court, then, no doubt, it is a good idea to allow the Magistrate to have jurisdiction up to the amount of £50. It would enable small cases to be settled with greater facility. We have full confidence in the Arbitration Court, and would prefer that these cases should be decided by it, if it could only sit regularly. At present it is often six or nine months before you can get a decision. Consequently, in small cases we think it is necessary that they should be heard at once so that a man may get his compensation as soon as possible from a Magistrate.

Mr. A. H. COOPER made a statement. (No. 8.)

Mr. A. H. Cooper: I am secretary to the Wellington Trades and Labour Council. Clause 3 of this Bill is asked for by the Trades and Labour Council because of the delays which were taking place in the hearing of cases by the Arbitration Court. That is the reason that the Trades and Labour Councils of the colony have in asking that a Stipendiary Magistrate should have power to adjudicate in these cases. Cases have been delayed for eight and nine and sometimes twelve months. We have endeavoured to obtain more regular sittings of the Arbitration Court, but with no success, and so we have given up hope to get more regular sittings of that Court, and we think something must be done to get quicker decisions in these cases, and therefore we propose that Stipendiary Magistrates should have jurisdiction in the cases. In coming to that decision we considered this point: that the matters for decision in regard to compensation are as a rule as to the amount of compensation to be paid, and as to law-points that may be raised. It is almost impossible for employers to prove that an accident was due to the gross negligence of a workman, and I do not think that defence has been raised in any case. The points in dispute are generally as to the amount of compensation or as to some sub-contract. To a large extent it is a question of fact as to a man's physical condition or some question of law, and we think the Magistrate in smaller cases would be perfectly competent to cover all such cases. It is not necessary to have a technical knowledge of a trade, and the Magistrate would be perfectly competent to administer the law. At the same time we desire that there should be an appeal to the Arbitration Court, but no further.

Mr. ANDREW COLLINS made a statement. (No. 9.)

Mr. Collins: I am a member of the Wellington Trades and Labour Council. We practically came to the conclusion at the last conference that it would be as well to have this amendment of the Act, for this reason: that we found that the delays which were taking place in relation to the dealing with compensation for accidents were causing much trouble. This arose through the Court not being able to deal with them at the moment, and we considered it would be better that a Stipendiary Magistrate should have power to deal with such cases, and that there should only be an appeal to the Arbitration Court. There is plenty of work for that Court to do, with one Judge at its head, having to travel all over the colony, and we think that the Government should appoint a Judge to deal with questions which arise out of industrial disputes—that is to say, with regard to industrial awards and compensation for accidents; and, failing that, we are content to take what is provided for in this Bill.

Mr. DAVID MCLAREN made a statement. (No. 10.)

Mr. McLaren: I am here to represent the Canterbury Trades and Labour Council, also the Wellington wharf labourers and the Wellington building-trade labourers. With regard to the Bill itself, and as to its effect upon those who are most directly interested, we find that, particularly in regard to the wharves and building-trade work, there is great conflict of opinion as to the cause of accidents, and the delay in getting cases heard by the Arbitration Court has been so great that it disheartens the men, and in many cases men have lost compensation which they might have secured. The Wellington Wharf Labourers' Union and the Wellington Building-trades Labourers' Union both desire that cases may be heard by the Stipendiary Magistrate, with the right of appeal, on points of law only, to the Arbitration Court. We should certainly oppose any proposition to carry the appeal further. With regard to the men who are employed in the building trade, I might give one or two instances of what is likely to occur. There was a job at Ngahauranga, and a firm of Sydney contractors came over here to take it up, and they took on men for two or three days' work, so that there was a constant flux of men employed on the job; and in case of accident there should be some more ready means of settling any question that may arise. We think, therefore, that there should be power given to the unions to take action on behalf of any individual labourer. Of course, as secretary of the Wharf Labourers' Union I have taken charge of many cases, having got the authority from the individual to appear on his behalf. In that way the union has taken control of the case, and has paid the expenses necessary. In some of these cases we find that it is necessary to take legal advice, and to go to some expense. Many of the employees are unable to carry the thing through themselves, and we think it is only right that unions should be empowered to take up cases on behalf of individuals. I do not suggest that this power should be given to the exclusion of the individual: that is to say, we hold that, with the consent of the individual, the union should prosecute in these cases, and have direct control in respect to the action.

Mr. WILLIAM THOMAS BARNES made a statement. (No. 11.)

Mr. Barnes: I represent the Lyttelton Stevedores' Industrial Union of Workers. I am simply a member of that union. I may state that Mr. McLaren has gone through a considerable portion of the matter which I intended to bring before the Committee. I want, however, to traverse the vital question that arises as to the wharf labourers and the conflict of opinion as to their wages and work. Any person who knows about the wages at New Zealand seaports knows that a wharf labourer's wages are 10s. a day. That is the rate of wages which he receives for the work he has to do. Yet I know of several cases which I could bring before the Committee where men have been earning £160 a year from different employers who have only been offered £1 a week under the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act. One man, who had averaged £31 5s. 11d. for the six months previous to his accident, was offered 2s. 6d. a week. Another man, who averaged £80 0s. 2d. for the six months preceding his accident, was offered and accepted £1 a week. Another man, who had earned £74 10s. 5d. for the previous six months, accepted 13s. 9d. a week. Another man, named Dix, who was laid up for five weeks and a half, was offered 5s. a week, when his usual weekly wages came to £2 15s. I only mention these cases to show what an injustice is done to the men. The wharf labourers at Lyttelton have to work for one particular firm, and it does not matter whatever other firm they may tell you to go to, if you do not go you will probably find your self what we call in our wharf language "beached" for a week. At the same time, if you have worked for these different firms during the week you go to the firm that employs you originally and get your money. Therefore they are actually and virtually your employers, and they send you where they like and then pay your wages. That is where the injustice comes in. I may have been working for one firm for five or six months, and then I am sent to another firm, and may get hurt while I am working for them. Of course, I would not get hurt if I could help it. I may be working for that firm for only seven days, and my average for the preceding six months is not taken into account. I ask you, gentlemen, whether that is right or just.

84. *The Chairman.*] How do you propose to meet that case?—It is not for me to adjust these matters; but I may say that my opinion is that the person who pays the money over the counter should be the responsible person to pay half the average wages of the person who is injured.

85. That might suit Lyttelton, but it might not suit other parts of the colony?—The wages bill might be adjusted for each centre, as it is done in Lyttelton.

Mr. WILLIAM EDWARD AGAR made a statement. (No. 12.)

Mr. Agar: I am vice-president of the New Zealand Stevedores' Union of Workers. As my colleague has stated, the most vital point to the wharf labourers in Lyttelton is that a person may be called upon by the Stevedoring Association to work for three or four firms in a single day. He may work for one of these firms for only an hour, and he may get injured during that time. It is now held that, although a man may have been working under the Stevedoring Association for twelve months for every firm except one, and then may have to go and work for that firm for an hour or two and receive an injury; as he had not worked for that firm for any length of time they only allow pay for the average amount which he has earned from that firm, which may be only 1s. 3d. per week, whereas if he had been working for his usual employers his average earnings might have been up to £3 a week. What we suggest is this: that the Act should be so amended that it would not matter whether a man worked for a day or a half-day for a particular firm, the compensation which he should receive should be based on the average wages which he has earned for the twelve months, and not on the particular amount which he has earned from the particular firm for which he has been working for only a short time.

Mr. Barnes: The compensation should be dated from the day on which the accident took place, so that the insurance company could not steal from the worker the difference in the premium.

Mr. McLaren: To show how serious the matter is, I may say that there is now in Wellington one case in which a man received compensation for an accident under the Act, and he is actually being supported by charity. The compensation was so small that he has had to depend upon charity to support his wife and children.

86. *Mr. Tanner.*] You, Mr. McLaren, spoke of the delay in settling small claims for compensation, and said that it led to their being abandoned?—Yes.

87. Are there many such cases?—There are a good number of them.

88. Is it because of the disappointment, or because the men have to ship off elsewhere?—I find that both causes operate. In some cases the witnesses go away elsewhere, and the man who makes the claim, not being able to get hold of them, abandons his claim. In other instances a workman who has received a small injury and has recovered from it has to go elsewhere to work. In these cases, if they are not settled within a month or two, the workmen abandon them altogether.

89. Another point which you raised was with regard to the desire of the unions to represent injured members in case of litigation?—Yes.

90. We have had a witness who said that it was the desire of the unions that they should act for the man who receives the injury. As it is, the injured man has to take action individually, and he may compromise the case, although the union is behind him and finds the funds. Do you consider that that system should be stopped and the charge given to the union?—That is substantially our view—of course, with the proviso that where the individual wishes it the union shall supersede the individual.

91. Would you like to see the Act amended in that direction?—Yes; and that, with the permission of the individual, the union should have power to represent him directly. I would point out that workers generally have the impression that they must act as individuals, and in a number

of cases they have compromised on terms which are not legal. I, as an officer of the union, have gone into the matter carefully, and we find that we could do nothing.

92. In case of a man falling back upon the union and getting it to represent him in the Court, would you allow him to settle the matter privately?—No. When a man gives permission to the union to take up his case and act for him he should not settle it out of Court without the consent of the union.

93. I did not clearly understand the statement made by Mr. Barnes, that a man should be paid compensation for accident on the basis of the wages which he had been earning for the previous six or twelve months, no matter what wages he might be earning from the employer by whom he was at the moment engaged?—Precisely so; and I would add that perhaps during the preceding six months the man may have been laid up through sickness or through an accident, and the amount for that time should be taken off his earnings for the six months. It should be based absolutely on the amount of money which he has earned during the preceding six months.

94. *Mr. Laurenson.*] What does a man get if he is injured in working on the Railway Wharf here in Wellington?—I am not aware what it is, but as far as I can gather it is much the same as in other places.

95. What do the railway men get in Lyttelton?—I think it is £1 a week; but if a man is injured upon a steamer and gets damages against the owners, then he has to refund the allowance from the Railway Department.

96. Supposing the owners of the steamer paid him £1 a week, would they require him to refund that?—Yes, if he was receiving £1 a week from the Government.

97. *Mr. Sidey* (to Mr. Cooper).] In connection with the question of appeal, under the ordinary jurisdiction of the Magistrate's Court there is a right of appeal on matters of fact when the claim is over £50: have you any objection to such a provision?—The Trades Council has not considered that point, but personally I do not think there is any objection to it.

Mr. Naughton: The object of taking these matters before the Magistrate's Court is that small cases may be settled quickly. If there is to be an appeal on matters of fact, as well as on matters of law, it will simply make the proceedings before the Magistrate's Court useless. It will give a greater opportunity for appeal and consequent delay. I do not know what action the Trades Council may take in the matter, but that is my personal opinion.

Mr. Collins: If we allow that to come in, then we shall have to go back on the whole question.

Mr. Sidey: Would the deputation be in favour of allowing such an appeal in cases where the claims exceed £200?

Mr. Naughton: The Trades Council has not had that point brought under its consideration. What we have chiefly considered is that there should be some means provided for settling small claims quickly.

Mr. Ell: We have had evidence given to us in favour of there being an appeal from the Magistrate's Court to the Supreme Court, and from that to the Appeal Court. Would you be in favour of that?

Mr. McLaren: The bodies I represent are most strongly opposed to any such a thing.

Mr. Cooper: The cost of litigation is now quite as much as the unions can stand.

Telegrams handed in by Mr. Field.

Auckland, 6th October, 1903.

MY committee strongly oppose Labour Department Bill in all its phases.

GROSVENOR,
Secretary, Employers' Association.

Blenheim, 7th October, 1903.

EMPLOYERS' Association strongly protest against Labour Department Bill. Consider Bill monstrous, and bordering on Russian persecution. Many will give up employing labour if passed.

F. BYTHELL,
Secretary, Employers' Association.

Dunedin, 8th October, 1903.

OTAGO Employers' Association strongly protest against Labour Department Bill as being highly inquisitorial and entirely unnecessary. Any reasonable objects of Bill already dealt with in existing Acts. Section 7, (*c*), specially objectionable, and should be strenuously resisted.

GARROW,
Secretary, Employers' Association.

Christchurch, 8th October, 1903.

BILLS committee of the Canterbury Association met to-day, and adopted following resolution *re* Labour Department Bill: "If the only object sought to be obtained through the Labour Department Bill were the compilation of legitimate industrial returns no serious objection could be raised, but the Bill provides for such extensive and undefined powers beyond those already held by the Labour Department (which are already considered sufficient) under other Acts that the committee considers the Bill dangerous in the extreme, and should be strongly resisted."

BROADHEAD,
Secretary, Employers' Association.

Napier, 9th October, 1903.

OUR association enters strong protest against Labour Department Bill. The whole measure is unwarranted, and distinctly oppressive to employers and colonial industries.

Captain TONKIN,
Secretary, Employers' Association.

Invercargill, 9th October, 1903.

SOUTHLAND Employers' Association strongly protest against Labour Department Bill. Shameful, inquisitorial, unnecessary, not tend improve relations employers employed. Urge strongest action to prevent passage.

RICHARD ALLEN,
Secretary, Employers' Association.

Mr. JAMES COX THOMPSON made a statement. (No. 13.)

Mr. Thompson: I am vice-president of the Dunedin Branch of the Employers' Association. In dealing with this Bill I may say our opinion is that it is not one which should find a place on our statute-book. The provisions contained in many of its clauses are already provided for in existing legislation. To these we have no objection, but we look upon them as simply duplicating what already exists. There are other clauses from which we dissent entirely, because we consider they are entirely wrong in principle. They are very indefinite, they are very far-reaching, and they confer powers that are beyond all reason. The Title of the Act is misleading. It is called "An Act for the creation of a Labour Department," and then it proceeds to state that its work is to be in connection with the industrial occupations of the people. While it does so, it comprises work and operations of every description not confined to industrial occupations at all. If the Bill is one for the purpose of collecting statistics regarding the industries of the colony, then I submit we have already sufficient power conferred on the Registrar-General for that purpose. Some of the details set out here are very objectionable, such, for example, as ascertaining the cost of production. That is very objectionable, and all that is required under that head is already provided for by the income-tax returns. Therefore, our contention is that existing legislation gives all the power needed in this respect. In the definition of "employer" you have the following words used: "'Employer' means any person, firm, company, or local authority employing labour of any kind for hire." But this Bill only refers to the industries of the colony and to labour only. These preliminary clauses we pass over, with that exception, pointing out that it is not in accord with the provisions set out later on. I have referred already to procuring the cost of production, as provided for in clause 6. That is a provision which we think is entirely outside the operations of a Labour Department. Clause 7 with its subsections is really very objectionable. It provides that, "For the purpose of obtaining the necessary information to enable the Department to carry out this Act the Minister, and any officer of the Department," may procure the information. "Any officer of the Department" is most objectionable. It does not matter who he is. He may be an Inspector of Factories, or perhaps a man who has been in some employment which he has left and gone into the service of the Government, and he is to have all the powers conferred by this Act. Then, with regard to subsection (*a*) of this clause 7—all that is provided for is already provided for in existing legislation. There is no registration of these associations of workers until their rules have been approved of. Again, in subsection (*b*) we have a very wide statement made: "The full name of every worker employed by him, together with the nature of the employment, the hours of labour, the mode, terms, and rate of payment therefor, and such other particulars as may be deemed necessary." That is a provision of very wide scope to place in such a Bill as this. Then, we most emphatically object to subsection (*c*) of the same clause. It gives power to "obtain from all persons able to furnish the same such further and other information, either general or particular, as the Minister deems necessary relating to combinations of capital or labour and their effect on production and prices of commodities, and the collection of Customs duties and their effect on the operations of labour." That subsection should be struck out of the Bill, because it confers most unnecessary and dangerous powers. You might have some vindictive person coming forward and giving evidence which might seriously injure you in your business. We think that is a most objectionable clause. We pass over clause 8, with its subclause, and we come to clause 9, which we think should be struck out, because the powers there given are already given. We next come to clause 10, which provides for a penalty in case of refusal to give information. We think this is too stringent, and that the word "neglects" should be struck out, and it should only apply to persons who refuse to give the information. A man may overlook a thing and have no intention of refusing to give the information. In clause 11, which provides for the recovery of fines, we propose that the words "in a summary way" should be struck out, and also that all the words after "Magistrate" be struck out, so that there shall be a right of appeal. It is a civil action, and therefore it is only right that there should be a power to appeal. These are the main points that I see objectionable in the Bill. Of course, we consider that the Act should not have gone in this direction at all, and we have the greatest objection to clause 7 being inserted.

Mr. GEORGE THOMAS BOOTH made a statement. (No. 14.)

Mr. Booth: I am president of the New Zealand Employers' Federation. I think, sir, I shall have to go over to some extent the same ground as Mr. Thompson has gone over, for the sake of summarising and placing before the Committee in a brief form the objections the employers have to this Bill and the amendments they suggest to it. We have some copies of the suggestions we make. They are very roughly drawn up, and put in the shortest possible shape the explanation of our views. Mr. Thompson has said the employers are inclined to regard the Bill as unnecessary on the ground that on the face of it it appears to be designed for the purpose of procuring statistics for the purpose of compilation, and if that is the main object of the Bill there is sufficient machinery in existence at present to carry out that purpose. Then, if the compilation of statistics is, as it appears, the main purpose of the Bill, we say that the Labour Department is not the proper Department to carry out that purpose. There are already statistical Departments which can gather in all the necessary information without creating any extra machinery and without causing any conflict between employers and employees. Those Departments can summarise the information without the necessity for this Bill at all. I say, therefore, that if the compilation of

statistics is the end aimed at by the Bill the Department of Labour is not necessary for that purpose. It appears, however, that the compilation of statistics is not the main purpose. The idea is to set up a Department of Labour which will have very wide powers, and to some of these we object as being very dictatorial and likely to cause conflict. Mr. Thompson has referred to some of these in section 6 and in the subsections to section 7. Then, section 9 is a wonderfully sweeping section. It provides that any officer appointed by the Government "shall have all the powers and authorities conferred by 'The Commissioners' Powers Act, 1867,' on a commission issued or appointed by the Governor in Council." That Act can be easily referred to, and it will be found that it is there provided that such a commission shall only be granted under exceptional circumstances, and certainly not for the purposes provided for in this Bill. Clause 10 has already been referred to in regard to the penalty for neglecting to furnish information; and so has clause 11, with regard to the jurisdiction of the Stipendiary Magistrate: therefore I shall not further allude to them. Speaking generally about the Bill, what strikes me personally is this: that if it were only giving effect to what appears at a glance to be its purport we should not take much objection to it. I take it that it follows the lines on which the legislation of the United States is based by which the State Governments there collect labour statistics. But there is a difference in the proposals brought down by the Labour Department here. In the United States the Government has avoided in any way a defence of a part of the community at the expense of others. It has an impersonal bureau, and its statistics are entirely impartial, and merely for general information. It may be a very desirable and necessary thing to have these statistics, and the gathering together of this information would not be seriously objected to if it were placed in the hands of such a Department as exists in the United States; but I think I am not saying too much when I say that if this authority is placed in the hands of the Labour Department there will be very considerable resentment throughout the employers in the colony, because it must be borne in mind that there is already a feeling of distrust in the Department. I do not for one moment desire to reflect on the gentleman who is at the head of that Department—I believe he is doing his duty according to his lights—but there is no disguising the fact that the Labour Department is the special guardian of the labourer, and has no regard in its work for the general public or the employer. You can readily see that if such powers are granted to the Labour Department, occupying this position in the eyes of the public and of the employers, there is sure to be a great amount of resentment, and considerable friction, which we are as anxious to avoid as this Committee is. I believe that since the labour legislation came into effect the employers have done their best to meet the requirements of the law in all respects, and abide loyally by the law decisions. It does not seem prudent that anything should be done which would cause friction between one section of the community and another, and I am satisfied that if this Bill becomes law a great amount of harm will be done. In fact, if this measure comes into force, in conjunction with the Labour Bills recently passed, everything will be in the hands of the Labour Department, and they can make the position of the employers exceedingly unpleasant and probably untenable. That is not a desirable state of things, and I do not believe this Committee desires it. I think the Committee wishes that all parties to the commonwealth should have a share in the administration of the law, and it will desire that there should be no friction between sections of the community. I have no more to say, but if the Committee desires any further information with regard to the clauses of the Bill we are here to give it.

Mr. DAVID GOLDIE made a statement. (No. 15.)

Mr. Goldie: I do not think I have anything further to say. I believe you want to get everything you can for the worker, but under these laws you will find it very hard to get them work at all. I am a large employer of labour, and I am in this difficulty: that I have to a great extent to employ experts, and I cannot take on those who come in from the other colonies—and they are very numerous—who are not experts and put them beside those who have been working for me for many years. They are men who understand their business, and yet these men who come in here and know nothing about it are to receive the same remuneration. I have been compelled over and over again during the last twelve months to refuse to give persons employment on that account only. With regard to the Bill itself, we most strongly object to the insertion of the words "cost of production" in the information to be supplied by employers, because some of us can produce at a lower price than others, and we have no right to be asked to give up to the Government or to any of its officers our means of producing. Then, again, with regard to clause 7, in the subsection which refers to the employment of workers, we most strongly object to the insertion of these words "and such other particulars as may be deemed necessary in order to ascertain the relations between such employer and worker." We think that is altogether too inquisitorial. The words "deemed necessary" cover an enormous amount of ground, and half our time would be taken up in obtaining this information. Again, in relation to subsection (*c*), it commences with the words "obtain from all persons." We may have persons in our employ whom we think it right to discharge, and yet there is power given to obtain from such persons "such further and general information, either general or particular, as the Minister deems necessary relating to combinations of capital or labour and their effect on production and prices of commodities." That seems to us to be altogether too inquisitorial, and it is unfair to ourselves that the Government or its officers may be able to pick up any person who may be prepared to come forward and give information on these matters. Clause 9 provides that "For the purpose of obtaining any information to which he is entitled under this Act, the Minister, or any officer so appointed or authorised as aforesaid, shall have all the powers and authorities conferred by 'The Commissioners' Powers Act, 1867,' on a Commission issued or appointed by the Governor in Council." So that any inferior officer of the Government may take hold of us, summon witnesses, and extract information which it may be most injurious to our business to disclose.

That is bound to lead to friction. In fact, the whole thing is teeming with provisions which must cause friction. With regard to clause 10, imposing a penalty for not furnishing information, we may do all that we think the Government requires, and yet if by chance we overlook something that is thought necessary by an officer of the Government we are liable to a fine of £20. Certainly the words "after application has been made" should be inserted after "neglects." I think that is all I have to say with regard to the Bill. Unless some stop is put to this class of legislation I can assure you that employers of labour will be driven out of the country. We think that we could do our work fairly without all this irritation. They do it in England. I have heard people in Auckland say that they would chuck up the sponge and go elsewhere.

98. *Mr. Hardy.*] With regard to clause 11, with regard to which you, Mr. Goldie, spoke, do you think that there should be an appeal when the amount is over £5 as in ordinary cases at present?—Yes; we asked for that.

Mr. WILLIAM SCOTT made a statement and was examined. (No. 16.)

Mr. Scott: I am vice-president of the Dunedin Employers' Association. It is not my intention to take up much of your time this afternoon. I simply rise because I have been asked to point out one matter which we consider very unfair in connection with this Bill, and which previous speakers have omitted to allude to. In connection with this Labour Department Bill, you must remember that the Labour Department is now prosecuting for breaches of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, and that this Bill places all these powers in the hands of the Labour Department. You will see, gentlemen, that in connection with this matter the Labour Department has power to call for any information or statement with regard to the relationship between a master and his men. They have power to examine books, to make all inquiries, and to obtain the evidence of men in any employ, and then, with that information in their hands, they can prosecute for breaches of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, and the awards given under it. Now, a Criminal Court Judge will often tell a man that he need not answer a question because it might incriminate him; but under provisions of this Bill the employers are bound to incriminate themselves, or, in other words, they are not granted the privileges which are accorded to a criminal in the ordinary Courts. Employers have over and over again complained of this, and one cannot forget that all these powers are vested in the Labour Department. The employers have no means of finding out the standing and status and accounts of the labour unions, while, on the other hand, the Labour Department have every means of obtaining all the information they require with regard to the employers, and then when the employers go into Court they are practically condemned before they are heard. I may say that this position has been very much spoken of by employers, and there is a very strong feeling lately aroused among them with regard to it, and I think you will admit that there is something in it. Then, there is the provision in the third sub-section of clause 7, with regard to obtaining information, "either general or particular, as the Minister deems necessary, relating to combinations of capital and labour or their effect on production and prices of commodities." Now, there is a Bill before the House dealing with combinations and trusts, but the Labour Department has such great powers conferred upon it by this Bill that it can even deal with trusts. There is no doubt that had this Bill been simply to place the Labour Department on a proper footing, if that is needed, and for the compilation of statistics, it would have been quite a different matter from this. I hope the Labour Bills Committee will not think that the employers are trying to get an advantage when they ask the Committee to carefully consider the points which we have brought before you.

99. *Mr. Tanner.*] Do I understand you, Mr. Scott, to mean that information could be obtained under this Bill which would be used by Government officers as a basis of prosecution?—I do not think there is any reason why the Labour Department should not be able to use the information obtained under this Bill for the purpose of prosecuting. Not only is the employer compelled to show his books, but the Department is given every means of extracting the information which it may require.

100. Have you read the subsection to clause 8 which provides that the information obtained under the Bill is not to be divulged? The subsection says, "Every person who commits a breach of this provision is liable to a fine not exceeding fifty pounds." Have you considered that provision? Do I understand that you have come to the conclusion that this evidence can be procured and afterwards used for the purpose of prosecution?—It is not my own opinion only that I have been giving. Some little time ago the Labour Department issued a circular to the following effect: "You are respectfully asked to notify at once the Head Office of the Department of Labour of any dispute that may arise between your union and employees, giving a concise and clear report of same. We are desirous of having such report as soon as possible after the dispute is declared, so that the Department may be fully acquainted with all matters connected with the dispute."

101. What does that mean? Is it not the duty of the Department as far as possible to get the most reliable information with regard to the trade and industries of the colony?—That is so; but the information can be used in case of a dispute.

102. Would that affect the industry?—It does not take away the fact that an employer has to give information which may be against himself.

103. I do not see that he would have to give information beyond what is within his own knowledge?—Well, the employers think it is unfair.

104. Is it not a fact that the employers have communicated their grievances to the newspapers?—No; I am not aware of any instance in which employers have communicated their case to the newspapers before it went before the Arbitration Court.

105. Well, I will say employers have lent themselves to interviews with newspaper correspondents?—I am not aware of any such case.

106. In the late furniture dispute in Auckland did not the employers get at the newspapers?—I am not aware of the particulars of that case, and cannot give an opinion on it.

107. Have you ever seen copies of the monthly publication called the *Labour Journal*?—Yes, I have seen it at times.

108. Have you seen the information in that journal with regard to the rates of wages in different places?—Yes.

109. Have you any reason to suppose that the statements made there are correct?—I presume they are pretty accurate as far as the general average is concerned.

110. I think it was the first speaker who suggested that the bulk of the information, with regard to the cost of production, is given in the income-tax returns?

Mr. Thompson: Yes.

Mr. Tanner: Are you aware that the information which is sent in under the Income-tax Act is purely confidential, and can never be divulged?

Mr. Thompson: Yes; but we object to the clause in this Bill, because if the information is only required for statistical purposes, then it should be supplied to the proper Department.

Mr. Tanner: I am willing to object all round if you will give me reasons.

Mr. Thompson: If the Minister wants information on this subject for his Department, he can get it from the proper Department.

Mr. WILLIAM NAUGHTON made a statement. (No. 17.)

Mr. Naughton: We consider this is a Bill which is urgently required. In fact, the Trades Councils and the labour organizations of the colony have been asking for it for the last eight or nine years. We recognise that it is only right and proper that there should be reliable industrial statistics, and these cannot be obtained at present. Any one with a knowledge of statistics has only to look through the Labour Department returns and they will find that they are very wide of the mark. They are most unreliable. We believe the Department does its best to obtain reliable information, but it has no sure way of verifying the statements made to it. This Bill will enable proper statistics to be procured. In my opinion, the last bookbinding statistics are very unreliable; and in the case of the bootmakers I believe that, as a matter of fact, the statistics given by the Labour Department with regard to piecework were taken from the rates which prevailed two years ago, whereas there has been a fresh award since then, and the rates have been changed. Therefore the statistics in that respect are utterly unreliable. We have been asking for a number of years for a Bill of this sort, and there has been no objection made to it. We never heard of any objection on the part of the employers. In fact, there has been no objection from the employers themselves. It has only arisen from those who if on our side would be termed paid agitators. So far as the statement that this Bill will enable a system of espionage to be carried on, we cannot see that it will do anything of the kind. We do not think that it will give any greater power than is already possessed by Inspectors under the Factories Act, and therefore we cannot see why any objection should be made to the Bill. In the census returns many more things require to be answered than are required under this Bill. It is a Bill to enable reliable statistics to be obtained with regard to people engaged in the industries of the colony, and we believe that will be an advantage to everybody. I have nothing more to say on behalf of the Trades Councils.

Mr. ANDREW COLLINS made a statement. (No. 18.)

Mr. Collins: This question has been before the trades and labour organization for the last ten years. We have always advocated, and do now, a Bill on the same lines as that which was introduced by Mr. Reeves in 1893. I will read a resolution which was carried unanimously at the last Trades and Labour Conference, which was held at Greymouth. I think it will give the case as far as we are concerned, and it will save time. I may say that we are prepared to go one better, and say that "what is sauce for the goose should be sauce for the gander," and that the Department should be able to obtain information from the trades-unions in the same way as from the employers in order to enable them to prepare the statistics. This is the resolution which was carried unanimously at the Greymouth conference:—

"Mr. Rusbridge (Canterbury) moved, and Mr. Collins (Wellington) seconded, 'That this conference again urges upon the Government the necessity of introducing a Bill on the lines brought forward by the Hon. W. P. Reeves in 1895, to enable the Department of Labour to demand reliable statistics for its reports.' The mover stated that this was a very important measure, and was intended to give the Department power to collect information from all sources, such as requiring employers to furnish returns of every workman employed by them, stating the nature of employment, hours of labour, and whether the workman is paid daily or other wages, or by piece, and such other particulars as may be necessary to ascertain the relations between employers and workman. It would also empower the Department of Labour to investigate the causes of disputes between employers and workers, and require either party to furnish statements setting forth the matter and causes that led to the dispute. If this Bill became law it would, to a large extent, do away with the difficulties under which the unions labour in their efforts to get information as to the true state of any particular industry. Such information is very necessary when bringing cases before the Conciliation Board or Arbitration Court, and, seeing they are not in a position at present to obtain it, this measure would be of great advantage to workers. The Department would have power also to collect information from friendly societies, industrial societies, and trades-unions. It would be of very great assistance in the compilation of the *Labour Journal*. He was quite sure that all those present would agree with him that the journal issued by the Labour Department was a very valuable publication, and it was very necessary that every opportunity should be given to obtain reliable information from all sources, as it is desirable that the people of the colony should be in a position to know in what condition the industries of the country are. The motion was carried unanimously."

A resolution to that effect has been carried unanimously for the last ten years. With regard to the argument of the employers, that the information may get out and injure them in their business, I have only to say that the Income-tax Department has power to obtain all the information it requires in order to ascertain whether the returns supplied to it are reliable or not; and, as was pointed out by the last speaker, under the Factories Act the Department can overhaul an employer's books to obtain the information it requires; and I do not think there is one member of this Committee who would say that the Department has made an improper use of the information so obtained. Relating to the statistics which would be obtained, we, as a labour party, say this: that if we knew the particulars of an employer's business and the real position which he held in the particular industry, some of us might not feel it right to go on and make a claim on that industry, but as it is we do not know where we are. We say that the Labour Department has practically got its hands tied, and, even with the powers conferred by this Bill, will have them more tied than any other Department, and we think they should be allowed to expand not only in the interest of the employees, but of the employers. I cannot see anything in the Bill which will injure an employer. In fact, in some instances it would have the effect of stopping the labour leaders from asking for small concessions when they knew that the state of the industry would not allow of them. I think the employers should take advantage of that, and see that their statistics are reliable. The secretary of the Bootmakers' Union is not able to be present to-day, but if he were he would be able to give the Committee reliable information as to the importation of boots into the colony. The bootmakers know very well that the statements made by the employers before the Court regarding the local industry were very far-fetched. At present the Labour Department has no means at its command whereby it can get reliable information in regard to trade, and we think that if the Department had the power to give such reliable information we should see that there is a large amount of importation of manufactured boots, which is increasing, as you will see by the returns, while the increase in the boots manufactured in the colony is considerable, and has been increasing every year. This we know by the number of hands engaged.

Mr. DAVID MCLAREN made a statement. (No. 19.)

Mr. McLaren: In connection with this Bill I may say that I represent the same bodies that I represented this morning when giving evidence on the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Bill. It appears to me that this is a measure which is absolutely necessary, not in the interests of any particular class of people in the colony, but of the people of the colony as a whole. It would be helpful to the Legislature, to the local governing bodies, to officers of societies both of employers and of workmen. I cannot conceive of a proper Labour Department without such Department being a bureau of statistics. I had occasion some short time ago to get information from the American Department, and I was astonished to find how complete were the statistics of the Chicago Bureau. It appears to me that the provisions of this Bill are in the interests of the colony as a whole, and should not be regarded as being in the interests of any special class of the community. I think the chief suggestions you want are towards improving the Bill which is before you. These are suggestions which might be taken from men who are in the position of experts in various departments. One suggestion I have to make, which comes from Canterbury Trades Council, is that in clause 7, subsections (*a*), (*b*), and (*c*), provision should be made that the information received under this section should be attested before a Justice of the Peace, also that penalties should be imposed in cases where false information is knowingly supplied. Of course, there is provision for neglect or refusal to supply information, but it appears to us that there should be an attestation of the information supplied, and that in cases where false information is supplied the persons so acting should be liable to a penalty. In connection with wharf work, the class of work with which I come most in contact, the position is that in the Old Country there has grown up a state of things that might be plainly spoken of as deplorable. I believe that that in a measure is due to the fact that the governing bodies in the Old Country have not from the earliest date kept records of the trade of the ports. In the London Docks the authorities are so numerous that it has been necessary to get the London County Council to buy them at a great cost, and to form one controlling authority. I know the bad conditions there have been growing up for a great number of years, and the authorities were absolutely in the dark as to them. When the big dockers' strike took place at Home, and the question came up as to the conditions under which the dockers lived, the authorities were all in conflict with one another because none of them had any statistics on which they could rely. I think we should take steps to avoid anything of that kind in a young colony like New Zealand. I find that in New Zealand a custom is growing up which is very much in vogue in the Old Country. There is, for instance, in connection with wharf work a great deal of subcontracting. Section 7 of this Bill, subsection (*b*), provides that the employer shall state in writing "the full name of every person having the principal control, superintendence, or management of any kind of business carried on by such employer." I think it should also be necessary, besides giving the name of the principal manager or superintendent, to give the names of those who have subsidiary control. In connection with wharf work, that would mean giving the names of the various controllers, foremen, or stevedores in cargo-work and in coal-work, so that there might be a full knowledge of the trade in any particular port. There is also this further suggestion which we have to make with regard to subsection (*a*) of section 7. It is provided in that subsection that the officers of industrial unions shall be required to supply information regarding membership, benefits, and other advantages under the union or society. I think these officers should also be required to give information as to the customs of the trade or calling. There are customs which grow up in connection with every trade or occupation, which are not set out in any rule-books, and which customs, at the same time, have great power in operation in connection with various occupations. Such information would be of great value if supplied by the officers of the institutions. I have nothing further to suggest. I will only add that

it appears to me that this measure is so much in the interest of the whole colony that I cannot conceive why any one should oppose its passage.

Mr. WILLIAM THOMAS BARNES made a statement. (No. 20.)

Mr. Barnes: I can only indorse what Mr. McLaren has stated in connection with this Bill. I think it meets the case, if not altogether in its entirety, still, very near it. As Mr. McLaren has stated, there are one or two things in which it might be amended; but, still, we think that half a loaf is better than no bread, and we are prepared to accept the Bill as it stands, and hope that it will be passed. One matter I should like to allude to is in connection with clause 2, which says, "'Employer' means any person, firm, company, or local authority employing labour of any kind for hire." I should like to have that improved by the Committee so that it shall be provided that it is no matter what firm you may be working for so long as that firm employs you. Another omission is that it is only provided that the employer shall state in writing the name of every person having the principal control, superintendence, or management of any kind of business carried on by the employer. I think that those who do the managing, under the principal manager, should also be included in that provision. These are the only points that I can see that should be really impressed upon the Committee. As far as the rest of the Bill is concerned, I am perfectly satisfied that when I go back to Lyttelton, if I take this Bill with me passed, we shall all be quite satisfied with the terms of it.

111. *Mr. Tanner.*] You referred Mr. Collins to clause 7, and said something about getting returns from friendly societies and industrial associations. I presume you would like to see the scope of inquiry made larger?—Yes.

112. Do you think that if the Department gets this enlarged information it will use that information as a basis for prosecution? Is there any reason to apprehend that?—I do not think so.

113. Look at the first lines of clause 6, and then at the subsection of clause 8, which provides, "Every person who commits a breach of this provision is liable to a fine not exceeding fifty pounds." Do you think the provisions of this Bill in that respect would empower the authorities to initiate a prosecution?—I do not think so.

114. Do you, Mr. McLaren, think so?—No.

Mr. Tanner: The object is to obtain correct knowledge with regard to the industrial occupations in the colony.

Mr. Collins: That, to my mind, is the object of the Bill; and I say that there is nothing extraordinary in the provisions of the Bill in regard to the inspection of the books of employers, because the Department has already that power under the Factories Act, and I have never heard of a case in which they have used the information thus obtained in prosecuting an employer.

115. *Mr. Tanner.*] Of course that would be only for the purposes of the Factories Act. The Department might come across the fact that an employer was working against the law, and he might have his attention called to it, but not necessarily for the purpose of prosecuting him?—That is so.

Mr. McLaren: I take it that there are many cases brought against employers under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act which would not be pressed forward if the officers of the industrial associations had reliable information to depend upon. You can quite understand that things are now often forced through, whereas if there were reliable information they would very likely not be pushed forward, and the cases would be more easily settled.

116. *Mr. Tanner.*] You, Mr. McLaren, have referred to customs which are peculiar to certain trades, but which are not laid down in the rules. Would you define any of them?—There is the custom, for instance, with regard to overtime rates. In some cases there is time and a half allowed for overtime, and in others it is time and a quarter. I think it would be of great advantage if the Department were able to obtain reliable information in regard to these points.

117. Is it a fact that building labourers are allowed to carry away the empty cement cases?—That is a general custom in the building trade, and again, in the carpenters' trade it is the custom for the men to carry away the chips and a certain quantity of small wood.

118. Is that included in the award?—No.

119. Is it possible that in an action for petty larceny against a man, he might plead that it was a custom of the trade?—There is nothing to safeguard a man if an action were taken against him for petty larceny, although it was a custom of the trade.

120. Are you aware that in a part of this colony a man lost his employment because he carried away four small pieces of wood, and said it was the custom of the trade?—I am not aware of that case. I know, in connection with the Wellington Wharf, that men are allowed to take away some portions of the wood which is used in stowing cargo in the holds.

121. Have you known a case of a man in the boot trade losing his employment because he took off his boots and drove half a dozen nails in the soles, although it had been a custom of the trade and he did not know that that custom had been withdrawn?—I do not know of that case.

122. These are what you refer to as being customs of trade, without being provided for in the rules?—Yes; they are the custom amongst some employments.

Mr. Collins: In the baking trade we have a custom that the bakers should be allowed so-many loaves a day. In Wellington the custom is to allow two loaves a day for other days and three loaves on Saturday. This practice had been in force for over five years; but on the last occasion on which a dispute was brought before the Arbitration Court the employers fought against it. I am pleased to say that Judge Cooper said it was an old custom, and that no exception could be taken to it.

123. Is it embodied in the award?—Yes.

124. Is it not a fact that where these customs prevail it is usual to make allowance for them in the wages?—I look upon them as something like half the wages. If an employee takes his loaves away it practically means that he is charged 3d. a loaf for his bread.

125. Is it not a fact that in some occupations the whole of the materials used in the manufacture are supplied by the employer, whereas in other cases the employee has to find a portion of it?—That is so. Carpenters have to go to considerable expense in supplying themselves with tools.

THURSDAY, 22ND OCTOBER, 1903.

Mr. EDWARD TREGEAR made a statement. (No. 21.)

Mr. Tregear: I am Secretary of the Labour Department. I am not going to say much with regard to the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Bill. The Committee has already had my opinion on the Bill. There was, however, some evidence given yesterday in which statements were made which might be misleading to the Committee, and I want to put right some of the statements which were made. One witness stated that a Judge of the Arbitration Court gave a decision in favour of a farm-labourer before farm-labourers were covered by the amending Act. I may state that farm-labourers have always been covered, and it has been so held in a great many cases. It had been said by many people that a man who was working on a threshing-machine or on a reaper-and-binder did not come under the provisions of the original Act; therefore an amending Act was passed which clearly defined those who were to come under its provisions, and farm-labourers came under the definition. A witness stated that a man who dropped at his work and was injured was subject to fits, and that it was in consequence of a fit that he was injured. The insurance manager put in that plea in the case of Susan North *v.* The Dunedin Threshing-machine Company, in September, 1902. The whole of the evidence came before Judge Cooper, and he gave a decision in favour of the applicant. I think the Committee will accept the judgment of the Judge as against the statement of the insurance manager. Another witness stated that his firm contributed 10 per cent. to the Sick and Accident Fund of the men, and that they became a sort of friendly society. I would only point out that, although such an arrangement was very good as far as a sick-fund was concerned, it did not provide any large sum for the widow in case of the death of her husband in the way of compensation. Another statement was made by a witness that the fines in the Arbitration Court cases go to the unions. I may point out that is not so, because in later cases the Department of Labour has brought the action and the fine has gone to the Department.

126. *Mr. Tanner.*] Do the fines go to the union when it initiates the prosecution?—When the Judge decides that it shall be so they do.

127. *Mr. Aitken.*] Have you any idea of the percentage of fines which go the unions?—I could not say without consulting the documents. Another witness stated that there were four firms in Auckland who themselves covered the whole of their risks. I may say that when the first Workers' Compensation for Accidents Bill was brought in, and when the Government Insurance for Accidents Bill was brought down, I expressed the opinion that it was a bad thing to contract out the compensation for accidents to workers, because it tends to put a man's life in danger. In Germany the employers in each trade insure themselves, as these firms in Auckland have done. They then take care that their machinery is up to date, and firms like these Auckland timber firms will not use obsolete machinery. I think that when an employer is allowed to insure his workmen outside he may sometimes be exposed to the temptation of allowing his men to go into dangerous places, which otherwise he would not do.

128. *Mr. Aitken.*] Does not the same principle apply to the insurance company? If there is a chance of it having to pay a heavy loss, will it not see that the machinery is good before it gives the insurance?—No doubt; but the good employer will have a greater interest in seeing that all machinery is good.

129. *Mr. Bollard.*] If a man meets with an accident by allowing himself to go among dangerous machinery so that his friends may get compensation, that does not prevent him going for the employer under the Employers' Liability Act?—No doubt; but that is an Act which it is very difficult to work. A witness expressed the opinion that ordinary cases should be decided by a Stipendiary Magistrate, that the employers approved of the ordinary Courts being used for this purpose, and that the Arbitration Court should have nothing to say to them. I can only say that if the ordinary Courts are to be used for these cases, and there is to be an appeal from Court to Court, with all the expense of employing lawyers, and so on, it would entirely defeat the intent of the labour laws, and prevent justice being done to the parties. With regard to bringing cases before the Court, the Department is of opinion that it would be greatly to the interest of all parties if the employees were obliged to appeal to the unions before they brought their cases into the Court. It would save considerable expense. I will now turn to the Labour Department Bill. One witness said that it was a Bill that should not be placed on the statute-book, because the statistics could be obtained under existing Acts. I have only to reply that we wish to widen these statistics so as to take in every occupation in the country, so that we may be able to lay reliable statistics before Parliament when we make our reports. One deputation stated yesterday that late reports gave figures with regard to wages which were given two years ago. It is not possible that a report should have been sent in which did not take account of the alteration in wages which has occurred in the meantime. It was also stated that the report of the Registrar-General and the income-tax returns were sufficient as to the cost of production. I say that they are not, and I have brought here a volume which will show the sort of thing which the United States Labour Department does in this respect every year. There is no country in the world in which there is more industrial freedom than there is in the States, and yet this system of obtaining reliable statistics has been carried on for years, and has never been objected to. In regard to its being inquisitorial, it is nothing in that respect when compared

with the details required by the Income-tax Act. A witness spoke with regard to a circular which was sent round by the Labour Department, and said that it was very dictatorial. That circular was issued directly after the furniture-trade dispute in Auckland, and it was merely to the effect that employers and unions were asked as soon as a dispute arose to send particulars to the Labour Department. The reason why it was issued was that the first we knew of the dispute in the case referred to was to see the big headlines in the newspapers when the news of the dispute was telegraphed down here. The intention of the circular was most harmless, and we have no power to carry out what was proposed in it; it was merely asking for a voluntary opinion. I beg to ask the Committee to take notice of a recommendation made by one witness: that the giving of false information should be punishable. I see it has been left out in the Bill, and I would ask the Committee to make provision for such cases. There is one point which I should like to bring before the Committee, and that is that there have been attacks made upon me in the Wellington papers since the matter has been before the Committee. As I am a Civil servant, and therefore precluded from making any reply, I should like to bring the charges under the notice of the Committee. In last night's *Evening Post* there is an article headed "A New Detective Bureau." In answer to that, all I can say is that I do not think there is anything wrong in being called a detective, because the duty of a detective is to bring criminals to justice. In this morning's paper there is a report of a meeting of the New Zealand Employers' Federation, at which a resolution was carried unanimously in which the following expression was used: "It is now apparent, however, that the labour party, led by the Secretary of the Labour Department, has decided upon a most socialistic platform which has as its ideal "One employer only, and that employer the State." I would ask the Committee, as a measure of protection to me, to refer to the evidence given yesterday, in which it was shown that for ten years the labour councils have brought this matter up yearly at their conferences. It was also mentioned by a witness that the employers had great distrust of the Labour Department. I think that any one who distrusts it must have something to conceal. I have here a letter from my Auckland Inspector, dated the 16th October, 1903, in which he says, "So far, I cannot speak too highly of the general assistance and courtesy given by employers to me in getting any required information, and an apparent cheerful willingness to carry out my instructions. I was rather amused lately when reading the speeches of honourable members in the House, during the debate on the Arbitration Act, when they appeared to consider it would be a great hardship for an employer to be called upon to produce his books for the inspection of a factory Inspector, knowing as I do that I do not think there is an employer throughout the length and breadth of this district but would volunteer his books for my inspection—not only this, but instruct their clerical staff to furnish me with written copies of the same. I venture to think that if some such system as the above was put in force it would give general satisfaction to all concerned, and save a good deal of friction through the interference of persons irresponsible to the Department."

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (1,425 copies), £10 6s.

Price, 9d.] By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1903.