

127. And, as we want our Courts kept clear of politics or of any leaning in any direction, would it not be better to trust the Magistrates themselves?—I do not reflect upon the Magistrate's honour or anything of that kind; but I say he is unable to judge in some cases on account of his want of technical knowledge. We find that out in the Court when we go there in connection with our award. We found that a lawyer representing the Labour Department did not understand some of the points, and it was very difficult to make him understand.

128. We both agree that experts are useful, but I want the expert to give evidence and you want him to advise?—Yes, we will call our witnesses to give evidence.

129. You want an expert both to give evidence and advise?—Yes.

130. I want the expert to give evidence and the Magistrate to decide upon the evidence put before him?—Yes, I understand that.

131. *Mr. Bollard.*] I understand you to say that under certain circumstances you consider strikes are justifiable?—There are instances where they are. I want to make it quite clear that a strike may be justifiable in the manner in which I gave it to you in my evidence. A man may be dismissed from his employment, and the employer says, "I shall not give him any more work." Now, if the Court is not coming along immediately to decide that issue, the feeling of the men is so high that they want to lay down their tools; but if we could go into the Magistrate's Court and settle the matter, provided there was a dispute, it would be all right.

132. Do you not know that strikes are illegal?—Yes.

133. Then, you think that under certain circumstances you are justified in acting illegally?—That is so. It is an anomaly right enough.

134. Supposing there is a certain strike, and that strike is investigated by the proper Court, and the union is found to be wrong in striking: do you consider that the strikers should be punished?—Yes.

135. Do you think the law at present is strong enough to punish them?—Yes, the Court can inflict a fine.

136. Supposing you cannot collect the fine?—The men can pay the fine. I know we could—we have property.

137. If you cannot collect the fine and there is no imprisonment, what is the use of it?—If a man becomes involved with a storekeeper for provisions you can get judgment against him, and that judgment practically stands for all time. When he gets money you can get yours.

138. Do you think married men as compared with single men are dealt with fairly in connection with the collection of these fines?—I think, personally, the maximum in the case of a single man ought to be less than that of the married man, because married men can claim an exemption up to £2 under the Attachment Act.

139. Do you think the law is sufficient to punish strikers?—I think so.

140. Had it any effect in the Blackball strike?—It evidently had not, but I think the Department has got wiser and means to collect that money.

141. *Mr. Poole.*] Do you think that most strikes are precipitate?—Yes.

142. In view of that, would you be in favour of giving notice covering a certain period prior to the strike taking place?—The very nature of strikes being precipitate shows that they are acted on immediately, because there is no machinery to deal with the matter. I think if we had machinery by which they could be settled, strikes would be obviated to a certain extent.

143. Giving notice would give time for a Board to be set up so as to consider the difference of opinion before the strike took place?—If men are prepared to submit the matter to a tribunal, they should give notice to the employer that within a certain period the dispute should be settled. In the Blackball strike I moved on the Trades and Labour Council that the Minister of Labour be wired to to send the Court down at once to decide the issue, and on getting a favourable answer from the Minister they should immediately resume work; but the men would not agree to the resolution.

144. Would you be in favour of a decision of a Board being taken, prior to a strike taking place, without the matter being sent on to the Arbitration Court?—Yes, because a decision arrived at like that is fair.

145. Failing a settlement with that special Conciliation Board set up, would you approve of the strikers, or the employers in the case of a lockout, automatically severing themselves from the Arbitration Court?—I think so; but my union has never considered it from that point of view.

146. Having arrived at a decision, would you be in favour of the enforcement of that agreement by the aggrieved party and not the Government?—How is the aggrieved party going to enforce it?

147. You would have to get machinery into the Act for that purpose?—I am not prepared to give an opinion on that.

148. In connection with the settlement of the difference, do you think there would be a continuity of good feeling between the employers and employees round a table with the least possible formality?—That is my opinion, and also the opinion of my union.

149. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] I think you were on the Westland Trades and Labour Council of last year?—Yes.

150. I think they approved of last year's Bill?—Yes, quite a number of clauses of it. We did not discuss it this year because of the other Bill coming down.

151. The reason of that was that I had given notice of my intention to introduce a similar Bill, and immediately some one got a stereotyped resolution sent round asking the unions to say that they opposed it?—Yes. The only objection we made to your Industrial Council proposal