

32. You spoke of the premium system, with which you have rather an intimate connection, and spoke of no less than three thousand rates having been fixed during the last two or three years: is this in consequence of the enormous variety of the work performed?—I should not like to say they are so very complicated in our trade. In other industries I think there would be more, and that they would involve a tremendous amount of intricacy.

33. Would the ordinary employers of the Dominion toil in a painstaking way through the intricacies of this system?—I am afraid not.

34. You object to the employers being called upon to collect fines?—I recognise that that is perhaps the only way to collect them, but it is open to objection.

35. Would not employers be inclined to drop a man in such a case?—Yes. You might introduce some new penalty, and make it a contempt of Court to refuse. That would happen in some cases.

36. You do not anticipate that there would be any large number of men in that position?—I hope not; but you can never tell.

37. *Mr. Poole.*] Are you of opinion that a Conciliation Board with the least possible legal formality would be the best solution of this difficulty?—I believe it is about the best thing the Government can do, but I do not say it is going to get over all industrial trouble.

38. With regard to clause 9, in view of men combining to strike, do you think it is a wise provision to make it imperative for striker and employer to give twenty-one days' notice before striking or locking out?—That refers only to certain industries.

39. But do you think it is a wise provision that twenty-one days' notice shall be given?—I really have not thought of that, but I should say it is a reasonable provision to make. It is very undesirable that there should be stoppage in any industry such as is referred to.

40. In view of a strike taking place, would you make it a necessity that the strikers should forfeit the obligations and privileges of the Arbitration Act?—That is provided for.

41. Do you think that would be a deterrent?—I do not think you can establish any provision that would be a deterrent.

42. Do you not think it would cause some employees to hesitate before taking the step?—Yes, it would have that effect.

43. *Mr. Bolland.*] You said you favoured conciliation?—Yes.

44. Do you believe in such a Conciliation Board as was set up in the Auckland Tramway case?—I did not like the award, if that is what you mean. I think the official Chairman ought to be very carefully selected.

45. You are in favour of an official Chairman?—Yes; but a man in that capacity ought to make a special study of the work. He has to get experience as he goes along that would enable him to deal efficiently and justly with the disputes. A man without any practical knowledge of the conditions is a very doubtful means to obtain just ends.

46. What is your experience with regard to the effect of our labour laws: have they promoted a good feeling between employer and employee during the time they have been in operation?—I believe they have had the reverse effect.

47. Do you find in your own business that the majority of your men are not so anxious to consider your interests as they were previously?—We have never had any trouble with our own men; I have not the slightest word to say against them. If we had only to deal with our own men it would be different.

48. But you do not think the relations between employer and employee have been improved by the labour legislation?—No, I think it has had the opposite effect.

49. *Mr. Barber.*] In the event of the work of the Conciliation Boards being increased, do you desire that it should be the chief feature of the Act?—Yes.

50. Do you think any man acting on a Conciliation Board is a marked man afterwards: do you think there is anything in the statements about penalising a man?—I have never come across anything of the sort. We only hear of it from the employees.

51. It has been continually brought before this Committee, and I should like you to give your opinion as to whether it prevails to any extent at all throughout the Dominion?—There is this to be said, that when a case is focussed in any dispute before the Conciliation Board or Arbitration Court and a dismissal follows shortly after of a man who has made himself prominent, it is at once said that because he made himself prominent he was dismissed; but there may have been a string of circumstances leading up to that which would make an employer think he was a good man to get rid of. In every industry there are some men who are not considered desirable, and on the first opportunity they are discharged. As it happens, this is the class of man who usually makes himself prominent in these disputes, but I have no information of any case where a man has been victimised solely because he has taken an active part in a dispute.

52. *Mr. EU.*] With regard to the figures you gave in connection with an industry, might we know the trade affected?—The engineering trade. These figures were not taken out for the purposes of the Committee, but for another purpose altogether.

53. In 1901 the output per man was £254, and in 1905 £224?—Yes.

54. Can you tell us whether there was any reduction in the prices?—No; I should say there was rather an increase in the prices, because raw material has been rising in value since before the year 1900. I should say there was an increase in the value of the material.

55. You are not certain whether the prices were lower or not?—I am sure they were not lower.

56. You know that we had an industries' week a little time ago?—Yes.

57. And there were exhibits made of different local products?—Yes.

58. They were placed before the public with a view to making them purchase locally made articles?—Yes.