

25. *Mr. Poole.*] Would you allow any expenses to the worker?—It should be in the power of the Court to say that all back pay should be handed to the Government without further legalities.

26. *The Chairman.*] In that case, do you think any cases would be brought?—The unions would prosecute the employer every time.

27. *Mr. Poole.*] What about the union's expenses?—The Inspector of Factories does all the work for the unions, and in cases where he refuses to act the union should be able to apply for its expenses if successful. That is the present state of affairs. Clause 52: We want twenty-one years to be the age limit of apprenticeship. In the skilled trades the trouble is with the permit system. We have had instances where the employers, after a young fellow has finished his time, consider the rise from £1 5s. a week to £3 to be too big, and have got him to apply for a permit. The Court says that the lowest wage a man shall get is so-much, and he should get it. But when a man becomes incapacitated through age he should be allowed to get a permit. If the age for an apprentice is limited to twenty-one, we shall be able to watch him all the time in the factory until he gets the minimum. We have had several instances where men from Home anxious to get employment have applied for a permit in order to work for less than the minimum. If a permit is refused as at present the person can apprentice himself at a wage agreed on by his employer.

28. *Mr. Barber.*] How many years is an apprenticeship in your trade?—Five.

29. Then, if a lad were over sixteen he could not become an apprentice?—No; and any lad wishing to learn the trade would start before that age. Clause 53: We want it stipulated that permits must come before the unions first.

30. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] If the clause is amended to provide that if the permit has been refused by the union the application may be made to the Inspector, would that do?—That would suit us. We want the application to come to us first, and then the applicant can have the right of appeal. Clause 57: The needs wage and exertion wage.

31. *The Chairman.*] That, you will notice, is optional?—Yes. There are only one or two minimum-wage men in the shop I work in, and in our trade the employers voluntarily pay higher wages to good men, and we have got men getting as much as £3 15s. a week, while the minimum is only £3 0s. 5d. If a man is a good man he will always get a good wage. I think the clause would be the cause of a strike, and I am very strongly against having it there. Clause 61: We object strongly to having the Assessors on the Court of Arbitration. They cannot be parties to the dispute, and must be workers in the industry. We should have to send away perhaps to Christchurch to get a man to act for us. The Court is best able to be guided by the evidence put before it. If you had a worker acting as an Assessor, it would be easy in some cases for an employer to buy him over. There was a clause in last year's Bill we should like to see inserted—that giving the unions power to collect subscriptions from non-unionists. In citing employers to appear in a case, we consider that the *Gazette* notice of the setting-up of an Industrial Council in any particular industry should be sufficient citation for that purpose, and the Court also. It seems to me a lot of red-tape to be compelled to cite every man in a whole district.

32. As was done in the case of the Canterbury farm labourers?—Yes. We think a *Gazette* notice should be sufficient.

WILLIAM ALLAN examined. (No. 12.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Do you represent the Wellington Furniture-makers' Union?—Yes; I am vice-president

2. Do you confirm the evidence given by Mr. Moriarty?—Yes.

THURSDAY, 6TH AUGUST, 1908.

WILLIAM PRYOR, examined. (No. 13.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You appear on behalf of the New Zealand Employers' Federation?—Yes.

2. You are secretary of it?—Yes.

3. You have seen and considered this Bill?—Yes.

4. Has your Federation done the same?—Yes, it has been considered by the Federation throughout the Dominion.

5. And they have communicated the results to you?—Yes.

6. And you are here to voice their representations?—That is so.

7. Will you please tell us what you think of the Bill?—The Federation as a whole, as Mr. Booth said in his evidence the other day, considered the Bill an honest attempt to deal with a very difficult problem and to arrive at a solution of the difficulties which present themselves to Parliament and to the country at the present time; and because of that belief the Federation is desirous of helping as far as it can Government and Parliament in their efforts. I want to impress that upon the Committee, Mr. Chairman, so that, while in a measure there is criticism of the Bill in what I have to put before the Committee, I wish it to be understood that the criticism is in no way factious, but is given with a desire to help our legislators. I would like to say with regard to Mr. Booth's remarks about going slow—if you remember he made a particular point of that—

8. Of the workmen going slow?—Yes. He pointed out that without striking at all the workers could gain their ends by deciding to minimise the output; and, to show that some workers and unions recognise that as a very strong power, I would refer the Committee to the remarks of Mr. Park, an Otago delegate to the recent Trades and Labour Conference, where he definitely advised that course being pursued.

9. Have you the words?—I have not them here. I intended to bring them.