

the necessary notice that the permit has expired, owing to the change of address, and as a result the permit holds good until notice is given by the secretary. We want the onus removed from the secretary and placed on the applicant.

31. Your complaint is that men outside the trade have been granted permits to work as carpenters?—Yes, and are at the present time—to every trade outside our own.

32. That could be met by an amendment of the Act providing for the filling-in in the permit of the term for which the man may work in the occupation for which he applies?—Yes, providing it stipulates that at the expiration of the term for which the permit was granted, failing a renewal, the permit is invalid, and the holder liable for committing a breach, and that he has had some previous knowledge of the trade.

33. So that a young fellow could finish off his time, or an old man take a reduced wage?—Yes.

34. It was never intended that a man who had been working at another trade should take advantage of this provision?—That is so. We raise no objection to old men in our trade coming in under the permit; but in the case of young men permits are granted for six months, and at the end of the term they want another one, and so on. In Gisborne there are a lot of men not getting the minimum wage at all: the employers simply bind them down to the permit system.

35. Do you think there can be a more complete system of machinery for the proper issue of these permits than the Labour Department, with its agents all over the Dominion?—No, I do not think so, providing, of course, the secretary has an opportunity of being heard. If the local Inspectors were to take the matter up, our interests would be served greatly where we have no branches of our society.

36. The Labour Department could notify the secretary of the union that application had been made, and also the policeman in outlying districts?—I do not like the idea of the policeman being in it, for in every instance he has no knowledge of the trade. Plausible stories are told by some of these applicants. We would like the permit to apply to those it was originally intended for—that is, to old men, or those suffering from injuries or infirmities. We would strike out of the Act the words “any worker.” We should like you to see that the injustice which is meted out to members of our trade, and not only to members of the union, is removed.

37. That is why I propose that this should be done by the Labour Department, which is responsible to Parliament for all it does, and that it should be taken out of the hands of the Magistrates where there is no Conciliation Board. There is no one better able to get information about the workers than officers of the Department?—I quite agree with that. I have to thank the Department and its officers in several of the country districts for the able manner in which they try to protect our interests. But they have no power in this direction just now. If it is left to constables they have no idea of what is required, and would only increase the number of permits.

38. I am trying to evolve a check over the whole of the Dominion. We have large outlying districts in which there is no other person than the constable who can notify the head of the Department of such applications. The constable would not grant the permit, but would notify the Department when a man had applied for it. This could be done by telegram?—I believe that would meet the difficulty.

39. We should then have the whole thing under complete control. If you want the permit system continued there is only one effective means of keeping a complete check over them, and that is through the Labour Department on the lines I suggest?—We do not want it wiped out of the Act.

40. You have admitted that it is necessary for the old men, if we confine it entirely to workers in the trade, and also for young men to finish their apprenticeship?—Yes, if the Department stipulates that they shall be legally indentured to serve the balance of their term, in which case it would throw the onus on the employers of teaching the young fellows their trade.

41. Parliament would not give the Labour Department power to insist on indenturing?—I admit it is a very difficult thing. So far as our trade is concerned, it is imposed upon more than any other. Twenty-four hours' notice to the secretary of an application for the issue of a permit is not sufficient.

42. My intention is that the representative of the Labour Department shall telegraph the information?—That may meet the difficulty to some extent.

GEORGE HENRY LIGHTFOOT, Secretary of the Wellington Branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, examined. (No. 19.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Is there anything you wish to say supplementary to what Mr. Powell has stated?—I do not think so, and the evidence I gave last year would cover the position.

2. Is there any representation at all you wish to make with regard to the present Bill?—Yes, with regard to that portion of the Bill dealing with enforcements. My opinion is in favour of the major portion of that part, but clause 17 we regard as hardly fair. My union takes its own cases for enforcement before the Arbitration Court, and this clause if passed will mean that after bearing the entire expense of the proceedings and winning a case it will be money out of pocket, while if it lost it would be more out of pocket, because under the existing law costs can be given against the union. We suggest that the penalty when recovered should go to the plaintiff. We also suggest that when there is an appeal from the Magistrate's decision, and a case is stated for the Arbitration Court, it should be on points of law only, and not in regard to penalties. Those are the only items I wish to mention.

3. *Mr. EU.*] You are representing the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners?—Yes.

4. And those are the only points you have to give evidence upon?—Yes. I might say with regard to the rest of the Bill that my union held a special meeting to consider it, and its various decisions were practically the same as those arrived at by the Trades and Labour Council, with the exception of the evidence Mr. Powell and I have given.