

ciliation. They might be equally versed in the technicalities of the work, but would be quite incapable of holding their own in discussion and in dealing with the facts from a business standpoint.

10. How did the case go off?—It has not been settled yet; it is being considered by the Court now. This was a union with 750 members, and the Committee will quite understand the difficulty there would be in the case of organizations containing ten, twenty, or thirty members. If a body of 750 members found a difficulty in getting suitable representatives for a Council of Conciliation, it would be almost impossible for the smaller organizations to do so.

11. You think they would be unequally matched?—I am sure they would. In Part IV there are certain clauses which the Trades Council have redrafted, but you are perhaps conversant with them.

12. You object to the number of seven forming a union being increased to twenty-five?—Yes.

13. And to the method of voting provided for in clause 47?—Yes. With regard to the number of members to form a union, it must be obvious to the Committee that the unions that remain to be formed will not be large bodies of men.

14. Are there many branches of industry in which no organization exists?—Taking Wellington in comparison with Christchurch I should say there are a great many, because there are many more unions affiliated with the Trades Council in Christchurch than there are in Wellington. I do not know the number, but I should say there are from ten to twenty more, and many of them are very small unions.

15. Is there any probability of unions of small dimensions being included in the existing unions? Would there be any disposition among the present unions to take them in?—I have endeavoured to do that, but I find the Court does not take very kindly to the idea. I do not know why. I endeavoured to have the unskilled labourers in the meat-works joined to the general labourers' award, but the Court decided that they could not be regarded as general labourers.

16. Is the objection of the Court due to the fact that it would mean that a number of awards would have to run in one establishment?—No; so far as I can see, the tendency on the part of employers is to have one award for their own little business. I had rather a serious illustration of this from our point of view in the case of the meat-workers in the Hawke's Bay district. When Nelson Bros., of Tomoana, received notice that they were going to be cited as parties in the general labourers' award they called a meeting of their men and told them that an octopus union of Wellington was going to take charge of them and that they should form a union of their own. The men decided to form a union, and the manager was present at the meeting. His was the guiding hand; he framed the rules and showed them how to run the meeting. They had never had anything to do with a union before. When the union was registered and Mr. Nelson told them that he had an agreement drawn up ready for signature and took it that they were satisfied with the existing conditions the men felt that all was not right. Under the existing conditions wages ruled at from 6s. to 8s. a day. The men communicated with Wellington, and I got into touch and pointed out the position to them. They then called a meeting hurriedly and threw out the officials who had been recommended by the company, and filled their places with men who were more independent, with the result that when the Court sits in Napier next month they will ask for an award on claims which are considerably in advance of the existing conditions. This has been the inclination, as far as I can judge, on the part of many employers for some time, and certain remarks which were made by Mr. Justice Sim at a sitting here in Wellington—I think at the last sitting of the Court here—inclines me to the opinion that he favours that method.

17. He favours employers putting up unions practically at their own dictation and under their own control?—I do not know that that is Mr. Justice Sim's intention, but that would be the effect.

18. As a safeguard, I suppose, against any movement from outside, or, indeed, from inside?—Yes; we judge it as having the effect of preventing independent men from exercising any control.

19. *Mr. Arnold.*] Men independent of any employers. That is only what you think the Judge's opinion is?—I am not giving any opinion. What I say is that Mr. Justice Sim made use of certain words—I may not be giving the exact words: he said, Why do they not form a union of their own? They could engage seven men to form a union. Mr. Pryor said, "We have."

20. *The Chairman.*] Has your attention been directed to clause 57 of the Bill, with regard to the "needs wage" and the "exertion wage"?—Yes. We are very strongly opposed to the needs and exertion wage.

21. What do you understand by it: I should like to get your view?—The first I heard of this needs and exertion wage was in a letter by an anonymous writer to the *Evening Post* on the 25th February, 1907. In taking cases before the Court we have always endeavoured to make the minimum sufficient for a married man and his family to live decently upon. We do not know what is in the mind of the Court when a minimum is fixed, but we assume that the minimum fixed is what a married man can live decently upon. This anonymous writer in the *Wellington Evening Post* eighteen months ago stated that the Act at present did not make provision for married men with families or give them encouragement or consideration above single men. Well, we take it that this anonymous writer is the father of this suggestion, and following out that line we take it that his intention is that if the present minimum is sufficient for married men with families to live on, then single men should get less. If that were the case employers would not take on married men, because they have not sufficient sentiment in them to pay more to married men than to single men for the same amount of work. In my experience the exertion wage is this: In the sawmills the man who gets the exertion wage is the benchman. We had evidence in Invercargill last month of a man receiving £16 a month and a bonus. If the benchman works hard every other man in the mill must work hard too. Those who supply the logs are worked harder and those who take the timber away must work harder.