

38. What brought about that state of things? You say, "until the Employers' Association ignored the Board"?—I take it that the employers were endeavouring to secure public agitation for the abolition of the Boards, and endeavoured to do so by throwing ridicule on their work.

39. Is it not a fact that originally all the cases had to go before the Board in Wellington?—That is so.

40. And legislation made it possible for the employers to go past the Board?—Yes.

41. What brought about that legislation?—It has been said that it was brought about by the workers themselves, but I am not able to say whether that is correct or not. It has been said that the workers asked that this clause in the Bill should be inserted, but my knowledge of the member who moved for the insertion of the clause leads me to think that it was done at the instigation of the employers, because he was one of the bitterest opponents we had.

42. The fact of one man moving an amendment could not have put it on the statute-book. Is it not a fact that the class of representatives placed on the Board by the Wellington workers, and the stand taken by those men, caused the strongest general disgust to be felt throughout the Dominion, which was reflected by members of Parliament, and caused a majority of the House to make it possible for the employers to ignore these Boards? Was it not brought about by the Labour party themselves in that way?—It is rather hard for me to answer a question that would reflect on the representatives of unions in Wellington.

43. It is not difficult at all, if true?—I would rather not answer the question. I think it is rather unfair to ask me to make reflections on the representatives of the unions.

44. How long have you been in Wellington?—Only about three years.

45. So that your experience is limited so far as that is concerned?—Yes.

46. With regard to the special Boards: You say that you had a conference at Invercargill recently?—No, that we had a case before the Court there.

47. The Chairman asked you, with regard to the special or Industrial Boards, whether they worked satisfactorily or not, and you said you had a conference at Invercargill, and from your experience there the representative workers were no match for the representative employers?—If I said that, it did not convey my meaning. What I said, or intended to say, was that we had a case before the Court, and from the experience or knowledge I gained there of the capabilities of the opposing sides I was quite satisfied that if they were to form a Council of Conciliation they would not be able to form one that would do justice to the workers.

48. Then, you had no conference at Invercargill?—No.

49. Then, the two parties did not sit over a table in argument in connection with the different clauses?—They did previously, but not while I was there.

50. How do you come to the conclusion that the intelligence of one body was pitted against the other?—By the different methods—it was the way the case was handled.

51. What you say is that those who conducted the case for the employers were keener than those who conducted the case for the employees?—No; that would be a reflection on myself. I refer to the preparations that were made on both sides.

52. That conveys to my mind again that those who conducted the case had not properly coached their witnesses. You have made a statement that reflects on the intelligence and abilities of the worker in contradistinction to the employer?—The employees' representatives put their side as well as they could. Their witnesses were very good, and they put up a very good case; but the employers' representatives were able to put the whole position from a financial and commercial point of view, and practically we were unable to touch them on that matter.

53. *The Chairman.*] Is not that disadvantage very general?—I am sorry to say it is.

54. *Mr. Arnold.*] If those two people met round a table there would not be any need to go into such questions as those?—They did meet round a table.

55. Then they held a conference?—Yes, before the Court arrived.

56. The question is as to the intelligence and ability of these people in comparison with the employers. Your argument against the Councils is that, if the two parties met, the intelligence and the ability of the employer is so much greater than that of the employee that the workers would be placed at a great disadvantage, and you say that was made evident to you in Invercargill?—I do not think I mentioned anything about the intelligence and abilities of either party. So far as dealing with the work is concerned the men were as capable as the employers, but they had no experience of commercial matters.

57. You admit that the worker, given the opportunity, is just as keen and intelligent, and as well able to look after his own interest, as the employer is?—If given equal opportunity, certainly.

58. Does not the same argument apply to Boards of Conciliation, where the two parties have to meet?—No, I think not. We have Mr. Cooper, and we consider he is the ablest man for this work we have in New Zealand, and I think that every union in this industrial district which knows anything about the man would be sorry to find any Board set up without him.

59. Are the employers not represented by the best men they can get?—I have no doubt about that.

60. And Mr. Cooper is a match for them?—We hold that he is a match, and that is the reason why we want him on every case.

61. Now, with regard to the number of industries affiliated with the Trades Council, you say there are ten or twenty more in Canterbury than in Wellington?—Speaking from memory.

62. But there are a large number more?—Yes.

63. And you are of opinion that those industries are represented in Wellington?—I have no doubt of that.

64. Then, what is the cause of them not being affiliated? Is it want of interest or want of energy on the part of the organizers?—I do not know. We appear to pursue a different method in