

much respect, and, any way, I am perfectly satisfied of this: that every principle of unionism is violated in that Bill, with its repressive, coercive method of dealing with labour affairs. What we want is that the facility for settling our disputes by the methods of conciliation provided in Mr. Reeves's Bill should be extended. The whole tendency of legislation since that Bill was introduced has been to reduce the present Conciliation Boards—which I conceive are the best institutions under the Act—to a position of absolute uselessness. It has all been in that direction.

15. *Mr. EU.*] What legislation?—Most of it. At any rate, the most important has been in that direction.

16. What clause do you refer to?—Clause 60 of the present Act, and clause 59, which enables an employer to take the whole case to the Court.

17. *The Chairman.*] We have your opinion of Part I of the Bill; what about Part II?—We approve of sections 11 and 12, and in section 13 we suggest that the words "not exceeding" be inserted in the third line, after the words "penalty of."

18. That £100 should be the maximum in respect of a breach?—Yes; and the same with subsection (2) of section 13. Section 14 we approve of also. In subsection (2) of section 14 we suggest that the word "only"—the last word in the line—be struck out, and these words inserted: "Provided that on the application of either party an expert from each side shall sit with the Magistrate to advise on technicalities, &c." With the rest of that section we agree. Sections 15 and 16 we agree with, and I will refer to section 17 later. Section 18: We suggest that after the words "Court of Arbitration," in the third line, the words "on points of law only" be inserted. The reasons for that will be easily seen.

19. That would need a new interpretation of an award?—I presume so.

20. The award is not statute law, although it is pretty well equal to it. It is not embodied in the printed law?—I think this would include that. That point of view was not discussed, and I would rather not say anything about it at the present time. Clause 19: We suggest that all the words after "action," in the second line, shall be deleted. That is for the purpose of preventing an appeal to the Arbitration Court. We can see quite plainly that if an appeal were allowed the object of allowing Magistrates to deal with breaches of award would be frustrated. The trades-unions and trades councils have urged that Stipendiary Magistrates should be given power to deal with the enforcement of awards simply because the Arbitration Court has not been able to deal with the breach of an award as it occurred. The result is that breaches have been filed for months, and months, and months before the Court has come along to hear them, and when the Court has come along all the witnesses have been dispersed to the four corners of the earth.

21. Is that not an answer to the previous question with regard to points of law? You contemplate that no appeal shall lie from the Magistrate in the interpretation of an award?—Yes.

22. Well, that answers the previous question?—Yes, it does. To allow of a party appealing from the Stipendiary Magistrate to the Arbitration Court would simply mean in most of the cases, in all probability, the old evil over again—the Arbitration Court would not come along, and in the meantime our witnesses would have been dispersed. For that reason we urge that no appeal shall lie from any judgment in an action in the Magistrate's Court. Then we suggest the judgment in any such case shall be enforceable in the same manner as a judgment for debt or damages in a Magistrate's Court, and in no other manner. We desire that section 20 be amended by striking out the words "subject to the provisions of the next succeeding section."

23. Strike out the top line?—Yes. Sections 21, 22, 23, and 24 we ask to be deleted altogether. I may say that the unions of the Dominion dealt with that proposal in last year's Bill, and practically the unanimous opinion was that this was altogether foreign to the spirit of advanced legislation with regard to wages—such as the Truck Act and the Wages Protection Act—and they strenuously object to this method of collecting fines. There can be no question about this: that if the clause were put into law it would cause more trouble than all the agitators in New Zealand combined.

24. What would you suggest instead of those four clauses—have you any suggestion?—My suggestion, and the suggestion of the Conference and Trades and Labour Councils and unions, is that the present law is quite sufficient. It seems to me that under the present law they have power to deduct money from a man's wages. If that is so, why introduce this legislation? Evidence of that power was given in a case up in Gisborne.

25. You mean in attaching surplus wages over £2?—Yes. Part III, dealing with Conciliation Boards: We suggest that the whole of this Part be struck out down to clause 44. We contend that the present Conciliation Boards, or the method of constituting them, is certainly the best way to keep alive the spirit of conciliation in the Act. All the arguments in favour of Conciliation Boards as against Industrial Councils, as provided for in last year's Bill, can be used with equal effectiveness against the Conciliation Councils of this year's Bill, and rather than take up the time of the Committee I would refer the Committee to the evidence given by the labour representatives before the Labour Bills Committee of last year on the subject of Industrial Councils. I would just like to emphasize this: that what we want as unionists appearing before the Conciliation Boards and Arbitration Courts is that the independence of our adjudicators shall be preserved as much as possible under the present system of society. The Conciliation Board gave us the largest measure of independence as adjudicators that can possibly be given us under the present system. All we want with regard to these Boards is that their decisions shall be given some finality, and that the provisions of the present law enabling one cross-grained employer to invoke all the machinery of the Arbitration Court, after the Board has made recommendations satisfactory to most of the parties, shall be amended to prevent that kind of thing.

26. What section are you referring to?—Section 60 of the principal Act. That has been the cause of practically all the trouble—there is no getting away from that. If the Labour Bills