

85. Even though they may be working under an award of the Court?—That may alter the case, I suppose.

86. But in the instances in which strikes have taken place in this Dominion the workers have been working under an award?—Unfortunately for them they were.

87. Why do you say “unfortunately”?—Because the award was such that it was not satisfactory to them.

88. There is no instance in which a strike has taken place in the colony where the workers were not working under an award, so far as my information goes; and you consider that, whether men are working under an award or not, or however the public convenience may be affected, they have a right whenever they choose to do so?—Well, the workers never strike unless there is some strong reason for doing so.

89. I have asked you a question with reference to clause 9 of the Bill, which makes provision for a special penalty in the case of men who strike in certain specified industries without due notice; the specified industries are set out as follows: “(a) The manufacture or supply of coal-gas; (b) the manufacture or supply of electricity for light or power; (c) the supply of water to the inhabitants of any borough or other place; (d) the manufacture or supply of bread; (e) the supply of milk for domestic consumption; (f) the slaughtering or supply of meat for domestic consumption; (g) the retail sale or delivery of coal, whether for domestic or industrial purposes; (h) the working of any tramway or railway used for the public carriage of goods or passengers; (i) any industry or occupation of such a nature that any danger to the public health or safety, or any injury or destruction of the property of the employer, has resulted from the strike.” These are the provisions in the Act. Now, do you consider that any body of workers have the right to strike at any time when working under an award where the public interests, such as are provided for in the Bill, are affected, without such body of workers giving due notice of their intention to strike?—If the circumstances of the case compelled them to take that action I would uphold them. It matters not what occupation they are following if the provocation is sufficiently great.

90. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] Notwithstanding a danger to life may be necessarily engendered?—A danger to life would not be engendered.

91. Are not the lives of infants and invalids largely dependent on the supply of milk?—Let municipalities control the milk-supply.

92. *Mr. Alison.*] Do you consider that when a strike takes place the workers in other industries are justified in aiding and abetting the strikers?—Most decidedly.

93. Does that not practically make the working of the Arbitration Act useless?—I do not know whether it does or not—I do not belong to the legal profession—but I say that men have a right to assist one another, no matter what the circumstances are.

94. They have a right to strike when it suits them?—Yes, when it suits them.

95. *Mr. Ell.*] How many years’ experience have you had of the working of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act?—I am a New-Zealander.

96. You have lived here during the whole period the Act has been in operation?—Not for the whole time.

97. Have you for the better part of the time?—Yes.

98. What is your opinion with regard to the effect of the Act on wages, hours of labour, and limitation of the number of apprentices?—Taking the majority of industries, I contend they have not been benefited by the Act one bit, especially where labour is concentrated in one centre; for instance, in the industry I follow.

99. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] What industry is that?—Coal-mining

100. *Mr. Ell.*] Have not wages been increased by the arbitration awards as compared with what they were before the passing of the Act?—Wages have increased everywhere during the last fourteen years, even where no Arbitration Act has been in existence. There has been an increase in prices and, naturally, an increase in wages.

101. Do you know what wages the butchers were receiving before the passing of the Act?—No, I am not acquainted with that industry at all.

102. I am not asking for your opinion with regard to the economic effect of the Act: I am asking whether you have any knowledge of the wages obtaining before the Act came into operation and those fixed by the Arbitration Court?—Do you want me to speak from personal experience?

103. Yes?—I will admit there has been an increase, but that has been in consequence, as in the case of other countries, of an increase in prices of commodities.

104. I want you to answer me this question: Have the wages, as compared with what they were before the Arbitration Act came into operation, been increased?—In some instances—in the majority of industries—they have.

105. I am asking you with regard to the mining industry?—The Act came into force just after a strike.

106. In 1897, six years after the strike?—After the maritime strike wages were abnormally low.

107. That would be in 1897?—I do not know whether it was in 1897 or not, but they were low. Since the Act came into force there has been an increase, but whether that is due to the Arbitration Act or not I cannot say.

108. That is not what I wanted?—You want me to say that wages have risen in consequence of the Act?

109. I want you to say whether you believe wages have increased since the Act came into operation?—I have answered that question—I have said Yes.

110. You cannot speak with regard to other industries?—No.

111. You are a worker among the unions, and I ask you, would it be possible for a small and scattered body of men—such as, perhaps, those engaged in tailoring, joinery and carpentry work