

in country towns, or twelve or fifteen painters in an out-of-the-way provincial district—to protect themselves in a strike as effectively as a large body of men in a mining district would be able to do?—I said that I thought where labour was concentrated the men would be better off outside the Act; but in the case of men engaged as cooks and waiters, &c., they are not in a position to protect themselves.

112. Then, the Arbitration Act would be of material service to those engaged in those industries?—Yes, to those industries.

113. Then, it is desirable to retain the Act on the statute-book in the interest of such workers?—Yes, I say so.

114. *Mr. Arnold.*] I take it for granted that your experience is centred in mining?—In New Zealand it is, practically.

115. I take it also that the largest portion of your evidence, if not the whole, is your individual opinion?—Possibly the greater part of it would be.

116. You say you do not believe in piecework?—No, on principle I object to piecework.

117. That is your individual opinion?—Yes.

118. I understood you to say, in answer to Mr. Alison, that you thought all men should receive the same rate of pay in the same industry?—Yes.

119. That is your individual opinion?—My individual opinion goes a long way further than that.

120. But in that you are not voicing the opinion of the Labour party?—No.

121. Would you be surprised to learn that there is one industry in New Zealand working under an Arbitration Court award where there are not more than three employees working for the minimum wage—that is to say, all the others are getting above the minimum wage?—I should be surprised.

122. If it is a fact, you would not desire all those men to be brought down to the minimum wage?—No.

123. Do you think the employer and employee should have the right to fix the amount above the minimum?—The decision would not rest with the individual, as it would involve the speed of the workers of the whole organization, which should have the right to say whether the individual should accept it.

124. Under the teams system the other men would have to keep up to the average rate?—I know that in some places the employers pay 6d. or 1s. a day to some men in order to set the pace for the others.

125. You admit that one man will have more skill than another: should that not be recognised?—Well, as a question of speed and ability he would naturally affect all the other workers, and they should have a voice in saying whether one man should upset the whole of the working-conditions.

• 126. However, your opinion that all men should be brought down to one level is your opinion only: you are not representing the Conference in saying that?—No.

127. *Mr. Poole.*] Do you think the employers are sufficiently ready to appreciate the ability of some men?—It depends upon the man, in my opinion.

128. Do you think the majority of the employers are prepared to pay a specially skilled man more than poorer workers in order to retain his services?—That naturally follows.

129. You would not put a bar in their way?—It is a difficult point. In offering a man higher wages it may be done for the purpose of speeding up the others. Unfortunately, there is always a number of men prepared to accept that position. They are what in America are called “straw bosses.”

130. You believe in having merit?—It depends upon what standpoint you look at it from.

131. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] You said you believed in the principle of the old Act of 1894, which had nothing repressive in it and no penalties: did you ever read the Act of 1894?—We passed a resolution to that effect at the Conference.

132. Did the Conference read the Act of 1894?—They approved of its principle.

133. The principle of the Act of 1894 is that you can sue under and enforce any award for any amount which is within the jurisdiction of a District Court or a Magistrate's Court. The Supreme Court may order that such award shall be enforced, and proceedings may be taken for the purpose of enforcing payment of such amount as if such award were a judgment or order of a District Court or Magistrate's Court for the recovery of such amount. That is in clause 76 of the Act of 1894. Clause 77 says an association or union may be fined up to £500 and an individual member up to £10; and clause 78 says that a member of any industrial union or any other person liable under an award may be sued individually by any person or body entitled to enforce or obtain any such payment in any Court of competent jurisdiction. You are quite aware that under those clauses a man may be sent to gaol for three months?—I am not aware of it.

134. It was proved in the slaughtermen's case that they could be sent to gaol for three months, and it was seen in the Blackball strike that a man could go into another man's house and distrain on his furniture?—Yes; but the Supreme Court has not given its decision yet.

135. The Act of 1894 is more repressive or restrictive than the Bill now proposed, as far as penalties are concerned?—I do not think so.

136. You said the present system was quite good enough for enforcing penalties: do you think a union is justified, as your union did, in withdrawing its funds and paying them away when the members knew they were under a penalty?—They did not do anything of the kind. They paid their debts, and had about £10 left. They paid their legal debts.

137. Was the penalty not a legal debt owing to the Crown?—They had debts before that was incurred.