

56. Would that not lead to nullification of another part of the Act which is directed against the multiplicity of unions and subdivisions of unions?—It might have that effect but for the fact that the Registrar has power to refuse registration if he deems fit.

57. Would it not have the tendency to multiply the unions in one industry?—No, I think not, if you mean an industry in its restricted sense. I think most of the employers engaged in our industries would welcome one union covering the whole of their hands in most cases. In many cases they are struggling under eight, ten, or twelve awards.

58. You suggest that the right be given to definite sections of workers to register notwithstanding the unions in that industry. Would not that mean the splitting-up of organization?—That might be necessary in some cases. We have in mind a union that has tackled a whole lot of industries and is putting them all under its wing—wool, frain, hardware, cycle agents, and others, and calling themselves the Wholesale Assistants' Union, and roping in all they can get hold of.

59. Your suggestion is that there should be an amendment of the law which would apply generally to this registration of sections?—Just to give the Registrar power to do so. Our point is that he is prevented, even where he deems it desirable, to register a union in such a connection as the Warehousemen's Union. What we wish is that power should be given to the Registrar, if he thinks fit, to register a sectional union.

60. You stated that your federation considered it a wise thing to aim at the settlement of disputes on a Dominion basis?—In certain cases that is so. We desire simple machinery. We can get Dominion awards now, but the process is cumbersome.

61. Would not that policy of dealing with industries as a whole be defeated by the registration of sectional unions?—I do not think so.

62. *The Chairman.*] With regard to subclause (2) of clause 6—"Any party that has not within the time aforesaid signified his disagreement with a recommendation shall be deemed to have concurred in the same"—is it not a fact that when the employer is cited before the Conciliation Council every employer is served with a notice, and he has the right to appear and state his views, and also ask to appoint assessors? Has the employer not a say in appointing the assessors on the Conciliation Council?—If there are a hundred employers and they each nominated a different assessor only three could be appointed, so that there would be ninety-seven of the employers who could not have a voice in the appointment. No employer has the right to appear who is not cited.

63. *Mr. McLaren.*] If there were a thousand in a union they could only appoint three assessors: why should not the employers meet and do the same?—We have not got the organization that you have. I am not saying that the assessors should be bound by the Conciliation Council's recommendation for the unions any more than for the employers. We think we should not be bound on either side, but have a free right to go to the Court.

64. *Mr. Luke.*] In the matter of the warehousemen's dispute, you said you considered there should be facility for sectional representation in the matter of industrial agreements: is that so?—Yes.

65. And yet you said in reference to other industries you thought there should be an award covering the whole of the sections in those industries. Do you differentiate between the mechanical and commercial sides of our life?—No. What I imagine would be a convenience to the engineers is that there should be one award covering all the branches in one shop, and in the soft-goods business there might be one award or agreement covering certain sections. It is quite conceivable that in one of the large warehouses some of the sections have no community of interest with the storemen—none at all—and in that case we say that the Registrar should have power to register, say, the clerk, separately from the sale-room hands, or the sale-room hands from the storemen and packers. The Registrar would have to be the judge, and there would have to be strong reasons put forward to split up the various sections.

APPENDIX.

Canterbury Trades and Labour Council, Trades Hall,
Christchurch, 14th September, 1911.

SIR,—

As it is impossible for us to send any one to give evidence before the Labour Bills Committee *re* the proposed amendments to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, I am directed to place before you the following amendments we desire to see made:—

In the proposed amending Act: That section 4 (3) be amended by deleting "six persons" and inserting "one additional assessor for each additional industrial district." We are of opinion that when a Dominion dispute is being heard by the Council of Conciliation each industrial district interested should be represented on the Council.

We would also urge upon you that the following amendments should be made to the Act:—

"That any section of an award agreed to by the Conciliation Council shall not be altered by the Court of Arbitration, except so far as is necessary to correct legal technicalities or to prevent the nullification of other portions of an award."

"That where employers are filing counter-proposals to a union's demands the same shall be in the hands of the union not later than seven days previous to the date of the hearing of the application."