

report to the Court to not less than three days or more than one week. Quite recently I have had four cases blocked out from the sittings of the Court in my district, and they will have to wait till the Court comes back again. If that takes as long as it did last time I am not going to get before the Court this year. If the Commissioner had to report in between three days and a week I could have got those cases before the Court at its present sitting. In industrial matters time is important. The next amendment in the Bill was very well discussed before the Labour Bills Committee last year, and the evidence given then ought to be available. The proviso in the present Bill is exactly the same as the recommendation of the Labour Bills Committee of last year. When we gave evidence upon it we wanted to repeal this clause altogether; but the decision of the Committee after hearing the evidence was that the law should be amended in the way that is proposed in the present Bill. With regard to clause 8 of the present Bill a lot of evidence was also given last year. Last year's Bill proposed the repeal of section 71 of the Act of 1908, and its amendment is now proposed. Here, again, the present proposal is exactly the recommendation of the Labour Bills Committee of last year on the Arbitration Bill of Mr. Walker. I do not know whether I may be allowed to mention something that is not in the Bill.

12. *The Chairman.*] If you can enlighten us we shall be glad?—What I wish to speak about relates to the definition of “industrial matters.” These are at present defined in the Act as—“all matters done or to be done by workers, or the privileges, rights, and duties of employers or workers in any branch of industry.” What I want to suggest is an amendment after the word “workers” in the second line, by the insertion of these words: “the place and method of the engagement of workers.” If that were done it would avoid the trouble which the organization I represent, the Hotel Workers' Union, is undergoing before the Court of Appeal. In the awards relating to hotels and restaurants for the last ten years we have always had a clause which reads as follows: “When an employer wishes to obtain the services of a worker he shall make application to the secretary of the union to supply him with the required worker, and if the union is not in a position to supply his requirements within a reasonable or prescribed time the employer may engage any person, whether a member of the union or otherwise.” But there has cropped up a doubt whether the Court has power to insert that clause in the awards. The question is now before the Appeal Court, and the decision may be either way. If the words I propose were placed in the law it would give the Court power to insert this clause, after hearing evidence as to whether it is advisable or not. The chances are that the Appeal Court will not deal with the case till after November or December, and Parliament will then not be in session to amend the law if it was found faulty. We ask Parliament to make the matter clear. In doing so it would be acting on the lines of the Commonwealth arbitration law. The Court has always been willing to give us this clause, and it has worked well for ten years. Before it was inserted in the awards employers could only get workers through registry offices or by advertisement in the newspapers. Mostly girls are employed in the hotels, and they do not run around seeking for employment, but depended upon the registry offices and the newspapers. In the registry offices they had always to pay fees, and the employer also had to pay. When conducting the case of the hotel workers before the Court I put in a return showing the number of applications and casual engagements made through the union's office in the period between the 1st October, 1917, and the 1st February, 1920—two years and a half. This relates to Wellington alone; and the same method is adopted right through New Zealand. Auckland, perhaps, would do more than we did. This return showed that in the period mentioned we had applications for 10,624 workers, and we were able to secure 8,637. In addition to that we engaged all the casual workers for balls and races in Wellington in the same period, a total of 278. This is what I said to the Court on the point: “To show the saving to the employers I have taken out the following table; and assuming that the union was not operating this clause, and the employers were obtaining the same number of workers from registry offices which were licensed to carry on that business in accordance with the provisions of the Servants' Registry Office Act, 1908, and we apply the regulations as to scale of charges, which reads as follows: ‘Where the weekly rate of wages exceeds £1 but does not exceed £2 (and board and lodgings), fees payable by the worker are 3s., and by the employer 6s: Engagements, 8,367; amount payable by employee (3s. per engagement), £1,295 11s.; payable by employer (6s.), £2,591 2s. A total of £3,886 13s. saved to the workers and employers.’” If we can get those words inserted in the definition of “industrial matters” it will make it clear that the Court has power and jurisdiction to provide for such a clause. We would still have to prove to the Court whether the clause was a good one to give to the union or not.

13. What are you contending for in regard to the one-union clause: is it financial benefit that will accrue to the nation, or the consolidation of effort?—Both national benefit and the consolidation of effort. In the Hotel Workers' Union alone if we could have one union for the whole of New Zealand we would be able to save close upon £4,000 a year. It costs us something like £10,000 a year to run our organizations.

14. How are you going to cut it out: would you not still need your separate organizations?—You would not. You would still need to have branch offices and a branch committee, but you would not require all the other paraphernalia. In our society alone we would save close on £1,000 in the two years, in the matter of our circulars and printing alone. You have to get out twenty-seven awards. Under what I am suggesting we would have to go through only one preliminary.

15. You would have only one award, then?—Yes.

16. I want you to be definite about that. Will that give general satisfaction to the employees throughout New Zealand?—Yes, it must, because when you take up the twenty-seven awards and read one you read the lot.

17. Do not the wages and hours vary?—No. They are the same all through the Dominion, with the exception of two. We are reaching out in Wellington for a forty-eight hours week for our girls. That will go in a circle all through New Zealand. Otherwise, we work under the Shops and Offices Act.

18. I want you to be perfectly plain and honest with the Committee and the people. You are pleading for your industry, and you are right to put all you can before us. But the Committee has to look at the matter from the public side as well as from yours. What is going to be the effect on the community if we entrench your organization in such a way that the facilities for the people in the matter of obtaining food are going to be disturbed as compared with present conditions?—The mere fact that we had one union would give greater security of peace than under a large number of