

unions. We still have power to have an association, but the association is only composed of the different unions in the different centres. You do not, with your association, curtail one iota the power of your unions. But if you had one union, and the others were branches, you would curtail the powers the unions have now, operating in the other industrial districts. Consequently, with a federation, the federation has not a quarter of the control that one union for the industry, operating from one head, would have.

19. Do you distinguish any difference between one union as representing the railway service and one union representing the different sides of another industry in New Zealand? Take your own industry, or the painters and decorators, or the engineers?—There would be no difference.

20. Does not the superannuation system in the railway service, with their general privileges as compared with outside organizations, make a difference? Would not that be an essential feature with the railway people, and make them a bit conservative before they broke out and caused a disturbance?—The reply to that is the decision of the railway people and what they did quite recently.

21. That answer would not apply in ordinary conditions: it was a most extraordinary happening?—But it is there. The inevitable thing happened.

22. What is the difficulty about the present conditions as to reporting the results of Conciliation Councils: you want a minimum of three days, and not exceeding a week?—That is, after we have argued with the Commissioner. Now he has not to report to the Arbitration Court for a month, and the dispute is not ripe for a hearing by the Court until that month elapses. One case brought by the Cooks and Stewards' Union, and another relating to restaurants, are all ready now for hearing, but we have missed the sitting of the Court. It will not be back in Wellington for six months, and we have to wait for the six months. If the period was a week or three days we could have got before the Court by this time. That would expedite the work. There is never a complete settlement before the Conciliation Council. The law says you have always to leave some item in the dispute for the Court to settle. You cannot get there until the month has elapsed, even if you have practically arrived at a settlement.

23. *Hon. Sir W. H. Herries.*] With regard to the 1911 amendment, are you satisfied that Parliament intended to give power to get a Dominion award?—Yes.

24. Was it to be a Dominion award or a Dominion union?—A Dominion award.

25. That is not one union?—I am talking of a Dominion award.

26. Would you be satisfied if you got a Dominion award?—You would still have to have a Dominion union, or federation of workers, and a Dominion union or federation of employers. Then the law could operate, but without that it would be impossible.

27. You said something about regulations. Was the Act clear, or was it the regulations that made it not clear? Was it the regulations that we followed or the Act?—Mr. Justice Sim blames both. He blames the regulations for the delay in taking six months to get to the Court, and he says then that both the Act and the regulations were no good. He advised the union to drop its application. So it had to go again over the whole ground—to set up Conciliation Councils, make another new demand, and then, when that was all over, to wait till the Court came back to Wellington. The Court could not give its decision till it had gone all round; consequently, you will rarely find the unions now trying to get a Dominion award.

28. Is it not a fact that some unions object to a Dominion award because they think the workers should be treated differently from some other part of the Dominion?—I have never heard of any union objecting to a Dominion award.

29. Did not the tailoresses in Auckland object?—I do not remember it happening.

30. *The Chairman.*] The tramway men did object. We had conferences time after time. We drew up three schedules—"A" for Wellington, "B" and "C" for other parts of the Dominion, and then they broke up?—There seems to have been some other reason.

31. The reason was that they would not unite?—I do not know.

32. *Hon. Sir W. H. Herries.*] Is not the cost of living much cheaper in Auckland than elsewhere?—In the Tramway Union decision which covers the whole of Australia the whole of the conditions are the same, but what has happened? In different places the national Arbitration Court has given different conditions as to the cost of living. We have never been able in New Zealand to get the Court to adopt that course.

33. Is it not a fact that in your own award there are differences: does not Rotorua come under a separate award?—They are all different awards.

34. There is not one Dominion award?—No; we have twenty-seven different awards.

35. Are there not differences as regards conditions?—Very rarely. The hours are fixed by the Shops and Offices Act. The wages are the same.

36. But the conditions are not always the same?—The one day a week is the same. There is only the principle governing the hotel workers—that is, the Shops and Offices Act, which I hope we shall have amended this session. We have girls working fifty-six hours a week in this country.

37. *Mr. Howard.*] The effect of the Act has been to drive them from under the Act?—Yes.

38. And you are trying to hold them under the Act?—Yes, that is my object.

39. The Trades and Labour Councils were registered under the Act?—Yes.

40. And they were driven from under it?—Yes.

41. You are trying to prevent any illegality taking place?—Yes. I would not be here if it was not with that idea.

42. To really avoid strikes?—Yes.

43. *Mr. Sullivan.*] As to the consolidation, you aim at it for administrative purposes only?—Yes, mostly that.

44. The point Mr. Howard made holds good, that if you wanted to develop consolidation for fighting purposes you would go outside the Act?—Yes; nobody would go for a fight when he knows the penalty under the Act. I know what I am speaking about, because I have had experience. I know of a case where the Government intended to grab the furniture and the little girl's sewing-machine—that was in the case of the Petone Woollen-mills strike; yet when the tramwaymen and railwaymen go out on strike the Government are not game to do it to them.

45. Do you say the unions get agreements quicker outside of the Act than within the ambit of the Act?—Yes.