the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth requesting him to communicate with the New Zealand Government with the object of bringing about an agreement which will result in, at any rate, an alteration of the laws to permit of one organization of seamen in Australasia, so as to ensure smooth working of arbitration and navigation laws in vessels operating in Australasian trades.

On the 27th November, 1916, representatives of the Federated Seamen's Union of New Zealand interviewed the Acting Minister of Labour (Mr. Herries) and placed before him the foregoing resolution, he stating that he would put the matter before the Government, at the same time intimating that the Government would consider any proposal of the Commonwealth Government along the lines of the resolution, as his Government desired to work as far as possible with that Government, and suggested that in order to have the matter in front of him the deputation might place it in writing. In accordance with the request of the Minister on the 6th January, 1917, we placed before the Minister in writing the two following proposals, at the same time putting forward argument in support of each :—

1. Respecting the mercantile marine industry, that the law be amended to permit of the organized seamen of New Zealand registering under the Act one industrial union for the Dominion, with power to file an industrial agreement or award operative and enforceable throughout the whole of New Zealand, instead of, as at present, having to register a separate union in each industrial district in which it is desired to carry on operations under the Act, and also having to file in each district where a union is registered a separate industrial agreement or award, which is operative and enforceable in the district only in which it is filed.
2. That the law be further amended to permit of the organized seamen of New Zealand being part of an Australasian union of seamen with legal power to obtain uniformity of conditions in Australasia on board all ships operating Australasian trade.

In acknowledging receipt on the 8th January the Minister stated the representations would receive careful consideration. We have had no intimation since, and I am thus unable to say what further action, if any, was taken by the Minister. Coming to the Bill referred to the Committee by the House, I am compelled on general principle to emphatically oppose that portion of it proposing to give a Conciliation Commissioner a determining vote as between the conflicting parties as being contrary to the best interest in the settlement of disputes by Commissioners. The Bill proposes to invest a Commissioner with the power of settling a point in dispute irrespective of the views of the parties. Thus the Commissioner ceases to be a conciliator and becomes an arbitrator—an altogether impossible and invidious position, and not in harmony with the designation of his office. Therefore it is strongly urged that the law on this point be allowed to remain as at present. The fundamental object of a Council of Conciliation is to induce the opposing parties to mutually settle their differences in a friendly spirit, recognizing that should they fail to adjust points in dispute either party may appeal to the higher industrial tribunal. Where workers and employers fail to agree on any given issue the dissatisfied party may refer the point to the Court of Arbitration for adjustment, and nothing is operative in the dispute until that point is settled. Exactly the same procedure would be permissible were the Commissioner to exercise a vote on any disputed point; therefore the exercise of the proposed vote is not only of no practical determining value, but the exercise of it leaves the Commissioner invested with a shade of suspicion by the dissatisfied party—throws open the door of corruptive allegation, besides removing from him the impartial influence of a conciliator. The proposal is very highly dangerous from all viewpoints, besides being ineffective and quite useless as a medium towards the settlement of disputes. I strongly oppose it, and hope the Committee will throw it out the back door as belonging to the family of fad industrial reptiles. The main principle of the Bill is that proposing to amend the law to permit of one union in industry in the Dominion and one Dominion award or agreement. In supporting this, it seems to me that it would be much more convenient, easier, and cheaper, and a saving of much time of the Industrial Court, if this proposal were given effect to, but at the same time preserving the rights of existing local unions, so that no union be forced into the one union until a majority plebiscite vote of its members have decided in favour of such course, and so that the existing rights of a local industrial union in respect to disputes, awards, agreements, and other matters shall be preserved until it resolves, as suggested, to link up with the one union, whereupon any award or agreement between the union and employers shall legally and automatically be transferred to the one union and the same employers. In the case of the waterfront industry there are no less than eighteen separate industrial unions, four being in the Auckland District (Auckland, Onehunga, Tauranga, and Gisborne); three in the Wellington District (Wellington, Wanganui, and Napier); two in the Westland District (Greymouth and Westport); and three in the Southland District (Dunedin, Port Chalmers, and the Bluff). In the painting industry there are twelve separate unions, of which three are in the Wellington District, two in the Canterbury and three in the Otago and Southland District. There are six industrial unions in the tailoring industry, five in the grocery trade, and eight in the tramways, of which three are in the Wellington District and two in the Otago and Southland. In the five industries named there are no less than forty-nine industrial unions, each possessing power to invoke the machinery of the law in a dispute or other application and secure an award from the Court. This means that for the purposes of the present law and the forty-nine unions the Industrial Court could be legally required to sit in judgment in forty-nine distinct industrial disputes, at a great occupation of time and expense to the State; whereas with one union in industry the forty-nine could be comfortably narrowed down to five disputes. There appears to be no rhyme or reason for the Industrial Court to hear a waterfront dispute at Auckland and then take tram to Onehunga and hear another similar dispute, when the Court might very conveniently to all interested sit in Auckland and hear one dispute in respect to waterside workers at Auckland, Onehunga, and Tauranga; and with equal convenience it could sit in Wellington and hear the dispute in respect to waterfront work at Wellington, Wanganui, Napier and Gisborne without having to go to each one of these places to sit in judgment on what is just about the same evidence. Identically the same could be done respecting the tramways industry at Wellington, Wanganui, Napier, and Gisborne. There appears to me to be no particular need for the Industrial Court to sit on each job to determine a dispute of national character, because if the representatives of waterside workers and their employers, or those of the seamen and their employers, or those of the miners and their employers, or those of the railwaymen and their employers, can meet in Wellington and discuss and settle their dispute in a few days without sitting at each place where a union is registered, exactly the same thing can be done by all industries under the jurisdiction of