

the Court. It is submitted that if this were done a great saving of time would be accomplished; the hearing of disputes would be attended to with more promptitude; much more patience would be used in the hearing of them, and much in the shape of expense to the State would be saved. The existing system under the Act is altogether too cumbersome to conveniently meet the number of unions now in the Dominion. It was excellent when the measure was first passed in 1895, when the unions were about a fourth of those of to-day, but it has had its day—twenty-five years—and the time is now ripe for a change along the lines proposed in the Bill. For these reasons I support the proposal for one union in industry and a Dominion award or agreement for the industry.

3. *The Chairman.*] Have you any further remarks to make other than those contained in the document you have read out?—I just want to emphasize, Mr. Chairman, the points pertaining to those districts where there is no seamen's union registered. For instance, in the case of the Westland District, it incorporates the ports of Hokitika, Greymouth, and Westport. We have no seamen's union in that district, for the reason that we have no members resident in that district—that is to say, not more than about two or three—and it would be impossible to form a union there and successfully carry on its work with duly elected officers when there would be no members to attend meetings. The Taranaki District incorporates the ports of New Plymouth and Patea.

4. *Mr. S. G. Smith.*] And Waitara?—I do not consider Waitara a port. We have no union in that district, and identically the same applies to those districts, except Lyttelton, where no union is registered. At the same time, our members are working at those ports ever day of the week. At this stage I should like to mention that we have not a seamen's union in the Nelson District, for the reasons advanced. There are several employers in that district—for instance, there is the Hokitika Shipping Company, the Anchor Shipping Company, the Rickards Bros. Company (which has a small vessel trading in one of the bays), and there is what is known as the Golden Bay Shipping Company. Now, sir, the position is that if any of these employers committed a breach of the award or of the agreement we could not successfully prosecute them, for the reason that we have no registered union there. While that is so and, as I have already intimated, men are every day in the week and every week in the year employed in those districts performing work, we ask the Committee to look on our case from that point of view. We are actually working in conjunction with the Australian shipping, and we want to have one union for the seamen of Australasia, because the two countries are bumping up against one another. We are both working under a code of maritime law and of industrial law entirely distinct. Ships are coming to various ports in New Zealand which are owned in Australia, and they are working under the maritime law and under the awards of the Court in that country. They are in open competition with the ships that are owned and working under the law of this country, and they are continually bumping up against one another. I consider the day has arrived when the Governments of the respective countries should consider the advisability of bringing in uniform shipping legislation as between the two countries as well as in regard to industrial arbitration legislation. I do not think I have anything further to say at the present time.

5. *The Chairman.*] I wish to say, Mr. Young, that this Committee appreciates the action adopted by you in submitting your remarks in typewritten form. There are one or two questions I should like to ask you before going any further. In the event of the Bill of which you are desirous becoming law, would the Seamen's Union abide by the amendment of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act?—We are abiding by it. I hope you are not guided by the foolish remarks which appeared in the newspaper the other day.

6. Would there be full respect for the law?—Most decidedly, just the same as any other organization. The seamen are registered under the law. When a dispute arises and we desire to obtain a new set of working-conditions we formulate the conditions and they are submitted to the employers, and they are asked to meet us in conference for the purpose of discussing the matters in dispute. We meet in conference—the same as we have done since 1908—and I may say we have always been successful in fixing up a new agreement between us. If the parties concerned could not come to that mutual agreement, sir, then there is only the one resort, and we would have to utilize the machinery of the law in order to obtain a settlement of the dispute.

7. Is that held as general amongst the seamen of New Zealand?—Yes. Some nonsensical remarks were made by Mr. Kennedy before the Arbitration Court the other day in the case of the stewards' dispute. I do not think he was entitled to introduce the seamen's organization in the course of his remarks, because it left a very strong inference that our organization resorted to a form of strike if a settlement of our disputes was not arrived at. I want to give that statement a most emphatic denial, and to say that the seamen of this country have not struck for improved conditions since the year 1890. All their conditions have been obtained through the medium of the Arbitration Court, and it was one of the first organizations to register under the law when it was passed in the year 1895.

8. If you obtain the powers you are asking for under the Bill, would not disturbances in one part of the country hang up the industry in other parts?—No, sir. The national organization would be the finest guard you could get against that.

9. As soon as disturbances occurred in one centre, would it not hold up the work in other centres? Not at all. The work could, however, be held up more effectively under the present system than it could if the seamen had one union: for example, the Auckland or Dunedin Union might declare a dispute such as that suggested by you, and as they have the legal power they could, without taking into account the national body, go ahead.

10. By giving effect to this legislation you are asking for, would it prevent a repetition of what took place in Wanganui recently?—The one union could give us 100 per cent. more power to stop a thing of that character—that is, 100 per cent. more power than we have at the present time; and that applies with respect to all unions.

11. I presume you are not contending for a consolidation between New Zealand and Australia in this Bill of yours: you are merely throwing that out as a suggestion?—Yes.

12. You think it would be better if they were consolidated?—Yes.

13. *Hon. Sir W. H. Herries.*] Did not the Auckland branch hold out a very long time?—The Auckland branch has done a great many things. What I want to say is that this was a national vote taken by the executive council of all the financial members. Auckland voted along with the financial members of Dunedin and Wellington, and out of a total voting-power of over a thousand only 141 voted against the proposal for one union.