

I am not representing labour generally: I am merely representing the seamen. So far as the seamen are concerned I may say that we never considered it until we saw it in the Bill. As a general principle, however, I may say that I am satisfied that the proposition is entirely a wrong one. You should keep the Commissioner in the position of a conciliator, and not force him into the position of an arbitrator.

37. *Mr. Potter.*] You have held various conferences at Wellington between the Seamen's Union, have you not?—Yes.

38. Was it ever suggested that you should have a membership card when going from one port to another—that is, they should be legal members of the union and be admitted into that union. Supposing a member of the Wellington Union left and went to Auckland, was it ever suggested in your union that his financial card should be recognized in the Auckland Seamen's Union?—Morally.

39. But is he legally entitled—what is the position to-day?—I have dealt with that point. Legally it is not the case.

40. Was it ever discussed that a man who was a member of the Wellington Union, and who disembarked in Auckland, should be admitted to the Auckland Seamen's Union on the financial Wellington card?—It has been discussed.

41. And what is the reason of it not being carried into effect?—Up to probably 1914, when such a man, for example, went from the Wellington Union to the Auckland Union, he transferred his book of membership to the Auckland Union; but in order to meet our own finances along the lines of one union we decided to abolish that system, and since then if a man goes from Wellington he retains his Wellington book as well as his Wellington membership card and is allowed to perform work there.

42. You would allow him the moral privilege but not legally?—No, we can only get that legally in the event of there being one union.

43. You can do it this way: if a Wellington seaman who was a financial member landed at Auckland he could be accepted as a member on his Wellington financial card?—Yes, of course.

44. If there was such an interchange of men, say, from Auckland to Dunedin, it would not make for the finances in the various towns?—I am not dealing with the question of finance at all.

45. I just wondered why you did it?—Your questions appear to me to be mostly along the lines of internal government. What we want is the one union—that is to say, where a man will be recognized in all the different parts of the Dominion as a member of that union. Nobody will be able to dispute that.

46. You were over in Australia some time ago, were you not?—Yes, in 1916.

47. Australia is agreeable to one agreement existing between New Zealand and Australia?—Yes, Australia is agreeable to one Australian union. We cannot get that owing to the nature of our laws. We cannot get it, and therefore we have to remain separate organizations. There is a moral working understanding between us in regard to membership.

48. *The Chairman.*] In the event of Parliament making a movement in the direction indicated by you, there can be nothing more inserted in the Arbitration Act that would make it compulsory for your union, or, for that matter, any other union, to abide by the decision of the Court in that determination of the award?—Personally, I have favoured their incorporation by law. It would be unwise, recognizing that the employers at the present time have the right to bring workers before the industrial union by application. I do not think we should go to that extent by force. I do not think so. No matter what you may do, men will strike irrespective of the law. That has been demonstrated on many occasions.

49. *Mr. J. S. Dickson.*] Very many?—Yes, many.

50. *The Chairman.*] The Labour Disputes and Investigations Act is a temporary Act, and this is merely a temporary Act too. Some of the unions are forgetting that, and they are making use of the Disputes Act. Is there any necessity to have two Acts running side by side, as it were?—We never use the Industrial Disputes Act—it is of no value for practical purposes. That was demonstrated in the jockeys' dispute. The parties concerned took up their papers and walked out.

51. Would it not be better to repeal that Act and strengthen the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act?—I think it would be better if the Arbitration Act were strengthened.

52. *Hon. Sir W. H. Herries.*] Do you not know of any settlements arrived at under the Industrial Disputes Act?—Yes; and exactly the same thing can be accomplished under the Arbitration Act.

A. PARLANE examined. (No. 5.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—I am representing the New Zealand Drivers' Federation, consisting of the following unions: Auckland, Gisborne, Napier, Wanganui, Wellington, Nelson, Canterbury, Otago, and Invercargill—although the latter is a very small union, and at the present time negotiations are proceeding with a view to amalgamating with the Otago Union. The Drivers' Federation really consists of nine drivers' unions. I may say that I am here to support the principle of this Act, which provides for one Dominion union. The reason why we support it is because it is in the interests of efficiency, and for the quick manner in which disputes will be settled. For the benefit of the Committee I will state briefly the difficulties experienced by the various drivers' unions in arriving at a settlement of their disputes. Previous to 1916 we were working under a number of awards which Mr. Justice Sim described as being in effect a Dominion award. Towards the latter end of 1915 these awards expired and the various unions opened up negotiations for fresh awards. Mr. Craig, of Auckland, on behalf of the employers, and myself travelled right throughout New Zealand and met the Conciliation Commissioner in every centre, and I do not think that any of the proceedings lasted ten minutes. The representative on behalf of the employers said, "We can accept nothing but the old agreement"; and I said, "We cannot accept that." The consequence was the cases went before the Arbitration Court, and sittings had to be held in every centre. The award was made in November, 1916, so it was practically twelve months before the disputes were fixed up. I submit that if we had a Dominion union it would be better for all parties concerned and better for the Government. In the year 1918 we endeavoured to improve things a little and