

made an effort to get our new agreement fixed up, without the delay that occurred in 1916. We had a conference in Auckland, presided over by Mr. Harle Giles, Conciliation Commissioner, and it was agreed there that whatever was decided upon would be binding on the rest of New Zealand. The organized employers of drivers throughout the Dominion were represented on that conference, and the organized workers in the driving industry throughout the Dominion were also represented. In spite of the fact that we came to an agreement in Auckland, still conciliation proceedings had to be held in every centre, and ultimately they had to go before the Arbitration Court in the various centres, and months and months elapsed before an award was made. An unsatisfactory feature about these proceedings was that it was about six months later before the Court sat in Napier to make the award. While we had agreed that it should come into operation on the 1st March, 1918, in Napier only the wages were made retrospective to that date. There was another matter which was put into this new agreement. For the first time provision was made for overtime for horse attendance, and this payment for horse attendance was not made retrospective. If we had had one union the whole of that would have been got over, and the new award would have come into operation and would have been legally binding all over New Zealand at the same time, and no section would suffer. Also, with respect to bonuses under the War Legislation and Statute Law Amendment Acts, awards in connection with this matter were made some months ago, but the Court takes about six months to get through New Zealand. An announcement was made some months ago that there would be a bonus of 6s., yet the Court only sat in Wellington the other day and took our application. The order has not yet been made, and it will be very hard to get a great many of the employers to pay that 6s. back to the 1st May. All the leading employers will do it, but there are such a large number of employers in connection with the Drivers' Union. I feel sure that a large number of the workers will be deprived of their retrospective pay. So for these reasons we are strongly in favour of one union for the Dominion. That is all I have to say.

2. Do you not think there would be a claim amongst your union, provided you were consolidated, for a differentiation in the amount of the award?—Well, that might be so. There is no differentiation at present, but it may be necessary. Even under a Dominion union it may be necessary. The cost of living is so very much dearer in this centre than in the others. Special conditions in particular centres could be overcome in a Dominion award. For instance, the watersiders have for several years past had a Dominion conference, and have fixed up a Dominion agreement. This Dominion agreement provides for special conditions for certain ports—tidal ports and such like. Provisions are made to suit the special requirements of that particular port. If it is necessary, and there are any special conditions existing in any one place, provision can be made for differentiation, even though we have a Dominion union. There would be no difficulty about that.

3. You are quite sure in your own mind that it would be an advantage, Mr. Parlane? You will remember that recently an attempt was made to bring the tramways men together, and that it did not break down from the employers' side, but that it broke down from the tramwaymen's side?—That might be a matter of organization in the Tramway Union. If they had one union of tramwaymen right throughout New Zealand the central executive would have full governing-powers, and a Dominion agreement would be fixed up. The very fact of having so many separate unions may have led to the negotiations breaking down.

4. I think it is recognized generally that, so far as Wellington is concerned, it is a dearer place to live in than the other centres. Do you not think there is a danger that, if you have one union and have a better rate in Wellington than in the other centres, it would cause a feeling of dissatisfaction right throughout the other centres?—That might be so, but that would not be affected by the one union. That can take place now, and is more likely to take place under a number of separate unions than it would under one union.

5. *Hon. Sir W. H. Herries.*] Is there not power under the 1911 Act to make a Dominion award now?—I believe there was an amendment made with that intention. The Drivers' Federation tried to work under that Act in 1912, but our application was thrown out. Another union in exactly the same position as we were made an application for a Dominion award under that Act, but judgment was given to the effect that the Act was abortive so far as they were concerned, and that a Dominion award could not be granted to them under that Act. Therefore our application was thrown out. I believe a Dominion award can only be granted under that Act when there is a Dominion organization of employers and a Dominion organization of workers. The employers must be agreeable. We cannot force the employers to agree to a Dominion award. Although we have a Dominion federation of our own we cannot make the employers have a Dominion federation, and that being the case the Act is, of course, quite valueless to us.

6. Have not the Miners' Federation a Dominion award?—Yes, the miners have a Dominion award, but they are in a different position to the drivers. The drivers are working for a very large number of employers. With the drivers' unions there are almost as many employers as there are workers. In Wellington there are over 360 employers, and a number of these are very small employers. Without an agreement being legally binding it is very hard to force the whole of the employers to observe the conditions of the agreement. Therefore we prefer to come to our agreements through negotiations with the employers, and after these negotiations have taken place and an agreement has been come to we get that agreement made into an award. The whole procedure at present under the Conciliation and Arbitration legislation is altogether too cumbersome, and is most costly to the Government and most costly to the unions. The present means of settling disputes from the Dominion point of view is absolutely farcical, and I believe that by making provision for a Dominion union a very great improvement would be effected. It would also be an advantage in connection with increased efficiency in the internal management of the union.

7. *Mr. Potter.*] There is just one matter I would like to mention. You stated in reply to a question by Mr. Luke that probably the tramway dispute would have been settled if they had had one union right throughout New Zealand. Do you believe that, with this one union, the executive would have all the real power, and not the individual unions?—The position is this: The individual members have to elect the executive, and then, before any agreement can be entered into, it has to be ratified by the members. The executive would have a very great bearing on the government of