

the union, and if the executive proposed entering into an agreement, and that agreement was referred to the members for ratification, I feel sure that it would be ratified by the whole of the Dominion.

8. Would a Dominion award satisfy you?—A Dominion award would be certainly better than what we have at present, but for efficiency in the internal working of our organization we stand for a Dominion union.

9. Pooling all funds?—That is a matter for the union to decide. In my opinion, the pooling of funds is the best, but that is only my individual opinion.

WILLIAM PRYOR examined. (No. 6.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Your full name, Mr. Pryor?—My full name is William Pryor. I am secretary of the New Zealand Employers' Federation. I have been asked by the federation to attend this Committee and give evidence on this Bill on behalf of the employers of labour of New Zealand—at any rate, on behalf of the federation. So far as clause 2 of the Bill is concerned, about the only thing we can see in it is that it is preliminary to the formation of one big union. By the means proposed Dominion unions could be registered under the Act, which would only be another step to the federation of those unions. Another result would be that it would certainly place more power in the hands of the extremists. If there is one thing more than another contained in this Bill it is that authorization shall be granted the Dominion executive to discipline the district unions and the individual workers. I believe you will find that some of the labour people themselves admit that this is so. And it would prevent local unions from entering into agreements with employers in their own districts. The proposal would also permit a Dominion executive of any organization to take action in one centre to secure an award for the whole Dominion, with the result that an award might be made without local conditions being fully considered. Now, while it may be desirable that there should be a Dominion award, so far as the general principles covering a particular industry are concerned, it is always found that local conditions must be considered, and in order to secure that being done it is essential that citations should be issued in the several districts, even if a Dominion award is being sought. We have found that out in our experience already. There is nothing whatever to prevent any organization from organizing on a Dominion basis at the present time. There is a provision in the Arbitration Act at the present moment which permits that to be done, although not in the way suggested here. Clause 4 of the 1911 Amendment Act provides that where there are two or more industrial unions registered under the Act, and they form an industrial association, an industrial association of that sort can make application for a Dominion award. I know there has been some difficulty in connection with that matter—largely, I believe, owing to the regulations which were issued; but it is only a matter of an alteration of the regulations, if they have not already been altered. I rather fancy they have been altered. It is only a matter of altering the regulations to gain what is desired. Our impression, however, is that it is not a Dominion award that is desired. We believe that this is all just a means to the end of the "one big union." Indeed, it is quite possible for trade organizations to federate throughout the Dominion even now without this legislation, and as a matter of fact a large number of trades are federated. You have the seamen, the waterside workers, the drivers, the tramwaymen, the engineers, the engine-drivers, the timber-workers, and there are others I cannot remember at the moment. The freezing-works employees are also federated. There are quite a number of them. I may say, however, that Dominion agreements have not been altogether satisfactory, or the attempts to secure Dominion agreements. Within my own knowledge, for instance, there is the case of the recent agreement made with the miners. Attempts were made to settle everything at the Dominion conference, but this was found to be absolutely impossible. There were local conditions—not only district conditions, but local mining conditions—which had to be settled, and the result was that, after providing for general principles at the national conference, the whole of the matters had to be referred to the different mines and industrial agreements arranged for the requirements of the different mines. That procedure will have to be carried out in any case. Even supposing that the promoters of this Bill were honest, and even supposing they had a right to secure what they ask for—to cite the employers of the Dominion, say, from Auckland to the Bluff—they would still have to have sittings of the Court or Conciliation Councils in the different centres. The Court would have to visit each district in order to ascertain what the local conditions are that would not otherwise be provided for in the award. In connection with the drivers we had the union conferences, and both parties agreed to whatever was decided upon should apply to the whole Dominion, and it was found that, even with the greatest care and good feeling between the parties, local conditions had to be considered. The great desire was to have an amicable settlement—there was no friction in that way—and still local conditions had to be provided for. That procedure was found to be a mistake even there, and that was in connection with a conference held under the very best of conditions. It was necessary to provide for local conditions even there, and it proved to be a mistake afterwards that we had attempted to settle an award for the whole of the Dominion. So that from that point of view, even if there is an honest desire to take advantage of the provisions of the Arbitration Act to get a Dominion award in this way, it is not going to save expense, if that is one of the reasons put forward. And it is not going to save trouble, and in my opinion it is not going to expedite the working of an award in any shape or form. We believe that if this is made legal that it will result practically in the elimination of local unions. We believe that this Bill is put forward with the idea of securing control from Wellington over a certain industry, so that whatever the controlling people may say it will have to be done. We find this to be the case to some extent in connection with some of the industrial unions to-day. In the mining industry, in the waterside workers' industry, and, I believe, to some extent in connection with seamen, who have got their Dominion federations, orders appear to be practically issued from the head office—not from the local body—but practically issued from the head office to the local bodies, and it is in the head office where the policy is formulated. Clause 3 is just a consequential clause rendered necessary in case clause 2 is adopted. Clause 4 proposes to amend section 16 of the 1908 Amendment Act by striking out all the words after the word "prescribed." This will have the effect