after he has adjourned the case he probably calls up the representatives of each side, or he goes to see them, and has a talk with them, and finds out just how far he can get them into a condition of mind so that when they again meet they are inclined to come to a settlement. I venture to say that the majority of the conciliation cases are settled in that way, and they could not possibly be settled in that manner in a week, as suggested by this Bill. According to the Bill the Conciliation Commissioner has to put in his recommendation to the Clerk of Awards before he can have a proper opportunity of settling the matters in dispute. Now, I suggest that it is desirable to promote settlement by conciliation as far as we possibly can, and that anything that would prevent that would be a very great mistake. I have no hesitation in saying that if the promoters of the Bill desire to kill conciliation under the Arbitration Act they could not have gone a better way about it than they have in connection with the proposals made in clauses 5 an 6 of this Bill. Section 7 proposes an extension of time within which a claim for wages may be made. Short payment of wages under an award is due usually to one or two things—either there is collusion between the employer and the worker, or there is misrepresentation on the part of the worker. The worker may go to the employer, and they may have a talk over things, and the employer may say, "I have so much work for you to do, and I will give you so-much," and the worker may agree. I want the Committee to understand that the Employers' Federation does not support the employer who is not prepared to pay the standard award wages in any shape or form. To do that would mean that we are not standing for the award at all. But this is a different matter. Then, with regard to misrepresentation on the part of the worker, this may be in connection with his age or with his years of experience. There was a case only the other week where a worker went in and told an employer that he had been four years at the trade. The employer engaged him, but after he had worked a little time—about three months—he proved unsatisfactory and was dismissed, and when he was dismissed he complained to the Labour Department that he was a five-years man. The employer was brought up before the Court and was fined £1 and costs because he took this man's word. What we claim is that in nine cases out of ten the worker is equally guilty with the employer, or perhaps more guilty than the employer, and when he leaves his employer he complains that he has been short-paid. He then takes action; and surely it is a fair thing to ask that he should take action within three months. The longer he can get, the more opportunity he has for getting at the employer, perhaps after some essential witness has left the district. This Bill would extend the period to six months. There can be only one reason for this extension, and that is the reason I have stated. Surely it is a fair proposition that, if the worker has been short-paid, he should make his claim within three months. So far as the payment to the Consolidated Fund is concerned—where there is wilful collusion between an employer and a worker, and the worker has evidently accepted a short payment—we are quite agreeable to that proviso: that he should not benefit, and that the money should go into the Consolidated Fund; so that there is one thing in the Bill which we agree with.

2. *The Chairman.*] You have taken up a negative attitude towards the Bill: can you suggest any amendment that ought to be brought into operation in connection with the Industrial Arbitration Amendment Act that would make for a more speedy settlement of disputes?—I do not think you could have more speedy settlements than you have now. I have had considerable experience in connection with industrial disputes, and I have found that to hurry up matters of this description brings about disaster. As a matter of fact we have just settled a dispute—although we have still to sign the agreement arrived at—which has been going on since April last. I may say that this dispute was not heard under the Arbitration Act, and it is merely a local matter. In my opinion it would have been disastrous if an attempt had been made to force us to settle the dispute before now. At the finish we had to obtain the services of Mr. Hally and appointed him to the position of arbitrator in order to settle some of the points in dispute.

3. The Dominion conference that was held in Auckland was for the purpose of arriving at a Dominion award, was it not?—Yes.

4. Was it possible to give effect to the decisions without taking into consideration the local conditions?—No, sir. We found afterwards there were several local things that were not provided for, and a certain amount of harm has been done in consequence.

5. You think that one union for each industry would not obviate the difficulty, and you say it would not be to the advance of the community?—I do not think it would save one bit of the trouble, and I am inclined to think it would bring about more trouble.

6. Owing to the nature of the seamen's calling, do you consider it is necessary that they should have one union?—The Seamen's Union is in a different position to any other union, because the seamen themselves are not all located in one place, and they are what one may term a movable community. In the case of the Dominion conference it has perhaps proved more successful than any other industry I know of, but there are not the varying conditions there as in other places.

7. In connection with the conditions with respect to the ships—the local conditions do not come into question the same as they do in other industries?—They have their own federation and they are under the control of their head office.

8. They contend that if they had one federation they would "gather in" small ports like Wanganui. Do you think this amendment would be objected to so far as the seamen are concerned?—I do not think it would be considered. There is no need for it even in the seamen's case.

9. The seamen have not association and no actual means of communication unless they have one big union?—They can have local unions to-day without this Bill, just as they have had in the past. In connection with legislation of this sort it only means bringing about one federation in New Zealand, and the next thing will be one Australasian union. That is the scheme.

10. You think it is the amalgamation of the Commonwealth that is aimed at?—I am sure of that.

11. *Hon. Sir W. H. Herries.*] Do you think that the general run of the unions that you have been dealing with wish to have the different branches amalgamated and have one big union?—I would be very surprised to find that it is the desire of the unions generally, and I think you will find that a number have not asked for it. Those trades that are right out for organization of this description are already organized.