

12. Would it not tend to throw considerably more power into the hands of the one organization?—Yes. One of the reasons the promoters of this Bill have in mind is that they could discipline the workers and regulate the local condition of work from the head office—say, in Wellington. That is unthinkable.

13. Any legislation giving Dominion unions would be a step in the direction of one big union, would it not?—Yes, sir, and in addition would not help to expedite settlement of awards at all. I do not think the promoters had that in view at all.

14. *Mr. McLeod.*] Is it not the tendency to-day amongst the employers to secure unanimity amongst their unions? The feeling throughout the country is against labour?—Not against labour.

15. Then perhaps against the movers of labour. I think you will admit as a representative of the Employers' Federation that all the facilities that are being asked by the labour representatives under this Bill are open to them now by another course?—Absolutely.

16. Would it not be better from the employers' point of view and from the point of view of the community to remove any obstruction that may be in the way, and may this not be a reasonable attempt to make the Arbitration Act more useful?—What is proposed will not have that effect, and in my opinion it will operate the other way. I can quite conceive that legislation in the way of giving definite power for, say, the executive of an organization to cite the whole of the employers of the Dominion to a sitting of the Court in Auckland might prove so unsatisfactory and ineffective that it might be the means of breaking up the Act.

17. *Mr. Howard.*] At the present time we have in this country different sections of workers, and you realize there is a desire to form one union regardless of any particular industry. That is the desire of the people who advocate one big union. Are you of opinion that the Act should take any part in the settlement of disputes?—Yes; is it not doing it? As a matter of fact the employers did not ask for the Act. One is bound to admit that as a result of the operation of the Act, more especially the result in the way of the settlement of disputes, has been much greater than if the Act had not been passed.

18. Would the employers like to abolish the Act altogether?—We want to know what would be put in its place.

19. At the present time you consider it is a better idea than the other system?—Yes, I think so.

20. What I am trying to get at is this: these people who believe in this Act are accordingly trying to counteract the movement of the organization known as the "one big union"—what is designated the "one big union"?—If the proposals were designed to smash up the present Act and destroy whatever effectiveness there is in its operation, then nothing better could be done than these proposals.

21. You people have in the Act at the present time all the powers asked for under this new Bill?—In the Act there is provision for a number of unions to register as an industrial association.

22. They have under the present Act power to do what they have here?—What I might say is, they have not taken advantage of it.

23. What you have said is they have the power under the present Act to do all the things they are asking for under this Bill, and therefore it cannot be a pernicious thing they are asking for under this Bill?—It is a pernicious thing because of the people behind it.

24. You have under the Act to-day the power they are asking to be given to them?—Under a certain clause of the Act they have the power, where there are two or more unions, to form what is termed an industrial association, which is really a federation, but they have not made use of it.

25. Now, with respect to clause 7: of course the worker can proceed for three months' back wages—he can claim twelve months afterwards?—He can only claim for wages up to three months—it is no use claiming for twelve months.

26. But the Court may order that the three months' wages be paid to the Consolidated Fund. Of course that is only fair; you have admitted that is a good point in the Bill?—Yes.

27. *Mr. J. S. Dickson.*] There seems to be some little doubt about this: the Act provides for a Dominion award, but there is a big difference between a Dominion award and one big union?—Yes.

28. If power were granted under the Act to have one Dominion award, all the funds would be pooled at headquarters?—I believe it is done already in connection with one or two organizations, such as the Shearers' Union and the Seamen's Union.

29. If they had one big union for the whole of New Zealand the executive could decide then to affiliate with any other trade or calling, and the one big union would be bound all over New Zealand to what the executive decided on?—There is nothing else designed in the Bill: that is the purpose of it.

30. I am not quite clear in regard to the clause with respect to recovery of wages that have been underpaid. Does it mean that the money after three months will go to the Consolidated Fund and the other three months will go to the worker?—No. I should say that when any money has to be recovered in that way the worker is to blame. The clause in the 1908 Amendment Act reads as follows: "When any payment of wages has been made to and accepted by a worker at a less rate than that which is fixed by any award or industrial agreement, no action shall be brought by the worker against his employer to recover the difference between the wages so actually paid and the wages legally payable, save within three months after the date on which the wages claimed in the action became due and payable." That distinctly provides that after three months from the day when the wages became due the person cannot take any action at all.

31. *Mr. S. G. Smith.*] The employers have not one big union?—No: we have the New Zealand Employers' Federation.

32. But they have the machinery to do so—you could get them all to join in?—Yes. The Employers' Federation is formed by the affiliation of the employers' associations, and at the present time we have twelve trade organizations affiliated throughout the Dominion.

33. *The Chairman.*] But you have no statutory authority?—No. Those bodies affiliated and formed what is known as the New Zealand Employers' Federation, but they have no executive—none whatever. They have, however, what is known as an advisory board, and that board cannot act unless by instructions from the majority of the organizations affiliated. We do not act without