

output of the average worker in any New Zealand mine will compare favourably with that of the miner in any other country. I would like to hear Professor Tocker submit facts to this Conference to prove that there is a slackening on the part of the worker, or that it is possible for him to produce more with the implements at his command. Perhaps Professor Tocker meant that we want to use more scientific methods of production, that our machinery is obsolete: perhaps I misunderstood him. I merely rose to ask these two questions, Mr. Chairman, but at the same time I submit, with Mr. Weston, that it would be impossible for any delegate to do justice to the great volume of matter that has been placed before the Conference by the economists.

*Mr. Tucker:* I find on page 23 of Professor Tocker's paper that he sets down the index number of wages (excluding agriculture) for 1927 at 163, as compared with 100 for 1914. Will he explain where he gets those figures from? I do not think he will find them in any award books. We find also on the same page that "the index numbers show that in 1927 agricultural and pastoral wages were 47 per cent. above the 1914 level; other wages, mainly award rates, were 63 per cent. above that level." Compare these two figures, 63 per cent. and 47 per cent., we find a difference of 16 per cent., which should be of some assistance to the farmers in making their industry pay. We also find references to production. I understand that by "production" is meant individual production in any industrial department. Now, when it is reduced down it is a question of management more than national production, and I believe that when the question is reduced down to individual production it is beside the point, because what counts in the economics of any country is the loss or reduction in the production of the country, and it is the duty of this Conference to see that the most scientific methods are used to produce nationally. I have no doubt that the delegates on the other side, or the people whom they represent, have their managers to see that every worker will give a good account of himself during the hours he works. There is no doubt that when we compare his figures it cannot be said that he has given us any case at all against the Court. He has given a lot of figures and other matter that is beside the point. He has given us a form of destructive criticism, but has offered us no constructive policy. I should think it would have been his duty to offer us some form of substitute for the institution that he now seeks to destroy. If the Court were destroyed we would return to individual bargaining, and resort to the strike as the most effective weapon to settle disputes, though I do not think there is a man in this room who would favour a resort to that state of affairs. We have to be proud of New Zealand for having achieved such a degree of contentment and peace. There is no doubt that when you deal with the figures that have been given here, and when you compare the industrial situation here and in Australia, you find that Australia is thoroughly organized, and the number of men in unions there is very much greater than in this country, and so are the employers, and yet we find that a higher rate of wages operates there. The census of 1921 gave the total number employed on the land as 59,000: 3 per cent. of the men in unions under the Act could not very much affect the agricultural industry from that standpoint. The figures for Australia are very telling in the pastoral industry, and I wish to point out that the effective wages in the agricultural and pastoral industries are 9·2, according to the Statistician's figures, below what they were in 1914.

*Mr. Polson:* I am one of those who feel a certain amount of diffidence in venturing to offer any criticism on the tremendous amount of information which has been placed before us by the experts to-day. I do not feel confident—in fact, I am in a more or less half-stunned condition—in approaching the mass of information which has been brought forward to-day. But I have some knowledge of one aspect of one of the subjects dealt with by one of the experts, and I am still one of those old-fashioned folk who believe that sometimes an ounce of experience is worth a ton of theory. I wish to refer to one of the matters that Professor Belshaw dealt with in his paper—the question of the inflation of land-values, a subject I know something about, although I do not pretend to know a very great deal about economics. I have been for some time a member of a Board in this country which lends money to settlers, and I have studied the question of land-values fairly fully during the past two or three years. I have taken the trouble to collect, as far as it is possible for a private individual to do so, information on the subject of land inflation and land deflation, and I wish to say that some of the figures which Professor Belshaw gave us in connection with land-values are, in my opinion, nothing more than pure guesswork; and whenever I find any economist guilty of guesswork in connection with any subject I know something about I am a little bit inclined to suspect him of guesswork in connection with the things I know nothing about. In the course of his address he said this: "Allowing for retransfers, my own estimate places the area which changed hands during 1915–24 as slightly under one-half the total occupied area." Now, I venture to say that that is a very gross exaggeration of the true position. The information is to be obtained, and can be obtained, by a study of the rating rolls of the County Councils throughout New Zealand. I have not been able to study them all, but I have some of them, and I have obtained some information, which I am sorry I have not brought with me. I have obtained particulars from various parts of the country, and I am satisfied that the area is nothing like that. I believe that the rate does not exceed 20 per cent. of various provincial districts and counties. The South Island is better off than the North, and the Provinces of Auckland and of Taranaki are affected more than others. And the position is complicated by the fact that in some counties the total area is small while the number of transfers is considerable, while in other counties the areas are large and the number of transfers small. So that it is difficult to discuss the question either from the point of view of area or number of transfers, because both are inclined to be misleading. I wish to point out also that the money value which Professor Belshaw gave us is calculated to mislead us also, because, as you know, money values have altered very much. I have here a list of a number of blocks of land, all in one area, with which I am familiar, and all those blocks were taken up in the bush twenty-one years ago—leasehold blocks in the Ohutu Land Survey District. After having been completely improved, they have been revalued in the last few months at a tremendously reduced valuation on the original valuation of twenty-one years ago.