

*Mr. F. R. Cook :* I am very diffident about rising to speak for five minutes in a discussion of this kind. I thought that we were going to swap ideas—that we were going to be a committee and swap ideas about making New Zealand better. But there seems to be a stiffness about the meeting, and we seem to be one side against the other. Perhaps the stiffness will break down, but it will not do so under stereotyped rules and five-minute talks. In criticizing some of the professors I am like Tom Sawyer, one of Mark Twain's characters: I believe in the book. I want the book. You will remember that the slave was attempting to escape, and Huckleberry Finn was helping him; and they met Tom Sawyer when they had got seven-eighths of the way out of the States. Then Tom said, "How did you come down?" And Huckleberry told him. "Well," said Tom, "we will read the book and see what it says." And they read the book, and the slave was captured again. I take the professors as the book; and when we follow it, what do we see in regard to the book? On listening to the professors' papers I found that the book was scarcely correct; because, when they came to speak of things we understand—labour and Arbitration Courts—we could soon find their mistakes, as Mr. Polson thought he found the mistakes of Professor Belshaw in respect to land-selling. Professor Murphy said that a question came before the Arbitration Court, a question of skill, and the skill consisted in a man putting jam on confections. Well, when I visited a factory I saw a junior girl putting jam on confections. Therefore his contention is, in my opinion, wrong. According to what I saw it was quite wrong. As to his criticism of the Arbitration Court, I find that he knows very little about the Court. It appears, indeed, that he has not attended the Court. He criticizes the proceedings of the Court on lines that are not practical—on lines that are foolish. If he had attended the Court when Mr. Justice Stringer, Mr. Justice Cooper, Mr. Justice Frazer, or any of the other gentlemen, were on the Bench, he would find that if any advocate made such a suggestion as that putting jam on a confection was skilled work he would get such a dressing-down that he would never attend the Court again. I am not going to traverse the arguments of the economists, because I could not do that in five minutes. But I have a lot of ideas, and have done a lot of research and study on these matters, and I might suggest that the protected industries, with their 77,000 workers and their £14,500,000 a year paid in wages, are not jeopardizing the interests of this country one iota if we take the national income into account and take into comparison with our exports that £14,500,000 annually. It appears to me that many of the professors have not got in touch with labour. Professor Murphy said that he had been in a pickle-factory, and he found he was a failure there and went in for economics; and I find he is a failure in criticizing the Arbitration Court, because, as I have shown you, gentlemen, he has made a big mistake.

*Mr. Roberts :* Sir, I have heard to-day and yesterday quite a lot about production, quite a lot about the value of production, sheets and sheets of paper about land and factories, but nothing about the human race that depends upon this production. In all the papers given by the professors, with the exception of Professor Belshaw, they have assumed, I believe, or forgotten to mention, that human beings require food, clothing, and shelter. That is not a remarkable thing for professors to do. They generally forget these little things, these most important things in life, though in the last analysis food, clothing, and shelter are very important things to the professors also. The first thing I want to say is that, as other speakers have said, there is quite an amount of information in the papers submitted. Some of the things said by Professor Tocker in his paper I agree with. But they are few indeed. I have to put on spectacles to find them. A great deal said by Professor Murphy, particularly as to the settlement of disputes, I think very good; but his knowledge of the Arbitration Court and its proceedings was pitiful. Then, Professor Belshaw gave us to-day a contribution on two issues—primary or land production and our secondary industries. It is an invaluable contribution in regard to New Zealand's primary and secondary production generally; whether we believe all of it or not, it will make us wake up and consider just where we stand in this country. Professor Tocker, on page 25 of his paper, says, "Through them we have limitations of the range of tasks to be performed by one man, the creation of jobs in order that employment may be found, men's wages for boys' work, skilled men's wages for unskilled work, and all the futility of making jobs, regardless of their effects on the cost of production, on prices, on the market for products, and hence regardless of their reactions on the wages that are to be paid." I shall be delighted if he will tell me where is that industrial Eldorado in New Zealand. I take it that when a Professor of Economics makes a statement of that kind he should back it up by some facts. My opinion is that that statement is not correct. My experience is that the Arbitration Court does not do foolish things of that kind, and I have had a fairly lengthy experience of that Court. Professor Belshaw states that there are only 25 per cent. of the workers of New Zealand who desire to come under the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court. But it is not a lack of desire on the part of the people but a lack of opportunity. If there are only 25 per cent. under the jurisdiction of the Court, it proves that the overwhelming proportion of the workers are engaged in the farming industry, and the Arbitration Court does not affect their position at all. Again, on page 23 there is a most important statement for a Professor of Economics to make. He states that from 54 to 60 per cent. of the national income finds its market within the Dominion itself. Does not the expenditure of that part of the national income mean something to the primary producers and the commodities they sell in New Zealand? Is the home market of no value to the primary producers? According to Professor Tocker it is not. I hold that the home market is of great value to our primary producers. It is a most important market. If we could eat all our produce and pay a good price it would be better for the primary producers. Are we to forget the humanitarian side of production, to forget that the worker must live whether he is a farmer or a town worker, to forget what Professor Murphy said, that he was paying a little out of his income to keep the general labourer? These men have a right to live, and it is the duty of New Zealand to see that a living is obtained by them, and the duty of the professors to assist us in getting a living for the men who render useful social service.