

this Conference. I do not want to refer further to Professor Murphy's address, because there is not sufficient time at my disposal. Professor Tocker's paper was most interesting, and contained a lot of valuable matter that we may be able to work upon. One point of which I have taken a note was in regard to the industrial balance. That is quite a good word, and the more you look into that question the more you will find in it for consideration. Then the professor also referred to overhead costs, which point was touched upon by most of the other professors in the course of their remarks, but I am now referring to Professor Tocker's paper particularly. I would like to ask the professor one question in regard to a statement which appears on page 23, that relief for the farmer can come only with the expansion of the farmer's demand for sheltered goods and services. Now, is the farmer's industry not sheltered? We will take the agricultural side of farming—that of grain-growing. We find that flour in this country is selling at £16 5s. per ton. In Sydney and Melbourne the imported stuff is selling at £12 5s. f.o.b. Freight to New Zealand is £1 13s. per ton; the duty per ton is £3: this makes the imported flour £16 18s. If you removed the duty on flour it would come into this country at £13 18s. I would like to know whether Professor Tocker thinks that the agricultural industry is not one of the sheltered industries. Mr. Coates in his speech told us that the Conference would be afforded a full opportunity to examine all the facts: he said the sky would be the limit, as far as our investigations were concerned. Probably before we finish some wag may call this Conference "the Nosey Parker Conference," because we are going to look at the business of the other chap, and they will have the same right to look into our business: to inquire into the business of both sides is the work of this Conference. The industrial life of this country is inseparable from the political life, and if we are going to delve into the industrial side, then we surely have the right to enter into the political field also. We want to know something about these overhead charges and the drift to the towns. The land of this country is deteriorating. There is very little employment on the land, and the drift to the cities is caused by the fact that industrial work is a seasonal occupation.

*Mr. Cornwell:* I have listened with great interest to all the statements made by the Professors of Economics, but I think it is to be regretted that they did not deal more fully with the question of unemployment. I notice that Professor Tocker, on page 21 of his address, mentions that during 1926 and 1927 in particular, after the prices of our exports had fallen 20 per cent. below their 1925 level, a measure of depression spread throughout the Dominion, unemployment became acute, and closer attention was directed to the search for weaknesses in our economic organization. On page 23, at the foot of paragraph 7, he states, "The sheltered industries of the towns have been since the war much more attractive. Consequently both labour and capital have been diverted to those sheltered industries. But their market is limited to the local demand, and, as the farmers' purchasing-power has declined, the local market has been unable to absorb their full output at prevailing prices, production has been restricted, and they have been unable to absorb the labour supply available. This is the chief cause of the unemployment which has proved so intractable during the past two years." I would like to ask these gentlemen if they have ever given consideration to the question of immigration and its effect upon unemployment. It is astonishing to me that that question was not mentioned when this matter was touched upon. If we turn to the figures and look at the question of immigration, and take the year 1926, we find that no less than 10,766 assisted immigrants came into the Dominion. I wish the Conference to understand that I personally, and the labour movement generally, am not opposed to immigration, but there are qualifications to which we are opposed. We have had very much unemployment, and during 1924-25 over eight thousand assisted immigrants came in each year, while in 1926 there were 10,766. It is remarkable also that for the year ending the 31st March, 1927, the Labour Department assisted 10,268 people. Possibly they may have assisted some of those men several times. This is a question which ought to receive further consideration later; but, seeing that the professors were dealing with most important questions in their papers, I thought it strange that they omitted that subject, and I hope that in their reply they will make some mention of it. I would like to ask Professor Murphy a question, and I am sorry I have not his paper before me. But he suggests this: "Another point I think of importance is, that it seems to me that the compulsory arbitration system has been extremely unfortunate, because it has simply resulted in practice, although not in law, in keeping the parties apart, with much harm to the community generally." I have been associated for just over twenty years with the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of this country, and my experience has been totally different to Professor Murphy's statement. Through the Conciliation Council's lead, through the discussions, and particularly in the presentation of cases in the Arbitration Court, facilities are given for workers and employers to meet more frequently than would otherwise be possible if they had not the Court. Without it industrial disputes committees would have to be set up, but under the Act the Councils take the place of the committees I mention in dealing with disputes. I submit that this Act has been the means of getting the employer and the worker together, and not of keeping them apart. It has been the means of bringing them closer together, in fact, and I hope the professor will give us some information in connection with that aspect when he is replying.

*Mr. Acland:* I wish to refer to Professor Belshaw's assertion regarding the question of the transfers of land, and to his statement that practically one-half the occupied area changed hands during the period 1915-24. Now, if that statement were correct—and I do not think it is—the conclusion he draws is not at all warranted. First of all he assumes that the whole of the land was sold at inflated or fictitious values. But it must be remembered that a very considerable area changed hands again owing to the occupiers being forced off in a ruined condition: and a great area changed hands owing to natural causes. In many cases, also, the sales of land were the result more of an exchange, because the people, after selling their lands at their best value, immediately bought other land at the same value in some other districts. Several of these transactions reduced the area, which it may be said has affected the situation to-day. I only wish to make that remark.