

include the representatives of employers and employees, with an independent chairman. I think in the case of agriculture it might be desirable to set up Minimum-wage Boards such as those that function in the United Kingdom.

I do not quite understand Professor Murphy's statement about price disparity, and I would like half an hour to consider it. My point is this: that the disparity in prices in this country is not as great as supposed; secondly, that the disparity is general and not confined to this Dominion; thirdly, that it is not proved that it is due to the Court. And it was not my job to prove that it was not due to the Court. It was the job of the critics who attack the Court to prove that the disparity is due to the Court, because that is the gravamen of the charge against it in reference to the present position, and I say that in view of the general nature of the disparity throughout the world it is only a presumption to assert that it is the fault of the Court. It certainly has not been proved, and I cannot see any evidence which would lead me to believe that in the case of the sheltered industries a higher level of prices results than would have resulted without the Court. The three groups of industries which have been specially referred to are coal, wood, and the textiles. I suggest, in reference to wood products, that the disparity in prices is due to the fact that the industry is subject to diminishing returns because it is necessary to push further and further into the forests in order to obtain timber, and that is the main reason behind any excessive rise in the price of timber products. In the case of coal it has been admitted that the Arbitration Court is not effective, and therefore I do not think we need deal with the disparity question there. The textile industry is a protected industry in this country, and the small size of the manufacturing units, and the wide variety of goods manufactured in each small establishment is, I think, sufficient to account for the weakness in competition with other countries, to account for the necessity for a tariff, and to account for the difficulties of the manufacturers in adopting improved methods and making more use of improved and expensive machinery.

My point in reference to the weaknesses of the Arbitration Court was this—and this is a practical reply to Professor Murphy's statement—that I did not suggest that the remedy would be found by keeping the Arbitration Court supreme in precisely its present position; but I suggested certain possible amendments which might be adopted to improve the system. I do make this appeal to those who are interested in the industrial welfare of this country—to exploit methods of improving the present system. There has been very little consideration given to means of improving the present system, and I feel that employers and employees who know the conditions of industry intimately, and who are directly concerned with industrial negotiations, are the people who are most likely to be able to make the most constructive suggestions. The economists might be very useful in examining, and criticizing, those suggestions, but I think that the responsibility for making them must rest upon the employers and the employees; and we will endeavour—I speak for myself—to assist wherever possible. Members can readily understand that we do not stand up as authorities on every aspect of the problem. It is only fair to say that the preparation for this Conference has involved a great deal of hurried work. The whole of my preparation, for instance, has been done in the past three weeks, though I have been thinking about the problem for a long time, and it is scarcely fair to expect us to come forward with detailed practical suggestions. I take it that the committees to be set up will be the proper bodies to do that; but I do feel that we should endeavour to try out different methods running parallel to regarding improvements in the present system rather than to smash it, and then say, "Now let us see what can be done." It is a better principle to build up from the existing machinery, despite its imperfections, than to scrap the system without attempting to improve it. There is too much impatience shown, and far too much friction has been engendered, and too much of the criticism has been destructive. I sincerely hope that my suggestion will be adopted. If after a period of further trial we find that it is impossible to improve conditions, and if you are absolutely convinced that if the Arbitration Court is abolished that the consequences will not be more serious than those arising from the working of the Court, then scrap it, and I will have no more to say.

Vote of Thanks to Professors.

Mr. Bishop: It is perhaps not quite in order at this stage, but I think that the work the professors have put into the papers they have presented to us calls for at least an expression of appreciation on our part. I therefore move, That we pass a vote of thanks to the professors for the very valuable work they have put into the task they have undertaken. I do not know whether they are being adequately paid for their services—

A Member: No.

Mr. Bishop: I would like to suggest, in accordance with Professor Tocker's theory, that the remuneration should be in accordance with the volume of their output. I have no doubt that Professor Tocker would reject his theory, and that Professor Belshaw would also reject his, if that suggestion were taken into account. I have much pleasure in moving this vote of appreciation of the work of the professors.

Mr. Roberts: I second the motion, and wish to express my personal obligation as to the papers the professors have presented to the Conference. Sometimes we do not agree with the professors, and we think that perhaps we know more about the subject than those learned gentlemen. No doubt they will not agree with a lot of the things we say; but we are certainly indebted to them for the very valuable information they have placed before the Conference, and I am sure it will be to our mutual benefit. I have not had time to examine the papers—that is the function of other delegates here—but it will be thought no doubt that we have criticized the professors rather strongly, and particularly our friend Professor Tocker. But I assure him that we were only trying to find out just what he means in regard to the figures he quoted, and he has let us down very lightly. The question might be brought in as to whether the payment for the services the professors have rendered should