

*Mr. Baldwin :* I have about finished. I say that that inquiry was held before a recommendation was made to the Court to make an award, and it was on the evidence adduced in the whole district ; but finally the Court did not carry out the recommendation and make the award. I ask Mr. Polson, is that not a fact, and, if so, why did he not tell the Conference that it was a fact ?

*Mr. Parlanc :* Is it not the fact that all the arguments Mr. Polson has put forward in support of the representation of the third party when the worker is bargaining for the sale of his labour applies equally if the workers were to put in a claim to be represented when the farmer is selling the result of his labour—his wheat and other produce ; and also when the farmer is buying and selling a farm ? Again, Mr. Polson stated that every section of the community has had their standard of living cut down. I ask him if he is aware that on page 736 of the last Year-book it is shown that the average wealth of the community has increased by 40 per cent. after allowing for the increase in prices. Another point I ask about is, in view of the fact that all the economists are agreed that the standard of living of the workers cannot be cut down below a certain point without reducing their efficiency, whether he has given any attention to the basic wage fixed by the Arbitration Court at £4 0s. 8d. a week. I ask him if he considers that wage affords a fair standard of living for a worker. Another matter I would like to ask Mr. Polson about is his claim that preference to unionists should lapse automatically as soon as a union adopts any direct action. Does he not think it only fair that it should be proved that a union has adopted direct action before it is punished ? Should not a union have the right of being tried before being punished ?

*Mr. Roberts :* Sir, I want at the outset to congratulate Mr. Polson on the lengthy report he has presented. When I heard it read I thought of the song, "Murphy shall not Sing To-night." I do not think there would have been any song if Murphy was not in it.

*Mr. Henderson :* Mr. Chairman, what exactly is the implication in that ?

*Mr. Roberts :* The implication is that Professor Murphy is quoted very frequently in this statement. Professor Murphy is an Irishman, like myself, and he will understand. I am talking to him really. I want to put this point to Mr. Polson : I am a transport worker, and I eat butter, meat, and potatoes—particularly potatoes—and use wool for clothing and so on, all grown on the farm. Mr. Polson has stated that the farmers as third parties have a right to representation on transport workers' disputes. If so, have not transport workers an equal right to be represented in the fixing of prices of commodities produced by farmers when the farmers sell them ? I, a transport worker, am just not the third party, but the second party, who buys them. At the present time we see the price of butter fixed at a certain figure from a certain date. I am not consulted. I simply smile and say nothing.

*A Delegate :* Or go without.

*Mr. Roberts :* I generally go without it. My next question is with regard to certain figures quoted by Mr. Polson—I know they were the same that were given in Professor Murphy's paper—in regard to certain stoppages in the mines and on the waterfront. Would Mr. Polson tell us the exact time of the delay caused by these stoppages, and what the stoppages were due to ; because some of the stoppages on the waterfront were caused by things that neither the employers nor the workers can control, and all of them are included in this report. The next point is as to that blessed word "elasticity." We shall soon be using it like "that blessed word Mesopotamia." Mr. Polson has asked that the Court shall allow more elasticity and freedom for employers in the employment of workers, and not bind them in a strait-jacket ; and he objects to any legal restrictions. Would he allow the same elasticity in regard to the dairy-factory regulations, and allow the farmers to carry on the dairy industry as they like ? I would like an answer to these questions ; and I would like him in his reply to state definitely—not to-day, because he cannot give such a list to-day, but when the Conference resumes again—the commodities that can be purchased for £4 0s. 8d. ; also how many workers of the unskilled type get £4 0s. 8d. per week throughout the year. Will he tell us, too, what he thinks a family of four can live on, and what those commodities can be bought for to-day ? That is all.

*Mr. Semple :* On page 84 of this paper Mr. Polson makes this statement : "there is no reason why labour should be exempt from national hardship." I would like to ask him, since when has labour been exempt from national hardship ? On page 80, the first of his proposed amendments to the Act is "To make the penalty of a breach of the preference-to-unionists clause more effective." I take it that the idea of this paper is to submit proofs and reasons why the farming industry should be exempted from the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court. Supposing the farmers were successful in getting that exemption, how would you apply preference to unionists in their case ? Is it the fact that the farmers are prepared to endorse the preference-to-unionists principle so long as it is applied to the other fellow and they are exempt themselves ? It seems to me that that is the idea, in view of the fact that they want exemption for themselves and yet support preference for unionists. On page 78 Mr. Polson suggests "a physical anti-sweating minimum below which, in the public interest, labour should not be hired." I want to ask him, does he contend that the present minimum is too high ?

*Mr. Kennedy :* I would like Mr. Polson to tell me how he would get over these difficulties : On page 75 he complains that the Arbitration Court, "being a compulsory tribunal, has to provide an elaborate system of inspection and enforcement, and this means inquisitorial interference with the details of private business." In the reports of the Department of Labour we find that in 1927 £11,020 3s. 11d. was collected by the Inspectors of the Department for underpaid wages from different employers who paid their workers less than the award rates. In 1926 the amount so collected was £8,966 ; in 1924, £8,567 ; and in 1925, £5,949. My question is whether he complains about the enforcement of the award rates ; and what system would he adopt if we took out these particular clauses of the Act relating to the enforcement of agreements—how