

would he do the work done under the present system in regard to collecting these underpaid wages? On page 76 Mr. Polson adopts the statement made by somebody that the unions have organized themselves politically. I want him to tell me what objection he can take to that when the unions find that the politicians of this and other countries are continually interfering with the laws under which they work. What objection can be taken if the workers organize politically to stop the continual interference of politicians with the Acts we work under? On page 78 Mr. Polson says that instead of the present minimum wage there should be "a physical anti-sweating minimum below which, in the public interest, labour should not be hired." I would like him to tell me how he would arrive at that particular wage? What system would he adopt to ascertain it? On page 77 he states, "During this period from 1906 to 1925 the total disputes involving stoppages of work in New Zealand numbered 695, of which 212 were in mining, 215 in shipping and cargo working, and 102 in food, drink, &c. (mainly freezing-works), or 559 stoppages in these three industrial groups combined." And again he said, "During the five years 1921-25 the concentration was even more marked, for out of 301 stoppages, 273, or 90 per cent., were in the three industrial groups named above, and 28 in all the other groups combined." I want to ask him whether he would be in favour of setting up a National Council to deal wholly with these industries, with full power to determine wages, and with provisions for preventing the stoppages he complains of?

*Mr. Cornwell:* On page 84 Mr. Polson mentions something about the go-slow methods of workers. I would like to ask him, what is the difference between his interpretation of that phrase as applied to the workers and the action of the sheep-farmers in withholding their products at a time when the nation is under stress? Just go back to the war period, when some of the sheep-farmers deliberately withheld their products for higher prices when the British Government wanted wool to manufacture clothing and so forth for the men fighting in the trenches. He should compare that with the go-slow policy of the workers that he complains of. Again, in the Wairarapa a little while ago some bacon-factories were instructed to restrict production in order to get higher prices for their products; and only, I think, last week, one Cabinet Minister was advocating that the wheat-farmers should withhold wheat until they got higher prices. I would like Mr. Polson to compare the action of the sheep-farmers, the bacon-factories, and the wheat-growers with his charges against the workers of going slow.

*Mr. Johns:* On page 76, clause 3, Mr. Polson refers to the inflexibility of the system of compulsory arbitration. I would like to ask him what degree of flexibility would he suggest in the dairy-factories of this country? At present the workers in those factories are working sixty-five hours in a seven-day week. There is no limitation in regard to hours in these factories; men have been known to work as much as fourteen to fifteen hours a day, and in one specific case in Auckland, on Monday, 6th February, they worked from 7.15 a.m. till 11 p.m., with half an hour for dinner and three-quarters of an hour for tea. On Tuesday, 7th February, they worked from 7.15 a.m. till 11.15 p.m., with half an hour for dinner and three-quarters of an hour for tea. On Wednesday, 8th February, they started at 7.15 a.m. and worked till 5.30 a.m. on Thursday, with half an hour for dinner, three-quarters of an hour for tea, and half an hour at midnight for another meal. They restarted at 7.15 a.m. and worked till 5 p.m., making 29½ hours of work, with these small breaks for meals. If there is any more flexibility wanted under the Arbitration Court awards than that, how much more can we get if the Arbitration Court deals with these workers? I speak as a practical worker in the industry for nineteen years, and I would not like the dairy-factory workers to go back to the conditions that obtained when I entered the industry. We started work at 4 a.m., and at 8 o'clock we went home and had half an hour for breakfast. Then we worked till 12, had one hour for dinner, and if we finished at 5 or 6 o'clock we could then go home. We worked these hours six days a week; Sunday was called an easy day, a half-day, if we finished at dinner-hour. We do not want such flexibility as that. We have seen the degree of flexibility that we have now. If they are not content with that, what do they want?

*Mr. F. R. Cooke:* I want to ask Mr. Polson a question in regard to the statement on page 81, which reads as follows: "There is never any guarantee that industry will produce enough to maintain a given standard, and the standard of living cannot possibly exceed for long the standard of output." I want to know how long the standard of living can exceed the output. Will he also say what the elasticity of the Court is supposed to restrict. Has it restricted the boot and shoe trade from increasing its output sixfold during the past twenty years, and the clothing trade from increasing its output fivefold during the past twenty years? These industries have been under the Court. I would like to ask him if he knows that the workers in one section of the clothing trade, which has increased its output fivefold, are to-day getting less remuneration for their work than those in the one that has not increased its output? There are two sections in the clothing trade. Those are some of the questions that I want to ask Mr. Polson. Then, I should like also to follow up Mr. Henderson's question, whether Mr. Polson does not think that a third party coming into a dispute in an industry, and interfering in a Wages Board or the Arbitration Court, would not cause such endless litigation in one way and another that you would get no settlement. It does so in property cases and so on. Wherever a third party comes in, it interferes with the procedure.

*Mr. Bloodworth:* On page 78 Mr. Polson quotes the Right Hon. Sidney Webb to the following effect: "Perpetual liability to a disagreement between the parties to a bargain is a necessary accompaniment of freedom of contract." Does not that quotation imply that the absence of the Arbitration Court will be more liable for perpetual disagreement than with the Arbitration Court in existence, which limits freedom of contract?

*Mr. Martin:* When Mr. Polson is replying to Mr. Semple's question in connection with the statement on page 84 that "There is no reason why labour should be exempt from national hardship," will he reply whether that has any connection with the sentence previous to that, that "Other sections