

compulsion must enter into the work of conciliation, creating antagonism where none need exist. I do not think that spirit exists; but, presuming it does, would not the same spirit disturb the system he advocates?

*Mr. Parlane:* I have two questions to ask: One, would Mr. Williams be in favour of giving an industrial agreement made by collective bargaining between employers and workers in any industry the force of an award of the Court of Arbitration, so that it would apply to and enable it to be enforced against all employers and all workers in such industry. In explanation, might I say that under the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act any agreement entered into between the Shearers' Union and the Sheepfarmers' Association would only apply to the members of the union who were in the union at the time the agreement was made, and to the sheep-farmers who were members of the Sheepfarmers' Association at the time the agreement was made. It would not apply to any subsequent period, and it would not apply to any sheep-farmer who was not in the association, nor to any shearers who were not in the union, and therefore there is not a chance of unfair competition. Will Mr. Williams be in favour of remedying that by giving an agreement made under the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act the force of an award of the Court of Arbitration? The second question I wish to ask is, With regard to the statement that the operation of the Arbitration Act has discouraged efficiency in the worker, does Mr. Williams say that the New Zealand workers are less efficient than workers in countries where there is no Arbitration Act?

*Professor Murphy:* Does Mr. Williams contemplate that unions on either side should be forced to register even if they do not wish to register?

*Mr. F. R. Cooke:* Mr. Williams quoted cases of breaches of agreement, making it appear that the employer has no remedy, and the worker is the one committing the breaches. He suggests that, in view of the breaches of agreement, the proper answer to a broken agreement is refusing to make another subsequent agreement. In this connection I want to quote from the report of the Department of Labour of last year, which says: "During the year 3,229 complaints of breaches of awards of industrial agreements, &c., were received and investigated. Apart from these a large proportion of the general inspections of factories, shops, &c., totalling 34,794, included an inspection to ascertain whether the awards and agreements were being complied with in respect of wages, overtime, &c. There were 381 prosecutions for breaches of awards and agreements other than subjects of work, 326 against employers and 55 against workers, while 327 convictions were recorded. 14 other prosecutions against employers were taken for miscellaneous breaches of the Act, and 10 convictions were obtained. 49 workers were prosecuted for striking and by otherwise ceasing employment (2 strikes), and a conviction was obtained in one case (35 workers); the other case was dismissed." So that the proportion against the employers is very great. Mr. Williams's paper refers to the rural districts being deserted in favour of the towns, and I wish to ask this question: Is not the loss of rural population due mainly to the advance of machinery, and also the skill of workers, and to the increase in the number of sheep shorn and slaughtered? I remember the time in the Old Country when a man was responsible for shearing about twenty sheep per day. I have seen workers in New Zealand shearing hundreds of sheep per day with the machinery, and with the hand-machines shearing nearly 200 in some cases. Is not the loss of rural population due in some cases to improved methods of farming also, to top-dressing instead of ploughing and cropping, to machine potato-digging, improved methods of fencing, &c.; and not the least to the bad accommodation provided for men with families, and the lack of education for the children. I wish to call attention to practical instances in that connection. I have, in travelling in some of the country districts, come across boys of thirteen and fourteen years of age who have been only in the First Standard of education owing to their parents having changed their districts and their work so frequently. They could never get a chance of studying. I assert that these are some of the factors for the population deserting the rural districts.

*Mr. Semple:* On page 101 Mr. Williams said, "It will be noted that the workers may compel any of their employers to come under the Act, while the employers cannot compel their workers to come under it unless the latter have registered as an industrial union or association thereunder; registration is voluntary." I do not want to refer to the past, because I regard this Conference as one created by the Government for the purpose of considering the future, and so that we may endeavour as best we can to put our fingers upon the tainted spots of our economic system and try to adjust them so that the country may develop in the interests of all. But I cannot but think of the past for a moment, and I would ask Mr. Williams how he squares the attitude now taken up by the Sheepowners' Federation with the attitude the sheep-farmers took up, along with the rest of the farmers, in 1913. Prior to 1913 a section of industrial workers was dissatisfied with the Arbitration Court, just as it seems the farmers and the dairy employers are to-day dissatisfied with it, and consequently they cancelled their registration and got outside the jurisdiction of the Court. The 1913 struggle developed, and everybody knows that the farmers and the sheepowners took up a very hostile attitude and were instrumental in forming bogus unions and thus forced those workers back under the Court. To-day, however, they ask us to cancel our registration and get outside the jurisdiction of the Court. How can they square their attitude in 1913 with their attitude to-day?

*Mr. Roberts:* Sir, on page 101 Mr. Williams says, "In any dispute the power of the Judge over the employer is absolute; his power over the worker is nil. He has complete control over the wages to be paid, and no control over the output returned for those wages." Well, I am afraid that shows that Mr. Williams has not attended many sittings of the Court, because if he had he would have found that the power of the Court over the workers is pretty solid. I can assure him it is. I want to ask him, how could the Court or any other labour tribunal control or decide the output of the workers? How could they control output in industry? Another question I want to ask is one that he should be in a very good position to answer without difficulty: Can Mr. Williams explain by what method output could be increased in the freezing and shearing industries, where piecework rates apply; and will he