

tell the Conference of any country where the output is higher than, or as high as it is, amongst slaughtermen and shearers in New Zealand and Australia? I want to know from him how you could increase the output of shearers working at piece rates and of slaughtermen on piece rates. And, as he has said that the output in New Zealand is not as high as it should be, will he tell us of any country in the world where the output is higher than, or even as high as, that of these two sections of workers in New Zealand? I would just say this: I think his paper is a very good one, and puts the position of the sheep-farmers very clearly before us. Unfortunately, they do not seem to be conversant with the operations of the Arbitration Court. It does not, in our experience, operate as stated in the paper.

*Mr. Tucker*: On page 97 Mr. Acland suggests that "After meeting in conference, the parties to any dispute should submit their case to the Conciliation Commissioner or an umpire mutually agreed upon, and, failing a decision being acceptable to either party at the Conciliation Council, the dispute could be submitted either to the Arbitration Court by consent of the parties or to the arbitrament of public opinion, which would by this time have been fully informed of the merits of the dispute." I am not quite sure what he means by the "arbitrament of public opinion." Does he mean a referendum of the whole of the people of the country? Mr. Williams also dealt with a voluntary system of settling disputes. He quoted South Africa, and desired us to make a comparison between South Africa and the United States. In regard to countries where the voluntary system of settling disputes has been in operation for a number of years, can Mr. Williams quote particulars to show that there is a greater measure of trade stability and peace between employers and employees than in New Zealand, and that in these countries the progress of production and the welfare of the people generally has made greater strides than in New Zealand? With regard to South Africa and the United States, if Mr. Williams refers to Kansas, in the case of America—and he may have that in his mind—he will find that the law there only applies to a certain number of industries. I think that is also the case in South Africa; and South Africa cannot bear comparison with New Zealand in regard to wages and the general standard of the workers.

*Mr. Herbert*: On page 102 Mr. Williams states: "The paramount necessity now is a reduction in the producing costs to meet reduction in the world values of our output. This can be brought about in two ways—either by a reduction in wages or an increase in the *per capita* output." Does not this conflict with the statement by Mr. Polson that he does not favour a decrease of the present basic wage in industry? With regard to the advocacy of similar rights for employers in negotiations in arbitration or conciliation proceedings, has Mr. Williams taken into consideration the economic status of the employers in having full control over the industries concerned? Does he not think that such control compensates the employers for the disadvantages he suggests they suffer under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act?

*Mr. Nash*: Does Mr. Williams agree that the well-being of all the people is dependent upon the effective utilization of the land and the efficient organization and functioning of the manufacturing and distributive industries? In the event of disagreement between the parties engaged in any industry affecting national production, would it not be essential that some person or persons should have a determining voice? And with whom would he place the determining voice in the event of disagreement between the parties in such an industry? The point made by Mr. Williams is that the Judge, having in his hands the adjusting of disputes in every industry in the Dominion, has too much power. In whose hands would Mr. Williams place that power in the event of that power not being in the hands of the Judge?

*Professor Fisher*: Sir, I would like to ask if in the opinion of the Sheepowners' Federation the Statement on page 101—that wages have been based in the Court proceedings on the cost of living—means that no weight need be attached to the repeated statements of the Court that general economic and financial and other conditions have been taken into account by the Judge and other members of the Court in determining wages? And I have a second question to ask in regard to the statement on page 101, that the bias of the Court "accounts for the persistent rise in cost of production and cost of living." Are we to take that to mean that, in the opinion of the Sheepowners' Federation, the operations of the Arbitration Court are the substantial explanation of the changes in the cost of living that have occurred in New Zealand during the past ten to fifteen years?

*Mr. Black*: What guarantee have the workers that they will benefit by increased production? Has Mr. Williams any scheme to place before the Conference by which such a guarantee can be given the workers? Professor Murphy stated that real wages have not increased since 1914, and I do not think it will be said that production has not increased in that period. Production has increased, but the workers have not got the benefit. Has Mr. Williams, then, any guarantee to offer that in case of any *per capita* increase in production the workers will benefit *pro rata*?

*Mr. Purtell*: Sir, on page 101, under the heading "False Precedents in the Framing of Awards," Mr. Williams says, "New awards are frequently based by the Court on precedents of the Court's own creation. This leads to accumulation of error where error has been made, and also to the spreading of that error right through industry." If Mr. Williams agrees that this accumulation of error also hits the workers, I agree with him. I happen to represent a class of workers who, because they agreed fifteen years ago to a twelve-hour shift, have had that twelve-hour shift put into their awards right along up to 1926. A man has to work from six o'clock in the morning to six o'clock at night, and his mate commences at six o'clock at night and works till six o'clock in the morning. So, if Mr. Williams agrees that the errors are hitting us as well as the employers, I do not mind. On page 102 Mr. Williams says: "Put briefly, we consider that, while the Arbitration Act is by no means the only source of our difficulties, it is largely responsible for them by reason of the following tendencies: (a) To discourage efficiency in the worker; (b) to increase the cost of production and the cost of living; (c) to accentuate the unfavourable economic position of the primary producer; (d) to increase rather