labour disputes in England from 1890 to 1922. A comparison of the conditions existing in New Zealand with those described by Lord Askwith as existing in England during the same four periods is most instructive.

Taking the first period—1894 to 1906—prices were rising in England during the early part of the period just as they were in New Zealand. It is admitted now that wages had to be increased there just as they had to be increased here; but there the resemblance ends. While we in New Zealand had twelve years of industrial peace, the same period in England, particularly in the years 1894 to 1900, was one of intensely bitter industrial strife. Practically every advance made by the workers was secured as a result of costly, wasteful fighting; and, further, the bitterness of the fighting was accentuated by the refusal of the employers organizations to recognize the trade-unions or to meet the men's official representatives. The fight for recognition was ended only by the passing of the Trades Disputes Act of 1906, twelve years after the same result had been secured in New Zealand by the passing of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. It must be noted also that in 1896 the English Parliament had passed the Conciliation Act, or "An Act to Make Better Provision for the Settlement of Trade Disputes." Of this Act Lord Askwith writes: "This Act was practically permissive in its terms Clause 1 allowed any Board constituted or authorized for the purpose of settling disputes between employers and workmen by conciliation or arbitration to be registered with the Board of Trade; but this clause had been utilized to a very small extent. Clause 2 (1) gave power, where a difference exists or is apprehended—(*a*) to inquire into the causes and circumstances of the difference; (*b*) to take such steps as to the Board may seem expedient for the purpose of enabling the parties to the difference to meet together, by themselves or their representatives, under the presidency of a Chairman mutually agreed upon or nominated by the Board of Trade, or by some other person or body, with a view to the amicable settlement of the difference; (*c*) on the application of the employers or workmen interested, and after taking into consideration the existence and adequacy of means available for conciliation in the district or trade and the circumstances of the case, appoint a person or persons to act as conciliator or as a Board of Conciliation; (*d*) on the application of both parties to the difference, appoint an arbitrator. A conciliator so appointed was to inquire into the causes and circumstances of the difference and report his proceedings to the Board. By clause 4 the expediency of establishing Conciliation Boards for a district or trade might be discussed, and by clause 7 three obsolete Acts of 1824, 1867, and 1872 were repealed. Any success likely to occur under this Act entirely depended on the acceptance by both parties of any aid which an inquiry might give, but it gave no power, without agreement of both sides, for any arbitration to be held, and no power to get one side or the other to accept any suggestions made by a conciliator, either in a report or at a meeting where he might be present."

The number of strikes which have occurred in England since this Act was framed should be an object-lesson to those who in New Zealand are urging that some entirely optional system of conciliation should be substituted for our present system of combined conciliation and arbitration.

It is not necessary to discuss in detail the industrial disturbances of the next period, 1906 to 1914. It is sufficient for our purpose to note that the position year by year became more serious, and the number of disputes which led to prolonged stoppages of work affecting almost the entire nation was greater than in the previous period. Of these disputes Lord Askwith writes: "What is to be said about these disputes? My own strong opinion is that they were economic. Trade had been improving, but employers thought too much of making money without sufficient regard to the importance of considering the position of their workpeople at a time of improvement in trade. Prices had been rising, but no sufficient increase of wages, and certainly no general increase, had followed the rise. It may be said that employers had waited too much upon each other."

That is an effective answer to those who are claiming that if there had been no arbitration system in New Zealand during the period of improvement in trade the workers would have automatically received without strikes or dislocation of industry the wage-increases to which they were entitled.

The history of the last two periods—that embracing the war and that embracing the subsequent years—should be fresh in everyone's mind. In England there were constant strikes which threatened the very life of the nation in the war years; and since the war the engineering dispute, the two railway and coal strikes, and the strike of seamen paralysed the trade of the country for long periods, delaying the recovery from the war losses. England had no machinery for the peaceful settlement of the workers' demands which resulted from an alteration in prices. In the absence of such machinery strikes followed the refusal by the owners of the workers' appeals, and after the nation had suffered enormous loss from the strikes in each case the Government had itself to intervene. In regard to Government intervention in the coal dispute (1920–21) Lord Askwith says: "The coal-miners were not alone in pressing forward demands. Once again the system of sectional settlement, without any co-ordination by different Ministers, had full sway. On the railways, in answer to large claims, the locomotive men and firemen obtained advances which only served as an inducement to other grades to press forward demands for themselves on the same principles, although the locomotive men had pressed for special treatment on the ground of skill. The unrest grew, section after section in different trades demanding more wages and new conditions; and, as each section advanced, a patchwork settlement was effected, first by one department, then by another, with the chance in every case of carrying an appeal from one department to another department, from one Minister to another Minister, and, when the union was powerful enough to cause much trouble, from minor Ministers to the Prime Minister; co-ordination and system were ignored at a time when peace and rest was of the utmost importance to the welfare of the country."

It must be admitted by any reasonable student that after considering the English industrial law, with its right to strike and lock-out, the principal object of the framers of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act in New Zealand—the prevention of strikes—has been attained to a reasonable