

system is an object-lesson to be avoided, and yet recommend a similar system for New Zealand to adopt? The second question I would like to ask Mr. Bishop is, Are the employers represented by Mr. Bishop in favour of a standard minimum wage being fixed; if so, what steps do they recommend in that direction? If not, what will prevent reverting to sweating conditions in the event of an optional system of arbitration such as Mr. Bishop suggests being adopted?

*Mr. Roberts:* I think Mr. Bishop has diagnosed the case for the patient very well. He has gone into detail very closely, and has told us all that is the matter with the patient, but I believe if he administers the medicine prescribed, instead of curing the patient he will kill him. He has really adopted the course of all practical surgeons, of eventually killing the patient if he continues to deal with him long enough. I would like to draw Mr. Bishop's attention to one matter, as I am sure he has not seen the obvious mistake he has made in the second paragraph of his proposal No. 1. I will read it: "In any case in which no agreement is reached by a Council, and the assessors do not agree to refer the dispute to the Court, the existing award or agreement shall cease to operate as from the date of its expiry or the date of the Council sitting whichever is the later." I will refer now to proposal No. 4 on the same page: "To meet the case of no agreement being reached by a Conciliation Council and a refusal of the assessors to refer the dispute to the Court of Arbitration, incorporate in the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act provisions similar to those contained in the present Labour Disputes Investigation Act for the taking of a secret ballot precedent to a strike or lockout." It must be obvious that if an award or industrial agreement ceased to exist when the Conciliation Council met, there is no contract of service. Therefore the two cannot harmonize in any possible way. I believe Mr. Bishop will recognize immediately the discrepancy between these two clauses.

*Professor Murphy:* Mr. Chairman, on page 128—about the middle of the page—Mr. Bishop says, "Some economists, for instance, write as though trade-unions and individual workers conform to theories as pawns on a chess-board move under the guidance of a master-player." Will Mr. Bishop name these intellectual malefactors, in order to save the reputation of the economists at this Conference and to apportion the blame to the proper shoulders? On page 131, in about the fourth paragraph, Mr. Bishop says, "This 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." I refer specially to the word "automatically." Will Mr. Bishop name the persons who have ever made that ridiculous statement? It is very easy to put up a man of straw and knock him down, but the professors have their intellectual reputations to safeguard.

*Mr. Parlane:* Mr. Chairman, in his paper Mr. Bishop refers to the item "rent" as a minor factor in the cost of production. How does he arrive at this conclusion?

*Mr. Nash:* On page 133 Mr. Bishop, in clause 3 of his proposals, suggests that "the penalty for a union convicted of a serious breach of an award or agreement shall be deregistration." Would Mr. Bishop make that penalty apply to the employers in like degree as to the employees, and say whether he would prevent, say, the Union Company collecting fares from intending passengers if it committed a breach of the award. What I would like to ask Mr. Bishop is in connection with the factors which he suggests enter into the cost of production. On page 128 he refers to three main factors. I want to ask him whether he has left out purposely the cost of credit, or whether he is of opinion that credit or capital is not a cost in production, or should not be a cost in production? Then he suggested that this Conference is considering the methods that enter into the cost of production and distribution. I want to ask him, is he suggesting that the Conference is confined to the methods of production and distribution, and is not in any way to enter into the distribution of the product itself?

*Mr. Black:* Mr. Chairman, on page 130 of his paper Mr. Bishop states, "Nothing short of revolutionary changes in human nature will prevent the recurrence of brief sectional strikes, some of which arise from petty causes, often of a personal nature." I would like to ask Mr. Bishop, does he know, and, if so, will he admit, that a large number of these short strikes which workers are involved in they are compelled to make with the object of preventing loss of life? Does he know that? We know that especially on construction works very often the workers are compelled through the action of unreasonable employers to become involved in a strike in order to make the place safe to work in. Mr. Bishop knows that we have an illustration of that not two miles from where we are sitting now, just a short time ago, when the men's contention proved correct, inasmuch as a number of men nearly lost their lives two days ago, and Mr. Bishop was one of the tribunal which inspected that place and said it was safe? The other question is on page 128. He says there, "The object of those who in 1894 secured the passage of our Arbitration Act was to apply some measure of sane control to trade-unionism." I want a definition from Mr. Bishop of "sane control of trade-unionism." I have never heard the definition, although those words are bandied about throughout the country.

*Mr. Cornwell:* Mr. Chairman, in his proposals Mr. Bishop is making arbitration entirely optional, but conciliation is to be compulsory. I notice that further on he details the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, and wishes to insert there a proviso dealing with strikes and lockouts. The question I wish to ask is this: If under his proposal arbitration is to be optional, will Mr. Bishop agree that strikes and lockouts be legal, and the parties to have full and free use of the actions usually adopted during the periods of strikes and lockouts? By that I mean the boycott, pickets, &c.

*Mr. Bromley:* Mr. Chairman, I want to ask Mr. Bishop whether his proposals for penalties upon workers would preclude the assistance of a strong union of workers being given to a weaker union handicapped in the settlement of a dispute by an employer who has not yet joined the ranks of those who are prepared to recognize trade-unionism? In asking that question I want to point out that