was, he was certainly not an official of the union. On page 134 he says: "During this period the staunchest supporters of the Court of Arbitration were the primary producers. Indeed, it may be as well to remind the farmers that in 1913, when the waterside workers and seamen attempted to withdraw from the Court of Arbitration altogether, which resulted in a lockout by the employers, the farmers organized free labour and by the use of force the transport workers were driven back under the Court of Arbitration." The first point I want to make in connection with that statement is this: that the farmers did not come into the ports to show their support of the Arbitration Court at all; they came in to load their produce and get it away to the overseas markets so as to avoid disaster, financial and otherwise, which might have come upon them. The question I want to ask is this: Is Mr. Roberts not aware, first, that in October, 1913, when the strike occurred, the waterside workers had been outside the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act for nearly two years; and, secondly, that the seamen had been outside the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act for nearly eighteen months.

Mr. Roberts: That is what I say.

Mr. Smith: No; Mr. Roberts said that they proposed to withdraw from the Court altogether. They had already withdrawn. Thirdly, is Mr. Roberts not aware that the trouble in October, 1913, was a strike and not a lockout, and that it arose from the Wellington watersiders striking in support of the shipwrights as the result of the decision of a stopwork meeting to do so, following on a written threat in the previous August that the watersiders would stand by the shipwrights in the event of trouble arising. That trouble with the shipwrights arose through the watersiders presenting, on behalf of the skilled workers, demands for increased wages and conditions, and in regard to travelling-time, which were of such considerable magnitude that the employers could not agree to them. My fourth question has reference to the statement on page 135, wherein Mr. Roberts refers to the cost of living. As regards the statement that the waterside rate on the basis of the cost of living should be 2s. 8d. an hour, is Mr. Roberts not aware that in 1912 the waterside workers received an increase of 2d. per hour, equivalent to 13·3 per cent., whereas the increase in the cost of living between 1903 and that date was only 12 per cent; and that in March, 1920, they received (following increases in 1916, 1917, and 1919) an increase of 3d. per hour, and in November, 1920, a further increase of 1d. making the percentage increase over 1914 64·7 per cent., whereas the Government Statistician's figures show the cost-of-living increase since 1914 to be 61 per cent. only. So that the watersiders were well ahead of the increase in the cost of living.

Mr. Polson: Mr. Chairman, I rise to a point of order. Assuming that a delegate has half a dozen questions to put, is he allowed only three minutes in which to put the lot of them?

The Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Polson: Then can he rise again and have another three minutes later on?

The Chairman: No. The writer of the paper has only fifteen minutes in which to reply to all the questions put by delegates, and if there are more than eight or ten questions it is not possible to reply to them all, and some of the questions are wasted altogether.

Mr. Bishop: On page 134 Mr. Roberts writes: "Recently there have appeared in the press statements by employers of labour and one or two economists which would lead people to believe that low wages are necessary to obtain general prosperity in the country." I think Mr. Roberts is mistaken there. I do not think that low wages have been advocated by anybody, but we have advocated strongly a lower cost of production. The question I want to ask Mr. Roberts is: How does he suggest we are to produce from the land and in our manufacturing industries at such cost as will enable the products to be sold at a profit in competition with lower-priced articles produced and manufactured in other countries? Then, on page 135 Mr. Roberts says: "In 1921 Parliament gave power to the Court of Arbitration to reduce wages by general order; but it may be as well to point out that Parliament gave no such power to the Court of Arbitration to increase wages by general order." I want to ask Mr. Roberts whether it is not a fact that the Court did increase wages prior to 1921 by awarding bonuses on its own initiative, practically by general order. Further, is it not a fact that the reductions of 1922 were based upon the cost-of-living figures for the previous six-monthly periods, so that the reductions lagged behind the fall in prices?

Mr. Jessep: On page 135 Mr. Roberts quotes waterside wages for 1913–14 at 1s. 5d. per hour, and for 1920, 2s. 3d. per hour. Following on this subject I want to ask whether Mr. Roberts claims that waterside workers or any one else is entitled to be permanently maintained on a pre-war basis. Secondly, in connection with the question of the actual rate of wages paid to waterside workers, and bearing upon the cost of handling goods, seeing Mr. Roberts quotes the wages, will he tell the Conference the percentage increase in the number of men now employed on waterside work to do the same jobs as in 1913? On page 134 Mr. Roberts refers to our produce, and I would like to ask him what proportion of the farmers' produce is purchased in New Zealand, and what is the governing factor in fixing the value of same to the farmer? Does not the wages fix the New Zealand value? Then, in connection with Mr. Roberts's remarks in regard to accommodation for married people in the country, is Mr. Roberts aware that the restrictions imposed upon the building trade have more than doubled the cost of erecting cottages in the country during the past ten years. I want to emphasize this, as it is the main point and our chief objection to the Arbitration Court.

Captain Colbeck: I wish to ask a question which has already been put in another form: How would the farmer benefit by the increased purchasing-power of the worker, since the farmer has to sell at world's parity? The next question is: Since labour is the largest factor in the cost of living, would not an increase in wages mean that the worker would lose more by such increase as a consumer than he would gain as a producer? I have here the figures relating to the cost of a suit made in America, and the figures have been prepared by the Federal Reserve Bank of the United States of America, and they show the cost of labour to be 44 per cent.; overheads, 34 per cent.; all material,