

wants to tell us that it was not a lockout. I suppose we have not settled that point yet, but I declare it was a lockout. I was in Wellington in 1913 and took part in the strike, and I am proud of it.

Mr. Smith: Not as a union official.

Mr. Roberts: No; but a man can be alive without being a union official. When the waterside workers proposed and attempted to withdraw from the Court altogether, the farmers came down and drove them back by force.

Mr. Smith: They had withdrawn two years before.

Mr. Roberts: They attempted to continue away from the Court, and what I said was correct.

A Delegate: Ask Mr. Semple what occurred in Auckland.

Mr. Roberts: He can speak for himself. The farmers, as I stated, objected to the waterside workers withdrawing altogether from the Court, and drove them back under the Court in 1913. That is the point I want to make as against the attitude of the farmers to-day. It is necessary for me to take out figures very often on the wages of the waterside workers. I keep a register of the whole of the waterside workers employed in New Zealand, and I have taken out some figures showing the losses they have sustained during the period 1919 to 1927 on the basis of the diminishing purchasing-power of the pound as compared with the increases in wages obtained for the waterside workers either through the Court of Arbitration or through industrial agreements. In the table the average number of men for each year is set out, together with the average number of hours worked per week, the decreased purchasing-power to the total number of workers each year, the decreased purchasing-power of all the workers for the nine years, the decreased purchasing-power of each worker for the nine years, and the decreased purchasing-power of each worker for each year:—

Year.	Number of Waterside Workers in New Zealand.	Average Hours per Week.	Average Weeks per Year.	Amount per Hour under 1914 basis.	Amount short paid.
1919	6,673	32	45	d. 3½	£140,133 (on four groups).
1920	7,591	32	45	5½	£250,503 (on four groups).
1921	7,724	32	45	..	All square.
1922	6,539	32	45	1	£39,234 (on four groups).
1923	5,928	32	45	2	£71,136 (on four groups).
1924	6,315	32	45	1¾	£67,307 10s. (on all groups).
1925	5,952	32	45	1¼	£49,640 (on all groups).
1926	6,286	32	45	1½	£47,145 (on all groups).
1927	6,500	32	45	1	£39,000 (on all groups).
	(approx.)				£704,098.

Mr. Smith: The central office shows that on the average they have gained 73 per cent. from 1913 to date.

Mr. Roberts: The figures quoted show that they have lost, from 1919 to 1927, £704,098, that is to say, the average number of 6,473 waterside workers was underpaid to that extent in that period. Each waterside worker was short-paid £108 15s. on the average for the eight-year period; or each worker was short-paid on the average £13 12s. each year. These figures have been checked, and I challenge anybody to show that they are wrong. There are other compensations which Mr. Smith would mention, but I have not time to deal with them now. (*Applause.*)

The Associated Chambers of Commerce of New Zealand.

Mr. Turner: 1. The questions that are referred to this Conference have been the subject during the past twelve months of much inquiry and discussion by the various Chambers of Commerce throughout New Zealand, and were the subject of a special report by the Associated Chambers of Commerce in conference in October last. It will be understood, no doubt, that the Chambers of Commerce include representatives not only of every class of business and commercial men, but in many cases of primary producers also. We therefore think that their point of view represents a sort of average of the views of all the other bodies on the employers' side of this Conference. That means, in fact, that our views have been, or will be, put forward substantially by the representatives of the other interests on this side of the Conference, and we think the Conference will therefore welcome our decision to submit only a condensed report.

2. In October last, at the Annual Conference of Chambers of Commerce, a report was adopted embodying the views of the Conference on the whole subject. This report was adopted when the Government's Amendment Bill was before the House, and in some respects is out of date; but the following points from the report are submitted as setting out substantially the view of the Associated Chambers on the main question before this Conference.

3. Before the Conference met the Associated Chambers issued a questionnaire to one thousand representatives of business and commerce, including manufacturers, leaders of industry and public life, merchants, builders, editors, farmers, members of Parliament, labour leaders, shopkeepers, and professional men. Analysis of the two hundred replies received show the following significant opinions:—

- (a) Is the arbitration system responsible for the economic disabilities of high overhead cost of production and insufficient production?—*Answers*: 57 per cent., "Yes"; 7 per cent., "Partly"; 13 per cent., "Yes, jointly with other causes"; 15 per cent., "No"; 8 per cent., no reply.