

with that happy result. I refer to the hospitality you showed us in asking us to have a cup of tea with you on the first afternoon. Both sides have followed the example shown by you, and over a cup of tea a great deal more has often been done to come to conclusions and cement the kindly spirit that has actuated both sides than by all the talk during the rest of the day. Years ago I first met Mr. Roberts in close contact at a mining conference. I remember that he then emphasized the fact that it was no good our two parties sitting on opposite sides of the room, glaring at each other and calling each other names; but I must admit that after that good advice he proceeded to give us a good trouncing. One of the prominent coal-mine owners said to me, "Surely, Weston, you and I are not so bad as he paints us"; and it was a relief to my friend, and I know it was to myself, when at the first interval Mr. Roberts strolled across with a friendly smile and started to treat us as human beings. At that conference were sown the seeds in the minds of many of us present that it is an absolute necessity in this country for labour and capital to work together on friendly terms, to the advantage of the whole community. It is useless for us to stand off from each other, and the closer we get the more we learn to understand each other's ideals, and the greater progress is going to be made. That has again been exemplified at this Conference. I am sure, sir, if you had been here at the conclusion of the deliberations of this Conference you would have been amazed at the difference in the atmosphere then and that on the first day, when with some difficulty we arrived at our first agreement. There is one thing, however, that it is well to bear in mind, I think, if we are to get the fullest benefit from this Conference; and I hope it will be borne in mind by speakers and by press writers that industrial matters should be treated more as scientific problems, to be discussed dispassionately without the use of adjectives and the exercise of dialectics. It has been my experience, and, I believe, that of Mr. Roberts—because he was the first to suggest a small sub-committee, and often it became an even smaller sub-committee, that much more is gained by a little quiet conversation in which both sides speak frankly without playing to the gallery, and without tactics. I believe I can assure you that that is our spirit on this side of the room, and I believe the same view is held on the other side; and there will be no great industrial difficulties in New Zealand so long as each side approaches the other in that spirit. I have to thank you, sir, very heartily, for this side of the table, and, I am sure, for those on the other side also, for the way in which you have looked after our comfort during the Conference.

*Mr. Bloodworth:* Mr. Chairman, Mr. Prime Minister, and gentlemen, I feel somewhat embarrassed. It is the first time in my life that I have been called upon to second a toast to a Prime Minister. In doing so I would like to say that when this Conference was first mooted, and we arranged our team on this side, I was very very anxious that the team on the other side should be the strongest team possible. But when I scanned the papers from day to day, and saw the names of the delegates who were to represent the other side I frankly admit that sometimes I had a cold shiver down my back, because many of the names which appeared were known to me as those of men associated with ideas directly contrary to the ideas with which I have been so long associated, and I felt a little bit afraid of meeting the owners of those names. But since I have come to know them personally, though it is still a fact that some of their ideas are directly contrary to my own, I have come to know that they thoroughly believe their point of view, and are honourable gentlemen, every one of them, as sincere in their ideas as we are in ours; and in future I shall not associate with them the horrible things I used to attribute to them, but the pleasurable recollections of the time we have spent together at this Conference. This Conference, called by the Government, was a very important experiment, and I think we may say it has proved entirely successful. It has been to me, and, I am sure, to every one of us, an intensely interesting experience, and an exceedingly valuable educational experience. Although perhaps we have not arrived at finality in everything, we have at least indicated the road by which we think an advance may be made towards establishing industrial peace and prosperity on a thoroughly sound basis. We have narrowed down the issues to four, and I am sure, sir, that you will be pleased to know that on three of those issues we have arrived at unanimous findings; and I think we may, without feeling at all boastful, submit that that is a very suitable example for your honourable House to attempt to follow. If it could do that we might think more of it. For the rest, I will content myself by saying that I have great pleasure in seconding the toast to yourself and your colleagues for calling this Conference, to the Parliamentary Committee for so carefully arranging all the details, and to the Hon. Mr. Barr, Manager of the Conference, for the manner in which he has carried them out. I feel sure that this Conference has been a very very valuable education for most of us who have been privileged to take part in it.

The toast was drunk with musical honours.

*Right Hon. the Prime Minister:* Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, may I, on behalf of the Parliamentary Committee and myself, sincerely thank the speakers for their appreciative remarks and the Conference for the hearty manner in which it has pledged the toast. I can assure you that each and every one of my colleagues and of the Parliamentary Committee—representing, I think, every school of thought in Parliament—will appreciate the manner in which the delegates have responded to their efforts. You will recognize that the mere fact of Parliament's agreeing to the Conference represented by no means an easy achievement. There were various and very decided opinions as to whether there should be a Conference or not; and my colleagues on the Parliamentary Committee will remember the late nights and the many days we spent in the effort to bring together the different points of view represented here. But gradually, as the matter was recognized to be important, and it was realized how great were the advantages to be gained from getting together representatives of the various points of view in regard to important legislation affecting the industry and life of the country, it became evident, the more we discussed matters amongst ourselves, that such a Conference ought to be held. I think I am correct in making the statement that politics—party advantage, at any rate—was the last thing thought of in coming to that conclusion. It was the general consensus of opinion that in getting together representatives of the different sections in the industrial world, if that could