

17. And the Act might just as well be repealed so far as the Conciliation Boards are of any use to the workers?—I do not say that at all.

18. I am talking about the position as it is now, not as we should like it to be?—I do not say that any of the provisions concerning the Conciliation Boards should be repealed at all, with the exception of clause 60.

19. You said that the Conciliation Boards as at present constituted were practically useless?—Yes, they are practically useless under the present Act.

20. That being the case, would it not be better to have something in their place to do the work of conciliation?—No, not at all. We want the Government to restore the Conciliation Boards to their position of usefulness and to give some finality to their judgments. We have been asking for that at Conference after Conference.

21. If they had the power to conciliate, and the workers had the power to appoint members of their union to it if they thought fit, with the option of going before a permanent Board, would not that serve the purpose?—I have just pointed out the reason that there is too much intimidation going on, and in the Industrial Councils the side that could convince the Chairman would win. The superior education of the employers will result in the employers winning practically all the time.

22. Is it not a fact, in connection with the Bootmakers' Union, that four consecutive agreements have been fixed up voluntarily between representatives of the union and the employers, and that that also applies to a number of other awards in force?—It is perfectly true, but the bootmakers of Canterbury said they would use the Board every time, but it is no good, because if one employer gets up and says he will not agree the case is referred to the Court.

23. Are there not plenty of cases where, in the bigger unions, they would be able to supply the men?—Yes, but they object to the principle of the Industrial Councils. They stand to the Conciliation Boards.

24. The purpose is the same?—We hold that they are different, although the intention may be the same. The intention of the Minister may have been honest, as Mr. Young said.

25. *Mr. Poole.*] Do you think it is impossible under the Bill for the small unions to be able to carry on?—In a great number of instances.

26. And the matter is of vital importance?—Most vital importance.

27. *Mr. Arnold.*] When I had a little to do with arbitration cases it was the custom of those who were conducting the cases to subpoena some of the witnesses—although they might be quite willing to give evidence—so that they could say to their employers, "I am compelled to go to the Court, and when there I must tell the truth": is that the custom to-day?—In cases I conducted a month or two ago I subpoenaed several witnesses, and that was the argument the men said they would use to their employers if they objected to their appearance in the Court.

28. *Mr. Hardy.*] Who is usually the Chairman of the Board?—They are appointed by the Governor.

29. Does the Governor act wisely in appointing them?—In some instances we consider he does, in others we consider he does not.

30. Would you like to have the appointment, or the Governor?—I should like to see the Board itself appoint the Chairman.

31. Do you not think the Chairman should be a man who is neutral—who should be fair?—Certainly.

32. In your experience, have the Chairmen been fair?—I have not had much experience of Conciliation Board work—the Boards have been practically put out of operation by clause 60 of the Act.

33. Have you heard that they were fair?—I should say they were very impartial men.

34. You would not really condemn them all because some one might have been partial?—I have never said a word about the Conciliation Boards.

35. You said something about the side which could convince the Chairman would win: if a Chairman can be influenced, how can he be fair?—If I were in the chair, and an educated man sat on one side and an uneducated man sat on the other, and the educated man put the position to me so plainly that I could understand it and the other man put it to me in a way that I could not understand, it is ten chances to one that I should lean to the opinion of the man who made me understand.

36. You would rather judge by the statement of the educated man than by the evidence before you?—I would judge according to the evidence, certainly.

37. You would rather prefer a chairman or umpire that was leaning to your own side?—Oh, certainly. We want as much as we can get.

38. *The Chairman.*] Do you mean to say that, according to the experience you have had before the Arbitration Court as a representative, you find that in litigation the employers' representatives, with better education, business methods, their more accurate use of words, and keener perception of meanings, can intellectually and argumentatively surpass the average union representative, the average representative being from the union?—He would on the Industrial Council, but before the Courts we have our own representatives, and they, under the provisions of this Bill, would be out altogether.

39. That is not an answer to my question as to whether you consider the employers' representative can surpass the average unionist?—I should say he could surpass the average unionist.

40. Under this Bill the average unionist will have to be the representative?—Yes.

41. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] You gave some cases where men have been sacrificed through their connection with unions: that is under existing conditions?—Yes.

42. Are you going to stop that?—No, I do not say so; but the Industrial Councils will make it more general.