

are entirely ignorant of the conditions. Mr. Revall, in giving evidence here last year, mentioned one particular case. He explained that the Canterbury Woollen-workers' Union, which has its existence in Kaiapoi, had no membership outside of Kaiapoi. But a new firm started at Ashburton in the woollen industry, and the girls entered into the employment of this new firm entirely ignorant of the conditions which had been fought for and gained in connection with the Kaiapoi Woollen Company. As soon as the union discovered the terms under which the girls were working they made an immediate application for enforcement of the award. In that case, if you had not the limitation of three months, injustice might have been done to the girls, who were ignorant. In the other case, where the worker is in collusion with the employer for the purpose of defeating an award, we say that the employer should be liable for the full payment of the whole difference in excess of the three months into the Consolidated Fund. Clauses 50, 51, and 52 we agree with. Clause 53: We ask that that be deleted altogether. Clause 54 we approve of. Mr. Jackson will deal with clauses 55 and 56. Clause 57: With regard to the needs wage and exertion wage, we ask that they be deleted altogether, and, further, we ask that the system of premium bonus, which it implies, be made illegal. This is another one of the violations of the principles of trades-unionism. All the world over, the trade-unionists have fought against the classification of workers. Once classification is introduced it means speeding up, and consequent injustice. I have had some experience in connection with this system of premium bonus. I fought a case in connection with it down in Christchurch about four weeks ago. The Moulders' Union of Christchurch asked the Court to prohibit the using of this system in Booth and Macdonald's foundry in Christchurch. The system of premium bonus has been in operation in that foundry for two years, and it has caused a great deal of unpleasantness and jealousy amongst the workers in the foundry. There is a lot of bad feeling existing where it never existed before, and the reason for it is easily to be seen. The men are pitted one against another. Some men get jobs where they can go easily and earn big premiums, while other men get jobs where they have to slog and slave simply to turn out a standard day's work, and get no premium at all. That is a feature of the system which developed a great deal of unpleasantness amongst the workers in the shop. I might say that our own council dealt with this matter some time ago, and the Hon. Mr. Barr and one or two others dealt with Mr. Booth's position at the time. We pointed out in a circular which we issued to the unionists that this system, in our opinion, was absolutely and completely immoral, and in other countries of the world it has been one of the greatest factors in destroying the physique of both men and women. Under the present-time system of payment—and I just wish to explain this to show you how the premium bonus operates—a man is expected to do a certain day's work. If he cannot turn out that day's work, then he is considered an incompetent man, and is sent along to get a permit to work at lower rate than the minimum. If he turns out the amount of work the employer thinks he ought to turn out, and the employer wants him to turn out more, then the man has to work overtime, and for that overtime he is paid time-and-a-quarter rates for the first two hours and time and a half afterwards. Under the premium bonus it is entirely different. The employer goes to the man and says, "Here is your standard output," and he may reserve to himself the right to fix that output, and say that he will pay the minimum wage on that. If the man cannot turn out the work he is sent down to the union for a permit. He is deemed to be an incompetent man if he cannot turn it out. Then the employer can say to the man, "If you can turn out more than this we will pay you a premium of 50 per cent. on your excess work." That is to say, the employer says, "We will pay you 1s. rate for your ordinary standard output, and then if there is anything you can do in excess of that you will be paid at half the rate we pay you for the ordinary work." Take this as an illustration: Supposing a moulder works in Booth and Macdonald's foundry—because that is the foundry where it is in operation in Christchurch—and he works eight hours a day. His standard output is supposed to be eight boxes, for which he gets 8s. a day. This is only a suppositious case. He gets 1s. a box. Now, if that man is put on the premium-bonus system, and he is speeded up by the fact that all the other men are working under it, and he happens to turn out nine boxes, for the ninth box, instead of being paid 1s., he is paid 6d., and the employer gets the other 6d. So that what, under the time system, would be paid for at the rate of time and a quarter, which is deemed to be a fair thing by the Court, is now paid at half-rates. If the trades-unionist who gets paid 1s. for making one box at one period is only going to get 6d. for another box at another period, it is an injustice. If the employer wants to pay a good man more than another man, why cannot he do it? It is not the workers who are responsible for the dead-levelism we hear so much about, it is the employers. Again, the premium-bonus system has all the bad points of the piecework system about it, in that it might be used, and is used, to unduly speed the men up and force them to work above their physical capacity. But it is worse in this sense: that when a man is working under piecework he is being paid for the pieces he makes, and for every piece at the same rate, but under the premium-bonus system the more he makes the less he is paid. If I turn out nine boxes for 8s. 6d., I have to turn out eleven for 9s. 6d., and if twelve I am paid 10s., and no one can tell me that if I give all my superior skill I ought to be penalised for it. That is the premium-bonus system and the exertion wage. The unionists of this Dominion are not going to stand that for one thing. We may disagree about other principles of the Bill, but, if there is anything we are going to be unanimous upon it is this principle to introduce a needs wage and an exertion wage. We suggest, then, that the clauses be deleted altogether. I might say also in that connection, although some of the employers give you their word of honour that they will not do anything of the kind (they do not write it on paper or enter into an agreement with the union officials), there is a possibility that when a man has established his ability to turn out the nine boxes I spoke of where his standard output is eight, there may be a time come when the employer will say, "You have turned out nine boxes for so long: what is there against fixing the standard