

10. Do you think they would vote under such a scheme?—That is opening up a very big question.

11. What is your own opinion?—I think the resentment against it would be so great that the majority would vote against it.

12. *Mr. Okey.*] They would rather go on strike?—They would resent outside interference. Take the case of a section of workers being called on to work under conditions that they consider unfair or dangerous; they might suddenly, on their job, get together and talk over their grievances, and inside of five minutes they might come out; and such a matter might not be referred to our executive. I do not know that there is anything that will control that.

13. Then you might as well leave legislation alone?—Let me put this case: Men are, say, on shipboard or in a mine, and they are put in a position where life is at stake. There is no opportunity of putting the matter before the executive. They are ordered to take up a certain position at a minute's notice, and they have either to take up that position at the risk of their lives or decline to do so: that constitutes a strike.

14. *Hon. Mr. Massey.*] Did you notice in clause 141 the provision that the Registrar of Industrial Unions shall in each case conduct a secret ballot? Do you think there would be any objection on the part of unions to the Registrar, who is practically one of those conducting the ballot?—If it was conducted outside the union offices.

15. But if it was conducted in the union offices?—That might meet the objection of a good many who favour the secret ballot. But the question of the secret ballot is not one upon which the members of the unions are at all unanimous; but those who favour the secret ballot, I think, would raise no objection to the supervising officer being within the building, but they certainly would not allow their ballot-papers to be regulated in any manner outside their own building. There would be suspicion attaching to that to such an extent that they would always have their doubts about the result. If it is under their own control and in their own building it might remove—I do not say it would—but it might remove the objections that there are to this proposed system.

16. Still, you think there is not a general objection to the secret ballot?—I know that there is a lot of objection—on the part of a large number—to the secret ballot. They say a man should have the courage of his opinions and be prepared to stick to them. There are others who favour the secret ballot, perhaps because they are of a weaker nature and are afraid of open voting, and for that reason favour the secret ballot.

17. Do you think they should have the opportunity of expressing their opinion by secret ballot?—I think the only way you could arrive at that question satisfactorily before it is put on the statute-book would be by taking a plebiscite of the unions—at any rate, in one district. If, say, the whole of the unions were asked to vote on the question as to whether they approved of the secret ballot or not, you could get at a fair estimate of how they would be likely to view the question. There are so many who take up both sides that I for one would not like to say on which side there is a majority.

18. *Mr. Anderson.*] Supposing a secret ballot were taken, and supposing the secret ballot were against a strike—supposing, we will say, that three-fourths of the men were in favour of there not being a strike, then, of course, there would not be a strike. Do you think the other quarter of the union—that is, the men who are in favour of a strike—would endeavour to intimidate the balance of the members?—I cannot conceive such a position as that possible where one man would attempt to intimidate three or four—that the fourth section would attempt to intimidate the three-fourths. As a rule all colonists are prepared to abide by the result of the majority, but each case must for all that be taken entirely upon its merits. It might happen that the minority might be right and the majority might be wrong, or it might happen that the lives or the conditions of the majority were not at stake, and the majority might perhaps fail to see the position as it is seen by the minority.

19. Do I understand that in your opinion they would not try to intimidate?—I do not think there would be a question of intimidation.

20. *Mr. Hindmarsh.*] Mr. Maddison wants to be asked this question: What leads unions to remain outside the Act and adopt the strike weapon instead?—Whilst its jurisdiction is equity and good conscience, for many years past, at any rate, the administration of the Act has been under common law entirely. As an illustration of this the Carpenters' Union came into Court two years ago asking for an award. The Union Steamship Company, which is a large employer, came into Court and asked that they be excepted from the award, and their application was granted. You cannot say that that was acting in equity. That is an example of what is going on. Thus the respect of the workers for the Arbitration Court has become lessened, and therefore in some instances they prefer the strike weapon.

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ELIJAH JOHN CAREY examined. (No. 2.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What position do you hold, Mr. Carey?—I represent the Wellington Trades and Labour Council. The Council has decided, through myself and its other witnesses, to oppose this Section VI of the Bill. And I would just like to say that those unions in affiliation with the Council, which I am representing, are not covered by this section of the Bill. As is obvious, this section is applicable to unions not registered under the Act, and they probably are more affected than are those unions like the one I represent and those affiliated with the Council, who stand by the system of compulsory arbitration as the best method for the settlement of industrial disputes. I am very glad to hear that the Committee has decided to drop the remainder of the Bill. And for the Council, and, I believe, for the whole of organized labour