and fight it out between themselves one side either wins or loses, and naturally the side that wins has the satisfaction of getting the advantage, but very often it is only a temporary advantage, and the public themselves step in later, because they have been denied that right at the time the crisis was on, and rectify matters.

36. You think it is advisable in the interests of the community that Parliament should step in and insist upon a reasonable conference?—I think that in this country, at all events, the system ought to be such and its administration such as would encourage rather than drive away unions from coming under it.

37. In your opinion the Australian method you have just mentioned would "fill the bill"?—Yes, I believe if we had a Court really bent on inquiring into industrial disputes and the conditions of the workers, instead of, as it does, giving a union with a big case only a few minutes' time to put its case because the Court has to get away to another place—if we had a Court patiently inquiring all the time into the best methods of settling disputes, and a Court that would give encouragement to the workers to have confidence in its judgments, the workers of their own volition would run along to it.

38. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] The provisions of the Arbitration Court of Australia are similar in some respects to the provisions in respect to the Conciliation Commissioners held for the purpose of settling with unions under the Arbitration Court?—Yes.

39. But there is no machinery of any sort that will settle a dispute for any union outside the Arbitration Court?—No.

40. And you are advocating that the necessary machinery ought to be set up by the Government for the purpose of dealing not with this strike alone but in all future cases for any union not registered under the Arbitration Act?—I think that the Judge or President of the Court should have the power to intervene at the inception of a dispute, or where a dispute of any magnitude in his opinion is likely to occur, and make an order for a compulsory conference between the parties.

41. That means providing the necessary machinery?—Yes.

42. At present there is no law to deal with those who do not take advantage of the Act?—That is so.

43. Bringing both branches under the Act?—Yes, I think that in a country like this the public should, through its constituted authority, say, "Those shall be the terms of settlement, and we are not going to have the country put to trouble like this."

In general answer to questions of members of the Committee I submit the following statement as to my views on the matter of improvement of the existing Act:—

It is not held by the Trades Councils that the Arbitration Act can be so perfected as to make it a "cure-all" for existing social injustice. The principle of "the settlement of industrial disputes on the lines of legally established agreements and awards" is only one of the many "methods" to that end suggested in the labour platform. All those planks are put forward by labour as reforms towards promoting and creating collective ownership and the more equal distribution of wealth, but it is not even held that the legislative enactments of all the planks will result in a complete "cure-all." It happens, because of the bread-and-butter aspect of the question, that the arbitration system excites more direct interest amongst unionists than any one of the other planks of the Labour party platform. It happens, too, that in recent years, because of discontent with the administration of the Arbitration Act as it now stands, that the question "Strikes *v.* the Arbitration Court" is the question of moment in trades-union circles. "Not with the system but with the administration of the Act by the Court" is the plaint of disaffected unions. The awards and judgments of the Court are not always in keeping with labour's idea as to what are fair and reasonable conditions of settlement in the several disputes adjudicated upon. Worse, it is confidently claimed by labour that the judgments are oftentimes not even in keeping with the public mind or the common-sense of fair play on questions of industrial justice.

Economists may argue that whatever the benefits secured by use of the system they are immediately counteracted by rise in prices because of monopoly control of land and industry. That is not the point. The remedy for that situation lies in the enactment of other more direct legislation—on the lines of the party platform we hold—not alone on the basic alteration of the Arbitration Act. The point is to ensure by an altered Arbitration Act that the system shall be more sympathetically applied—that the Act shall be administered in its true spirit, so as to really secure the benefits intended by it. Rises in prices and increased cost of living occur in countries where the system has not even been given a trial. Those rises are not due to the operation of the Act. The workers in New Zealand would be worse off and more hardly pressed by the increased cost of living were it not for the operation of the Act, bad as always has been its administration here. Properly administered the system would make for the retention of those benefits and the upkeep of the standard of comfort attained in defiance of monopoly effort to screw out by other methods the advantages provided in the awards under the system. As well argue that the whole trades-union effort is of no avail because of the power of private trusts and combines to force up prices to the point where people will still pay for the article rather than go without; or as well contend that a municipal tram should not be built to a suburb because of the absence of legislation to prevent the private appropriation of increment values and the consequent increase of house-rent following the tram to the suburb.

Mastery of the public will: Primarily the system sets out to avoid the waste and suffering of strikes by the early settlement of the dispute in accordance with public judgment on the matters in dispute. The trouble has all along been that often the Court's judgment has been inconsistent with the public judgment. The effective remedy is to make sure that in all settlements the judgment shall be in accord with the public will and mind on the matters over which the dispute results. Because after all, in all great questions, and especialy in countries enjoy-