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THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND THE STRIKE OF 1913 IN NEW ZEALAND.

I. *Labour in Politics.*

NEW ZEALAND has recently witnessed an attempt at a general strike which should be of interest to students who desire to see modern labour theories put into practice. Before entering into a detailed account of the revolt of a section of the workers of New Zealand, we shall give an outline of the most important changes in the condition of labour during the last thirty years, so that readers may be in a better position to grasp the course and the significance of events during the strike.

In common with many countries, New Zealand was in a state of industrial depression during the period 1879-95. The reckless expenditure of the 'seventies intensified the economic conditions which were being established by general causes: times were hard for all, especially for the workers. From August to November, 1890, there occurred the great maritime strike—a strike which began in Australia and soon spread to New Zealand.¹ At the general election of December, 1890, when the conservative government was defeated and a liberal government was returned, the labour vote was in evidence. The English dockers' strike had given a fillip to colonial trade unionism. The failure of the Australasian maritime strike sent the New Zealand trade unionists to the ballot-box with the object of redressing the balance by political means; but this was not the sole cause of their taking to politics. For some time politicians of both the established parties had been aware that labour organisations were coming into the field. The question was what they would do.

¹ See the *ECONOMIC JOURNAL*, vol. i, pp. 710-20, and vol. ii, pp. 425-41.

In Ballance and his colleagues of 1890, the unionists found a well-organised political party from which they had much to expect. With it they accordingly threw in their lot, and they made no attempt to form a distinct labour group. Under this liberal-labour government the general condition of the workers began gradually to improve, but not altogether, nor perhaps chiefly, through political action. In the early 'nineties the labour movement made little headway; but during Seddon's premiership, 1893 to 1906, much legislation beneficial to the workers was passed, and the working conditions of the New Zealand unionists were so raised that they became at least as good as those of any other civilised country. It must be borne in mind, however, that the improvement in the conditions of labour was due to economic rather than to political causes; the latter were secondary and conditional rather than originating factors. In 1882 the introduction of the frozen meat industry promised to revolutionise both agriculture and grazing, and the promise was gradually fulfilled. The demand from the British markets for the new commodity grew apace, and, whereas in 1882 the value of this export was £19,339, by 1890 it had exceeded £1,000,000. Refrigeration has undoubtedly done more for the small farmer than all the legislation of the last twenty years put together; and the well-being of the farmer is reflected in that of all workers. Psychological causes were also at work, for the world-wide feeling of hopefulness and confidence engendered during the middle 'nineties swept over New Zealand also. The dawn of the twentieth century revealed the Dominion in the enjoyment of industrial progress and peace.

The liberal government, which had carried all elections since 1890, did not move fast enough for the more radical class of workers, and in 1904 an Independent Political Labour League was formed. This new party made a poor showing at the 1905 polls. None of its twelve candidates was successful; in all they secured only 4,000 votes. At the 1908 elections the party was viewed a little more favourably. One candidate was successful, and the votes cast for labour were increased to 25,000. The Political Labour League died a natural death; but the party spirit did not diminish. In 1910 fresh energy was thrown into the labour movement, and it was again decided to contest the next election independently. Four candidates proved to be successful; 50,000 votes were given in favour of the party. In 1911, the year of the general election, the proposal was made that a party should be formed to include all labour *political* organisations.

For some years the Federation of Labour, a somewhat revolutionary body composed mostly of miners and waterside workers, had been in existence; but it was almost wholly a labour *industrial* organisation. Its watchword was the "abolition of the wage system." By organising industrially, it hoped to form the structure of the new society within the shell of the old. It used the strike for purposes of aggression and of defence. The preamble to its constitution, which was almost the same as that of the Industrial Workers of the World, began—"the working class and the employing class have nothing in common." The chief policy planks of the Federation were:—

1. "To secure employment of our members in preference to non-unionists; to maintain a spirit of fraternal sympathy with the workers of this and other countries by assisting them when necessary."

2. "To use our united efforts to discourage the contract labour and bonus systems, and as soon as possible to abolish these, believing the said systems to be detrimental to the best interests of organised labour."

3. "To enable and provide for the Federation to own, publish, and control a newspaper or newspapers."

4. "To ensure to members who are proved to have been unjustly treated the support of the Federation."

At the Unity Conference at Easter, 1912, the United Labour Party was definitely formed. Provision was made for the combination in this of all trade unions, trades councils, socialistic federations, &c. Amongst the objects of this new body were:—

1. To consolidate the political power of the workers in their own behalf, and to use their whole power (both political and economic) in negotiations with employers, in the courts, in municipal, county, and Parliamentary bodies, in international relations, and (if need be) in industrial revolt.

2. To use the fruits of every partial victory, to strengthen and continue this work until the power to oppress and exploit any of the workers, either by private monopolies controlling the Government, or through the private monopoly ownership and control of industry, shall utterly disappear, and there shall be secured for all the people power to purchase with their income the total products of their labour—until, in short, the means of production, distribution, and exchange (in so far as they constitute in private hands instruments of oppression and exploitation) shall be socially owned and operated without profit and for the common good of all.

This party strove to settle industrial disputes chiefly by methods of conciliation and arbitration. It used the strike only as a means of defence and as a last resort. The Federation of Labour refused to recognise the United Labour Party, with the result that much bitterness arose between the two rival organisations.

II. *Trade Unions and the Law.*

Before the next step can be properly appreciated, we must glance at two Acts in operation in New Zealand for the organisation of labour and the regulation of labour disputes—the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act and the Trade-Unions Act. The maritime strike of 1890 so impressed the general public that they were prepared to listen to suggestions for the prevention of such evils. The workers, defeated in the great struggle, suggested compulsory arbitration, in the hope that the Government would do for them what they were unable to do for themselves. Under the guidance of Mr. W. Pember Reeves, a compulsory arbitration law was placed on the statute book in 1894. In the title and preamble, the Act was described as an Act to encourage the formation of industrial unions and associations, and to facilitate the settlement of industrial disputes by conciliation and arbitration. Mr. Reeves, in discussing the Act later, said: "What the Act was primarily passed to do was to put an end to the larger and more dangerous class of strikes and lock-outs. The second object of the Act's framer was to set up tribunals to regulate the conditions of labour." At the time of its passing, the Act was regarded as a piece of experimental legislation, and many amendments have been made to it, as changing conditions have demanded. In 1908 the existing enactments were consolidated into the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, which has been amended in 1908, 1910, 1911, and 1913. The Act makes provision for, and states the conditions to be regarded in the registration of, industrial unions and associations. The number of persons necessary to register an industrial association must not be fewer than three in the case of employers, and fifteen in the case of workers. Registration enables a union or association: (1) To enter into and file an industrial agreement, specifying the conditions of employment agreed upon; and (2) in the event of failure to arrive at an industrial agreement, to bring an industrial dispute before a Council of Conciliation set up for the purpose, and, if necessary, before the Court of Arbitration.

After dividing the Dominion into eight industrial districts, the Act provides for the appointment of not more than four Conciliation Commissioners to hold office for three years; three have been appointed, and each of the industrial districts is placed under the jurisdiction of one of them. Councils of Conciliation are set up for each dispute as it arises. The originating union, association, or employer makes application to the Commissioner, stating the nature of the dispute and the name of the respondents, and recommending one, two, or three assessors to act as representatives on the Council. The Commissioner notifies the respondents, and calls upon them to recommend an equal number of assessors to represent them. The assessors must, except in special cases at the discretion of the Commissioner, have been engaged in the industry in question.

Disputes may be taken to the Arbitration Court direct or after failure to come to an agreement in the Conciliation Council. The Court of Arbitration is a court for the whole Dominion. It consists of three members: a judge of the court, who has the status of a judge of the Supreme Court of the Dominion; an assessor chosen by the industrial unions of the employers; and an assessor recommended by the industrial unions of the workers. They are all appointed by the Governor, and hold office for three years. The assessors are naturally inclined to be partisan in their decisions, so that the real power is in the hands of the judge. The awards of the Arbitration Court are binding on the individual employer and worker as well as on the respective unions, and heavy fines may be inflicted for the breach of an award. It follows, then, that, so long as a union is registered under this Act, its right to strike is forfeited; but, on giving the requisite notice, a union can cancel its registration.

It is worth noting that, in the early days of its operation, the Arbitration Act was bitterly opposed by the employers. Owing to the disclosures of the Sweating Commission of 1890, it was generally expected that labour must be benefited by the new piece of legislation. For years the employers were so penalised that the decisions of the Boards and of the Courts appeared to be all one-sided. The unions revelled in the discomfiture to capital. It must be remembered, however, that the rise in wages was not due solely to the Act, because from about 1895 a wave of prosperity began to spread over all the world.

Dr. McIlraith's index numbers (base period 1890-99=100) show that the general level of prices in New Zealand rose from 93 in 1895 to 101 in 1900, and fell to 98 in 1905; rose to 103 in

1910, and to 111 in 1912. Mr. Sauerbeck's index numbers for the same years are 62, 75, 72, 78, and 85.

The hostility of the employers, however, gradually diminished, owing chiefly to the firm and impartial administration of the Act by the Court, to the unscrupulous employers being made to employ labour on the same conditions as the better class of employers, to the awards usually freeing them from fear of labour unrest for a definite period, thus enabling them to enter into contracts with a greater degree of confidence, and to the continued upward movement of the level of general prices. The principle of industrial arbitration appeared to have taken deep root, although it was not applied to the chief industries of the country. When from 1906 the unions found that the Act could no longer be employed as an instrument for getting a marked increase in wages, because the Court was of the opinion that the remuneration to workers was as high as the economic conditions of the time would allow, they began to rebel against it. From 1894 to 1905 there were no strikes of any consequence, but between 1905 and March 31st, 1913, there were no fewer than ninety-eight. Of these, thirty-five came within, and sixty-three without, the scope of the Act. The more radical among the workers now regard the Arbitration Act as an instrument of capitalism in keeping the working class in subjection; they would abolish the Act, and inaugurate a period of industrial warfare as a prelude to the social revolution, which aims at overthrowing the capitalist system, and at bringing about a co-operative commonwealth, based upon industrial democracy.

Unions may, if they so prefer, register under the Trade-Unions Act, 1908, instead of under the Arbitration Act. The former Act, after reciting that trade-unions are not criminal and are not unlawful by reason merely that they are in restraint of trade, states that none of its provisions will enable any court to entertain any legal proceedings, instituted with the object of directly enforcing or recovering damages for the breach of any agreement between members of a trade union as such, concerning the conditions on which any members for the time being shall or shall not sell their goods, transact business, employ or be employed. It further provides that this Act shall not affect any agreement between an employer and those employed by him as to such employment. It should be noted, however, that the Act cannot be deemed to constitute such agreements as the above "unlawful"; all agreements are subject to the ordinary law of contract and the common law. The Trade-Unions Act, therefore, does

not provide for the prosecution of any union registered under it for the violation of an agreement by means of a strike or lock-out. For this reason, the ultra-radical unions have preferred this Act to the Arbitration Act. A table in the *Evening Post* (Wellington) of November 21st, 1913, contains the following estimate of the number of workers registered :—

	Under I. C. and A. Act.	Under T. U. Act.	Total.
Number of Unions.....	322	24	346
Membership.....	60,622	11,000	71,622

The total membership of unions registered under the Arbitration Act on March 31st, 1913, was :—Industrial, 60,622; employers', 4,262—in all representing about 6 per cent. of the population. If we add those dependent upon members of unions after allowing for the large proportion of single male and female workers, 10 per cent. would be a liberal estimate of the total population directly concerned in securing arbitration awards, so that 90 per cent. of the people are affected by such awards without representation other than that afforded by the judge of the Court. The Report of the Commission on the Cost of Living in New Zealand, 1912, in commenting on this, says : "This appears to be a serious weakness and calls for adjustment, as there is always the danger of mutual agreements being entered into between the two parties concerned, imposing unjust increases in the cost of living, not only to the 90 per cent. of the people who are not represented, but to all members of unions who are not parties to a particular dispute."

III. *The Present Labour Party.*

Towards the end of 1912 the miners at Waihi, Auckland, came out on strike, and all efforts to come to an agreement under the Arbitration Act were unavailing. The owners then introduced free labour; these new labourers formed a new union, registered themselves under the Arbitration Act, and under the protection of the law ousted the old union. A similar occurrence took place at Timaru, Canterbury, in connection with a local wharfsiders' strike. The use of the Act for the legal establishment of "blackleg" unions caused great indignation among the other unions, and wove a bond of sympathy between the two rival labour organisations. The Federation of Labour and the United Labour Party saw that both their interests lay in the one direction. The Federation of Labour sent out an invitation to a united conference, which was held in January, 1913. At this,

the basis of a new combined organisation was laid down, and in July the representatives of the two parties met for union. The union was effected, but only partially. The more moderate unions refused to recognise the new party, owing to its extreme tendencies, and the United Labour Party, though diminished in numbers, continued to exist. The new party was divided into two branches: the "United Federation of Labour" for industrial purposes; and the "Social Democratic Party" for political action. The United Labour Party had been staunch supporters of the Arbitration Act, and the Federation of Labour had been opposed to it: the newly-created United Federation of Labour adopted a compromise, in that registration or otherwise was left entirely in the hands of the particular union concerned. The new organisation is directly opposed to the formation of any "bogus" union—that is, a new union formed during a strike and registered under the Arbitration Act and superseding an old union, registered under the Trade-Unions Act. The objects of the United Federation of Labour were a combination of those of its two constituents (summarised above).

The chief instrument in the hands of the Federation for the attainment of these ends is the strike. The Constitution provides that unions of actual wage-workers shall be brought together under one of ten national departments. For example, the transportation department includes railway servants, waterside workers, seamen, tramway workers, drivers, cab and taxi-cab drivers, freight handlers, &c. The Federation requires the following rules to be observed in regard to strikes:—

"No National Industrial Department shall have the power to strike without first seeking the co-operation of the National Executive in an effort to secure a settlement.

"No union shall involve a local industrial department (that is, a department composed of all the affiliated unions in any given industry in a prescribed locality) in any strike without first placing the matter unreservedly in the hands of the local industrial department. No local industrial department shall involve its National Department in any strike without first placing the matter unreservedly in the hands of its National Department; and no National Industrial Department shall involve the United Federation of Labour in any strike without placing the matter unreservedly in the hands of the National Executive, the decision in each case to be final.

"The United Federation of Labour will employ the strike weapon, local, general, or national, whenever the circumstances

demand such action. In the event of a lock-out or authorised strike, the full strength of the United Federation of Labour shall be at the call of the National Executive in support of the section affected."

IV. *The Strike of the Wellington Shipwrights.*

Although the Wellington¹ shipwrights' dispute is not the chief cause of the recent attempted general strike organised by the United Federation of Labour, it was the first event in the chain leading up to it. The Wellington shipwrights, thirty-six in number, by reason of the fact that their employment was for many years of a casual character, had been in receipt of the highest rate of wages paid to shipwrights in New Zealand. They received 1s. 6d. per hour for ordinary time, while those in Auckland received only 1s. 4½d. The payment to the Wellington shipwrights of 1s. 6d. per hour has continued up to the present, although their employment is of a much more permanent character than it was formerly. Up to the time when the Union Steam Ship Company transferred its workshops staff from Victoria Street (Wellington) to their new site at Evans Bay, a distance of about two miles, it had been customary to provide a conveyance, or to pay travelling time to the shipwrights that were detailed to proceed from Wellington city to perform work at the patent slip at Evans Bay. On the completion of the U.S.S. Co.'s new workshops at Evans Bay, however, these became the place of business of the Company so far as its workshops staff was concerned, and the latter was notified accordingly that, for the future, the new workshops at Evans Bay would be regarded as the place of engagement, thus bringing the Company into line with other large manufacturing interests, whose premises are situated beyond the confines of the city proper, and who neither pay travelling time nor provide conveyance for their workers, though of course the location of the work is a factor in fixing the rate of wages. On March 19th, the Wellington shipwrights' union wrote objecting to this arrangement, and demanding payment for the time occupied in going to and from the work at the patent slip and Miramar. The Company, in its reply on April 9th, admitted

1

	New Zealand.	Auckland.	Wellington.	Christchurch.	Dunedin.
Population (1911 census)...	1,008,468	102,676	70,729	80,193	64,237
Exports } Year ending	£21,511,626	£3,381,938	£4,692,428	£2,904,148	£1,595,176
Imports } March 31st, 1913	£20,576,579	£6,398,533	£5,390,423	£3,174,571	£2,817,047

that the men were entitled to some extra remuneration for time lost in travelling; but the parties could come to no satisfactory agreement as to the amount. Owing to the failure of the negotiations, the shipwrights on May 1st cancelled the registration of their union under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, and joined the Waterside Workers' Union.

The Waterside Workers' Union, which was then a branch of the Federation of Labour, and subsequently became affiliated to the United Federation of Labour, was bound by an agreement with the steamship companies of New Zealand. In January, 1912, representatives of the companies had met representatives of the watersiders in conference, and, after long deliberation, gave a marked increase in wages. An agreement was entered into and was to be binding till January 31st, 1914. Shortly afterwards a marked increase in wages to seamen followed. How much these increases amounted to, or how far they were "passed on" to the public, has never been made known. At the time of the agreement, the chief source of comfort to the general public was a fidelity clause, which was intended to prevent work at the wharves from being held up as long as the agreement lasted. The clause in question, clause 28 of the agreement, reads as follows :—

"The essence of this agreement being that the work of the employers shall always proceed in the customary manner, and shall not on any account whatsoever be impeded, it is agreed that if any dispute or difference shall arise between the parties bound by this agreement, or any of them, whether as to its construction or meaning, or as to any other matter whatever arising out of, or connected therewith, every such dispute or difference, as the same shall arise, shall be referred to a committee to be composed of three representatives of the union at the port concerned and three representatives of the employers for their decision. The decision of the majority of the committee shall be binding, and if no decision is arrived at, the committee shall submit the point in dispute to some independent person to be chosen by it, and if his decision is not acceptable to both parties, then the matter shall be referred for further negotiation to the New Zealand Federation of Labour and the employer or employers concerned."

On July 31st, 1913, the Waterside Workers' Union demanded for the shipwrights higher wages, travelling allowance, and other concessions, which would afford a much greater emolument to the men. The employers, however, refused to treat with this union, on the grounds that the agreement stated specifically that

it was in respect only of the "wages and conditions of employment of wharf labour," in which category skilled trades could not be included. Negotiations, then, were in progress between the shipwrights and the employers from March 19th till October 18th, the date of the outbreak of the strike. On October 17th the employers replied briefly that they were unable to entertain the claims, and, at the same time, informed the Waterside Workers' Union that, in the event of the intimation contained in their letter of August 19th that they would "stand by the shipwrights in the event of trouble arising" being carried into effect, and that if any stoppage or interference with the work of the employers resulted therefrom, such action would be regarded as a flagrant breach of clause 28 of the agreement. The following day the shipwrights came out on strike.

V. *The Sympathetic Strike.*

On Monday, October 20th, at a mass meeting of the Waterside Workers' Union it was decided to call a "stop-work" meeting at 8 a.m. on the next Wednesday to consider: (a) The shipwrights' grievances and claims; (b) travelling time for shipworkers at Evans Bay; and (c) such action as may be deemed necessary.

At this meeting it was decided to put the dispute in the hands of the United Federation of Labour, along with the necessary officials of the shipwrights and the president of the Waterside Workers' Union, with a view to the settlement of the dispute. When at 10 a.m. those who had attended the meeting returned to commence work again, they found that other union men had been put on in their places. The employers were quite willing to allow the stop-workers to come back to work, but as they refused to put them in the places they had occupied before the meeting, the watersiders regarded the action as a lock-out on the part of the employers. A meeting attended by fifteen hundred workers was again held, and a resolution was passed to the effect that no work should be accepted until all those who had stopped work had been reinstated. The shipping companies refused to do this, and declared the agreement to be broken. Much discussion has been aroused by this declaration. The employers maintained that the workers, in breaking the continuity of the day's work, had committed a breach of clause 28 of the agreement, and that consequently the agreement was no longer existent.

The workers, on the other hand, claimed that the employers broke the agreement when they refused to pay travelling allow-

ance; and that they broke it again when they refused to recognise the Waterside Workers' Union in the shipwrights' dispute. The workers admitted that the holding of the "stop-work" meeting was a violation of the agreement; but they sought to justify their action by the fact that the working of the ships is continued throughout the twenty-four hours, and it is only at the change of shifts that all the men can be called together. Although they recognised that this was the first meeting of its kind in Wellington, nevertheless "stop-work" meetings had been held in Auckland and Lyttelton since the coming into operation of the agreement, and these might be regarded as precedents.

The strike or lock-out, according to the view taken, of the sixteen hundred Wellington waterside workers commenced on October 22nd, 1913. The point at issue was no longer the grievance of the shipwrights. That had become merely the incident which culminated in the larger strike. The actual cause of the strike at this juncture was the breach of agreement that took place on the occasion of the "stop-work" meeting. On the 23rd the wharves were picketed; some free labourers and permanent employees of the Harbour Board worked the ships, and efforts were made to form a new Waterside Workers' Union under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. On the 24th the working of the ships by free labour caused some of the strikers and their sympathisers to resort to violence. At a conference of both parties concerned, the employers proposed that work should be resumed on the old conditions. They promised that there should be no victimisation, but declined to recognise the former agreement, because it had been broken by the unionists, and there was no guarantee it would be kept in the future. The workers rejected these proposals on the following day, whereupon the employers further offered to enter into an agreement under the Arbitration Act, on the basis of the wages then paid, if the men would resume work and form a fresh organisation. On the 26th more acts of violence were committed. It was now felt by the Government that the police force was not sufficiently numerous to maintain order, and the Commissioner of Police decided to enrol special constables. Labour Day, the 27th, was regarded as a general holiday. The burning question on Tuesday, the 28th, was whether the strikers would allow the transshipment of the North Island horses entered for the New Zealand Cup Race Meeting at Christchurch. At a meeting of fifteen hundred strikers called for the purpose, it was eventually decided to allow the horses to proceed.

In the evening representatives of the employers and employees met in conference under the presidency of the Prime Minister, the Hon. W. F. Massey. The employers submitted proposals for the settlement of the dispute on the lines of their offers of October 24th and 25th. In addition, the Prime Minister suggested that Sir Joshua Williams, an eminent judge of the Supreme Court, should be asked to arbitrate.

The representatives of the workers, however, asked for an unconditional reinstatement of the late agreement. The employers would not accept this suggestion, as there was no guarantee given beyond a verbal statement by the representative of the union that the agreement would be carried out in its entirety. The other proposals proved equally unacceptable.

The conference was, therefore, unsuccessful. Up to this point neither the United Federation of Labour nor the Employers' Federation had taken any official part in the negotiations. The dispute so far had been between the Wellington Waterside Workers' Union and the Shipping Companies, whose proposals involved more than the resumption of work under the old agreement. At this juncture the local union gave place to the United Federation of Labour and the shipping companies to the Employers' Federation. On Wednesday, October 29th, the trouble began to spread; for on that day the Auckland and Westport watersiders came out in sympathy. On Thursday the appearance in the Wellington streets of the newly sworn-in special constables was the signal for some further rioting by the strikers and their friends. A strike of all the watersiders in the Dominion was now ordered, and the Lyttelton men followed the course of their Auckland comrades. On Friday more "specials" arrived in Wellington, and the city began to assume a military appearance. The Otago waterside-workers and the miners in the State coal-mines responded to the call for a sympathetic strike. Shipping was now at a standstill in the four chief New Zealand ports.¹

November was ushered in at Wellington by the parading of the Permanent Force armed with rifles, bayonets, and a machine gun. On Sunday, November 21st, delegates from the United Federation of Labour waited on the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, Sir Joseph Ward, to urge the calling together of another conference. They said they would accept the extension of the old Dominion agreement over a certain period

¹ The chief New Zealand ports are: Wellington, Auckland, Lyttelton (port of Christchurch), Dunedin, and Port Chalmers, Napier, The Bluff, Timaru, Gisborne, and Westport and Greymouth for coal.

with a penalty for stoppage of work. As this proposal made by the United Federation of Labour was practically the same as a previous proposal which had been made to the Waterside-Workers' Union by the shipping companies, and had been rejected by that body because it had no authority to accept it, the prospects of settlement were considered hopeful. The conference commenced the following day, when the Prime Minister presided over seven representatives of the employers and seven representatives of the United Federation of Labour. The employers insisted on the registration under the Act of any agreement arrived at. The labour representatives refused to be bound by this condition, declaring that they could not guarantee registration, and that the feeling of the waterside workers was strongly against such action. The conference was, therefore, futile. The principle at stake between the parties had now become whether or not there should be compulsory registration under the Act. "Starvation or Arbitration" was the phrase in which the federationists described the issue placed before them by the employers.

After the conference the employers issued a manifesto, in which they stated their refusal to deal with any organisation not registered under the Act, and called on free labour to work cargo at the wharves. The Prime Minister announced that the necessary protection would be afforded to persons "lawfully carrying on their business." Meanwhile, the miners on the West Coast came out in sympathy, and other unions began to make threats of following their example. On Wednesday, November 5th, a thousand "specials" riding to protect the shipping of racehorses at Wellington, were assailed by a multitude of strikers and strike sympathisers, and many skirmishes took place, the chief weapons being batons on the one side and road metal on the other.

Sir Joseph Ward now stated in a letter to the Prime Minister that it was time Parliament should interfere in the dispute in the interests of the country. The Hon. W. F. Massey replied that the Cabinet was considering the advisableness of introducing special legislation. On Thursday the Wellington "free labourers" formed themselves into a union and registered under the Act. The United Federation of Labour called out the colliers of the Dominion; but by this time almost the whole of them had come out on strike in sympathy.

The attitude of the men's strike committee now was that it would have nothing to do with the Arbitration Act, but would be quite willing to accept legislation empowering an agreement by Stipendiary Magistrate's Court proceedings. A conciliatory spirit

now pervaded both parties and an early settlement was hoped for. The Conciliation Commissioner of the Wellington district urged on both parties that the watersiders' agreement should be made national for a term of years, that it should be filed in the Arbitration Court, utilising the machinery of the Arbitration Act for its enforcement, without the necessity for registration or going before the Court for variation of agreement. The Government approved this, and promised the necessary legislation. None of these schemes was acceptable to both parties.

On Saturday the "specials" took possession of the waterfront at Auckland, and this was the signal for what was practically a general strike in that city. It has been estimated that six thousand men ceased work there; the city hotels were closed; the trams stopped running on account of the shortage of coal; and many business places were temporarily closed.

VI. *The Attempted General Strike.*

On that day terms of peace, proposed by the Waterside Workers as the basis of another conference, had been rejected by the Wellington Citizens' Defence Committee, which insisted upon the registration of unions under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. This rejection caused the United Federation of Labour to resort to retaliatory measures. On Monday, 10th November, the order for a general strike was despatched to all unions in Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin. It read: "In view of the gigantic conspiracy to smash organised labour, and the life and death struggle throughout New Zealand in order to preserve unionism against armed blacklegism, we call upon your union to make it a common cause, by refusing to work till the armed scabs leave the city. Auckland is magnificently solid. Will you follow? Labour's defeat means Labour's annihilation."

Moderate labour leaders did not approve the action of the Federation. One of these went so far as to say that the Federation leaders were fighting for their lives, and were using the unions as pawns in the game. The Wellington Citizens' Defence Committee issued a statement declaring no surrender and no treaty with the Federation. The New Zealand Farmers' Union announced that the farmers would see the strike through at any cost. Fourteen unions consisting of nearly 10,000 members were already out at Auckland, so that a state of general strike existed in that city. The Strike Committee at Christchurch replied that it would be a calamity to call a general strike there; the order

should be given only when special constables and "scab" labour were brought in. The Dunedin unions were lukewarm. Altogether four unions out of fifty-three responded to the appeal.

The industrial trouble took another turn on Tuesday, 11th November, when four prominent labour leaders were arrested on charges of having used language calculated to cause a breach of the peace. Another attempt was made to induce the parties to consider proposals for a settlement; but the employers refused to recognise the United Federation of Labour, and the deadlock continued. A warm debate on the situation took place in Parliament during which the Leader of the Opposition urged that special legislation should be introduced to end the strike. He suggested that a short bill, providing that no strike or lock-out should be made without a secret ballot conducted by an outside tribunal, with scrutineers selected by the union, whether of employers or employees, should be introduced by the Government; the standing orders should be suspended, and members asked to put it through in one session. The Wellington Waterside Workers' Union should then take a ballot amongst its members. The Prime Minister, however, was not so optimistic about the effectiveness of legislation, and declined the proposal. He said that no legislation in the world would make men work if they did not want to work, and none would compel employers to employ men if they did not want to employ those men.

Except for the arrest of two more leaders on charges of sedition, Wednesday was an uneventful day. By Thursday, matters had become quieter, and there were signs of the strike weakening. The Nelson farmers had already opened their port. Goods were now carted from the wharves through the city of Wellington without disorder. The drivers began to return to work. The shearers decided not to go out. Some unions at Auckland resumed work. From this city a petition was sent to the Prime Minister by three hundred shopkeepers and business men, asking him to bring pressure on the Employers' Association and "not to allow their stubbornness to ruin our trade." They stated that business in Auckland was paralysed. It was reported on Friday that the membership of the new Wellington Watersiders' Union had increased to nearly six hundred, and that twenty-two ships were being worked there. The large forces of special constables sworn in at Wellington and Auckland to preserve order and to enable the shipping companies and merchants to proceed with their work, now numbered over 3,000 men, and were costing the country more than £4,000 a day." The National Executive

of the United Labour Party issued a manifesto strongly opposing the call for a general strike made by the United Federation of Labour a few days previously, and urging its members not to come out. It regarded the strike as an injury to the cause of labour. Preparations were now made for the opening of the wharves at Dunedin, where the strike at no time got a firm hold. On the same day, the Christchurch Citizens' Committee, voicing the opinions of the Employers' Federation, informed the Lyttelton Waterside Workers' Union of its determination to work the port at the beginning of the next week, and advised the union to register under the Act. This ultimatum of the employers was rejected on the following day by the workers, and the former made their plans for the commencement of shipping operations. It was not till a week later, however, that the port was reopened.

Monday, 17th November, saw the registration under the Act of a new Lyttelton Waterside Workers' Union. The labour leaders in Christchurch promised that if special constables were not sworn in, the strikers would refrain from molesting the "free" labourers. The men, however, could not be restrained from creating disorder on Tuesday, and immediately the call went forth for the swearing in of the "specials." It was also announced that work was proceeding busily on the harbour front at Auckland, and, although five thousand men were still on strike there and another thousand involuntarily idle, yet the end was thought to be near. At Wellington, too, the wharves were busy, and the "Athenic," fully loaded by the new unionists, sailed for London amidst great enthusiasm. Work began to proceed peacefully with arbitrationists' labour at Dunedin. Thence came the announcement that the Strike Committee and the Relief Committee of the labour unions in that city had favourably received a proposal made by a unionist that the dispute should be referred unreservedly to Sir Joshua Williams, in order that a settlement might be arrived at, either as affecting Dunedin only or the whole Dominion. On Wednesday, minor disturbances in Wellington and Auckland were promptly suppressed by the "specials," and in the former town the hotels were closed. The arrested leaders were further remanded. The wharves were busily working in Auckland, Dunedin, and Wellington. Twenty-four steamers were being loaded or unloaded at the last-named port, and the membership of the new union there numbered nearly a thousand. A suggestion was made in Wellington that the strike could be ended by officially holding a secret ballot of

all the unions in New Zealand, to decide whether the unionists should register under the Arbitration Act, and it was stated that the Strike Committee would be quite prepared to abide by the result of such a ballot.

On Thursday all the ports except Lyttelton were busy. Men in all trades were returning to work in Auckland, and it was estimated that fourteen hundred more men were working there than on Monday. A large camp of "specials" was being formed at Christchurch, to assist in the opening of the port during the following week. On Friday the Christchurch Drivers' Union decided to stop work on the following Monday. The Central Strike Committee now despatched a cablegram to the Australian Workers' Union appealing for help and, in addition, sent two of its members to Sydney. On Saturday the Strike Committee at Auckland declared the general strike to be off in that city, with the exception of the transport section comprising the seamen, watersiders, carters, and tramwaymen. It should be remembered that many new watersiders were working in the Arbitration Union.

A large meeting of Christchurch citizens passed a resolution to the effect that the Government should be requested to introduce legislation to end the crisis.

The Conciliation Commissioner in Wellington made certain suggestions to the Prime Minister for the settlement of the strike difficulty, which were understood to be agreeable to the strikers; but the Employers' Association in their reply to the Prime Minister said that they could not be considered as a basis for settlement. The position at the end of this week appeared to be that, except for the miners, the strike was practically broken in Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin, and that Christchurch was to be the storm-centre the following week; the Australian watersiders were showing signs of restlessness, and there seemed to be some danger of an inter-colonial maritime strike.

On Monday, 24th November, the Christchurch drivers came out on strike, and violent conduct by some of the miners was reported from the West Coast. A large body of the miners who had struck at the Blackball and State Collieries marched to Brunner and caused the non-strikers there to "down tools" to the strain of the "Red Flag." Two events gave interest to Tuesday's proceedings. These were the formation of a new Christchurch Drivers' Union registered under the Act, and the opening of the port of Lyttelton by "free labour" under the protection of "specials." It was reported that there were only three unions

on strike in Auckland. A conference of representatives of the Australasian Federation of Labour and of the Transport Union was opened in Sydney, and by many this was regarded as heralding more widespread trouble. On Wednesday the strike of the Christchurch drivers had almost fizzled out, and work was proceeding briskly at Lyttelton. Sir Joseph Ward suggested in Parliament that Sir Joshua Williams should be asked to deal with the industrial dispute. Since Mr. Massey made the same proposal at the Conference of October 28th, the attitude of the two parties towards it had become reversed. The United Federation of Labour now favoured arbitration, and expressed its willingness to accept the eminent judge's decision as binding; but the Employers' Federation refused to entertain the proposal, on the grounds that the time had gone by for further negotiations; that work at the ports was progressing in a manner completely satisfactory to the employers; and that they had no intention whatever of entering into agreements, arrangements or understandings of any sort whatsoever that would in any way place them in such position as would in any degree prejudice their relations with the thousands of unionists then at work in the ports, to whom they were by that time morally and legally committed. They further refused to meet, negotiate, treat, or confer with the Labour Federation or any representative of it. New Zealand shipping was now held up in Sydney, and the attitude of the Australian seamen was causing considerable anxiety. On Saturday a long and secret conference of transport and other unions was held at Sydney under the presidency of Hon. W. M. Hughes, an Australian labour leader, to consider their attitude towards the New Zealand trouble. The conference, which represented over 200,000 workers, adjourned till Monday. Towards the end of this week the four chief New Zealand ports were almost fully manned by arbitration labour, shipping operations were carried on briskly, more strikers returned to work, and the end of the strike seemed in sight.

On Monday, 1st December, the coal miners at Huntly declined the mineowners' invitation to return to work. A suggestion was made that the farmers should be called upon to open the mines, as they had opened the waterfront. Six Dunedin strike leaders, who had been arrested on charges of intimidation, were bound over to keep the peace. The Christchurch Drivers' Union decided to call the drivers out again, an appeal also being made to other unions for co-operation. The conference of Sydney unionists was continued, and was again adjourned. On Tuesday

a very poor response was made to the appeal of the Christchurch drivers for another strike. The Australian workers now attempted to bring pressure to bear on the parties in New Zealand, in accordance with the policy framed by the big Labour Conference. The Sydney waterside workers decided to refuse to handle cargo to or from New Zealand, but not to interfere with the U.S.S. Co.'s Australian coastal trade. The conference, through Mr. Hughes, cabled a long and earnest appeal to the employers' organisation at Wellington strongly urging that the whole dispute should be referred to Judge Williams, or to some other acceptable arbitrator, whose decision should be final on all points, including the employment of labour. On Wednesday the Sydney watersiders, in spite of the ukase of the conference of unionists that the boycott should extend to vessels engaged only in the New Zealand trade, applied it to all vessels owned by the Union Company. At the same time the Federated Seamen's Union of Australia decided not to handle any New Zealand cargo. The Employers', Farmers', and Citizens' Defence Committee at Wellington issued a manifesto, strongly condemnatory of the United Federation of Labour, and stating that the Committee had collectively and individually pledged itself to the elimination of the Federation, its officers and representatives from any negotiations with unions of workers. It declared that the employers' relations with unregistered unions, especially with such unions as had been affiliated with the Federation, had been conspicuous for the frequency with which the workers had broken their agreements, and also for friction arising out of the interpretation by the workers' representatives of agreements, when such had been nominally observed. The experience of employers during the last ten years with unions affiliated with the United Federation of Labour had fully justified them in regarding that body as identical with the Independent Workers of the World, with which it professedly had so much in common. The employers said that they could not treat with an organisation of such a frankly hostile character. On Thursday, the Wellington Employers' Committee, after consulting with other associations of employers, cabled to Mr. Hughes declining arbitration. "There is nothing left for arbitration," the Committee stated, "as the employers know of no grievances that are standing in the way of the strikers joining the new unions." On the same day the president of the United Federation of Labour was sentenced to three months' imprisonment on a charge of inciting to violence. From Dunedin came the report that it was very likely that Sir Joshua Williams

would be asked to arbitrate on the trouble between the seamen and the shipowners. It appeared that all that was required to effect a settlement was a third party as arbiter.

The trouble now began to spread in Australia, for the Federated Waterside Workers' Union at Brisbane notified the shipping companies that it did not intend handling any cargo to or from New Zealand. On Saturday Mr. Hughes, in a cable to the Prime Minister, expressed the hope that he would use every influence to persuade the New Zealand employers to accept arbitration in the existing dispute. The chairman of the Wellington Employers' Defence Committee stated in reply to another cablegram from Mr. Hughes, that the Committee was unable to consider anything in the direction of the advice tendered to submit the dispute to arbitration. The secretary of the United Federation of Labour gave the assurance that the unionists would loyally abide by the decision of the arbitrator, were the dispute submitted as suggested.

On Monday, 8th December, Mr. Hughes succeeded in inducing the Sydney waterside workers to abandon their defiance of the Labour Conference's decision with regard to the U.S.S. Co.'s steamers. This meant that the men would now handle cargo on all vessels except those engaged in the New Zealand trade. On Thursday Mr. Massey stated in the House of Representatives that it would be impossible to effect a settlement by arbitration or legislation.

On Friday, the important question whether a union registered under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act and not under the Trade-Unions Act can give a part of its funds for the aid of the families of men who are on strike, the men not being co-workers in any sense in the same industry as that of the registered union, was decided by the Chief Justice, Sir Robert Stout. The Union concerned was the Wellington Typographical Union, which some time before had made a vote of £100 to the waterside workers' strike fund. The question at issue was answered by the Chief Justice as follows:—(a) It is not lawful for the defendant union to apply any of its funds for the purpose of assisting the unions mentioned in the proceedings or their dependents, while the members of those unions are engaged in a strike. (b) The union cannot make levies on its members for that purpose. In the course of his judgment, his Honour said the union must be one for the purpose of protecting or of furthering the interests of workers in connection with the special industry of printing. It was not a general benevolent society, and it was

not formed for the purpose of aiding workers in other industries. It might be that it could assist even those on strike if they were printers or engaged in the same branch of the printing industry, as Rule 15 provides, but, in his opinion, there being nothing in the statute enabling a union to assist workers on strike, at all events, outside the industry to which members of the union belonged, it could not be implied that it had that power. Mr. Justice Chapman concurred in the judgment.

On Saturday Parliament passed the Labour Disputes Investigation Bill, with the object of diminishing the number of strikes in the future. The provisions of the bill apply equally to employers and workers, whether associated under registered bodies or not. If a dispute arises, notice must be given to the Minister of Labour, and any action by way of strike or lock-out must be withheld until a Labour Dispute Committee, consisting of from three to seven representatives of each of the two parties concerned, has publicly investigated the merits of the affair. The Committee will submit recommendations to the Minister and the parties. Public opinion is then enlightened on the whole question, and if a strike or lock-out follows (a secret ballot of workers being a necessary preliminary to a strike), public sympathy, a valuable asset, goes to the more deserving side. The maximum penalties for a breach of any clauses are, in the case of workers £10, employers £500, industrial unions of workers or employers £1,000, or £10 per member, whichever is the smaller. On Monday, 15th December, Parliament voted £100,000 to defray state expenditure in connection with the strike. Tuesday was the fifth day on which the officials of the United Federation of Labour had sat in conference, and, as no public announcement had been made, the strikers and those who were working but paying strike levies began to grow impatient. Representatives of the seamen and the shipowners now conferred, but the meeting was adjourned till the following day. On Thursday, Greymouth was peacefully reopened. So far, no public announcement had been issued by the conference of delegates from the United Federation of Labour. The Dunedin seamen accepted terms arrived at between the representatives of the seamen and the shipping companies in Wellington, and decided to register under the Arbitration Act and to return to work. The directors of the U.S.S. Co., as a practical manifestation of their appreciation, granted a bonus of one month's salary to its faithful employees.

The situation was considerably relieved on Friday, 19th

December, by the strike of the seamen and firemen being declared off, terms of agreement being accepted by the seamen and ship-owners, and signed by representatives of the Federated Seamen's Union of Australasia on the one hand and by representatives of the Union Steamship Company and of the New Zealand Ship-owners' Federation on the other.

In consequence of a cable having been received in Sydney officially notifying that the strike had been declared off in New Zealand, the Conference of Unions adopted a resolution asking all delegates to inform the various unions and branches that the strike had been declared off by the New Zealand Federation, and that the embargo on New Zealand trade on the part of the Australian unionists had consequently been withdrawn. On Saturday, an official declaration by the Federation of Labour stated that the conference of delegates from the various strike centres, together with the Executive of the Federation, had decided that, in the interests of those most closely concerned, it was wisest to call the strike off as from December 20th, for all engaged with the exception of miners. "So far as the miners are concerned," said the statement, "we are but awaiting a conference with the mineowners and the miners' representatives to discuss matters relating to that industry."

VII. *General Remarks.*

It is very difficult to come to definite conclusions on the merits of the recent strike, while the dust of the conflict is still in the air and a great part of its history necessarily secret. We can offer here only a few provisional remarks.

Labour unrest at the present time is not peculiar to the Dominion of New Zealand. Dissatisfaction with the conditions of work has been a mark of the entire industrial world during the last few years, and is largely due to the tendency of real wages to fall owing to the rise of prices, to the conviction of the workers and their leaders that they do not get their full share of the advantages of material progress, to the rising standard of comfort during the last decade of the past century, to the desire for a still higher standard, and to the possibility of the broader and more diverse life which education and the diffusion of general knowledge have brought within the horizon of the working classes. It is noteworthy, however, that the burning question in this particular dispute did not refer to wages. It is true that the strike of the Wellington shipwrights for higher rates of pay was the match which kindled the industrial blaze; but this demand

was altogether lost sight of when the point at issue became whether agreements should be respected, and whether there should be compulsory registration under the Arbitration Act.

It is not possible to place the blame for the trouble wholly on one party; for a lack of the spirit of "sweet reasonableness" was shown by both sides. When the Federation of Labour was first formed among the miners, its leaders began to instil revolutionary ideas into the workers. On January 17th, 1912, a few days after the signing of the waterside workers' agreement, the secretary of the Federation gave expression to the following views on the observance of agreements: "Every agreement entered into is not binding upon you for a single instant; no, not if it was signed by a thousand officials and ratified by a dozen courts. The agreement is not sacred. Only a fool would regard it as such. The moment an opportunity occurs to better your condition, break your agreement; break it whenever it will pay you to do so. If necessary, let us toss every agreement to hell." There is little wonder, then, that after the expression of opinions such as these, the employers regarded the Arbitration Act with increased favour, and in the recent struggle insisted on the strikers registering themselves in a union under this Act as a condition of readmittance to work. The strike might, therefore, be regarded as the culmination of recent developments affecting the extreme labour section and the employers—both recognised that in a short time there must be a trial of strength. When the Wellington watersiders violated their agreement, the employers adopted a firm attitude, and forced the conflict at a time when trade was slack, the busy export season having not yet commenced, and victory appeared certain. It is a matter for great regret that the issue was not settled at an early stage in the dispute. If each party had been possessed of a conciliatory spirit, serious industrial disorganisation would not have occurred. The people of the Dominion regret that the Prime Minister was unable to bring the parties to an agreement when he presided at their Conference. By their insistence on compulsory registration under the Arbitration Act, the employers were responsible for the prolongation of the dispute; but it may be that their unbending attitude and their immediate victory on this point will make the workers generally less willing to entrust their affairs to men whose views are as extreme and methods as violent as those of the leaders of the Federation of Labour.

Up to 22nd October, the bone of contention had been the conditions of work of the Wellington shipwrights, and as negotia-

tions had been carried on since April, the men had reason for attempting to bring matters to a finality. When on that day, the waterside workers came out on strike in sympathy with the shipwrights, the question became whether agreements not registered under the Arbitration Act should be regarded as binding. The workers made light of the agreement; but the employers were determined to make the keeping of it the main condition on which the strikers should be allowed to resume work. Until the rejection of the employers' proposals for settlement on 28th October, the shipping companies had tried to get either the registration of the waterside workers union under the Arbitration Act or the reinstatement of the agreement with a provision for the infliction of a penalty if Clause 28 were broken, and they had even been prepared to submit the whole matter to the arbitration of Sir Joshua Williams. After the failure of these negotiations, the dispute widened from one between the shipping companies and the waterside workers to one between the Employers' Federation and the United Federation of Labour, and the bone of contention became whether there should be compulsory registration of unions under the Arbitration Act with the statutory punishment of a strike or a lock-out. Both parties now recognised that the fight must be fought to the bitter end; for the spirit of conciliation was lacking on both sides, owing to the aims and objects of the two organisations being in complete opposition.

It is interesting to observe the attitude of the combatants to the question of the submission of the dispute to arbitration. Up to 28th October, the shipping companies had favoured, and the workers had opposed, this course. When, later on, the struggle appeared to be going against the United Federation of Labour, the Executive of that body expressed its willingness to accept arbitration; but, although the conference of unionists at Sydney tried to force the New Zealand employers into referring the matter to arbitration, the employers peremptorily refused. They did this in spite of the fact that their refusal made an intercolonial Maritime Strike seem imminent. They insisted on registration under the Arbitration Act, and the conflict ended with the defeat of the United Federation of Labour.

The failure of the strike was in great part due to public sympathy being against the workers' action, owing to the violent speech and extreme action of the leaders of the United Federation of Labour, to their doctrine of non-observance of contracts, and to the United Federation pitting itself against the employers

and the community in the government of industrial conditions. The employers and a very large section of the community also resented the Australian intervention ; but that action shows that in the future the relation of workers in other countries may have to be seriously considered when a dispute arises.

The victory of the employers has been of considerable educational value to the workers. It has made them realise, as they have not done before, the direction that a section of the labour movement has been taking during the last few years, and it has reaffirmed many of the old and commonplace lessons of strikes. When the United Federation of Labour was formed, many workers believed that the objects of that organisation would soon be realised ; the promise of new things appealed to their latent discontent. The struggle may lead them to see that the general strike tends by paralysing industry to diminish the source from which wages are drawn, and that at present it is a weapon with a very dangerous recoil.

One fact that has been made clear is that if a strike policy is to have any chance of success, the workers must choose leaders of sound character, of sagacity, and of ability for generalship and organisation ; that they must have complete confidence in these leaders ; that they must give implicit obedience to their leaders' commands, thus sinking their individuality in their unions and making their conditions one of status rather than of contract ; that they must be perfectly organised ; that the time and manner of striking must be carefully chosen ; and, above all, that they must have public opinion in their favour.

The strike has shown how a dispute between a small section of the community can grow till it dislocates the trade of the whole Dominion. To many it seems a fatal defect that there is no representative on the Arbitration Court to safeguard the interests of the community as a whole, and that no provision was made for such representative or representatives on the labour dispute committees that will be set up under the Labour Disputes Investigation Act which came into operation on January 1st, 1914.

A comparison of the 1913 strike with that of 1890 is instructive. For some time previous to both, there were signs that the unions, in 1890 encouraged by the success of the dockers' strike in London, and in 1913 by the general advance of the federation movement and the revolutionary teaching of their leaders, were pursuing a course of action which must sooner or later produce a conflict with the employers. Mr. Charlewood has stated (*THE ECONOMIC JOURNAL*, Vol. I., p. 715) that it was difficult to avoid

the conviction that the strike of 1890, far from being brought about by an attempt on the part of capital to crush labour, was exactly the reverse. When the 1913 struggle grew into a battle between the two great federations, it was clear that the employers were determined to defeat the United Federation of Labour at any cost, and they did it. It must, however, always be remembered that the Federation represents only the extreme wing of the labour movement; and it is by no means clear that it has been crushed as an organisation.

It is noteworthy that the two struggles were carried on at the time most disadvantageous to labour. In 1890, the time chosen was the commencement of our summer, when a coal famine, one of the chief weapons in the hands of the workers was least to be feared, and the harvest being two months off, the country hands were able to pour down to the ports, where the nominal wages to be earned were such a revelation to them, that one result of the strike was a permanent transfer of workers from the country to the ports and *vice versa*. In 1913, the conditions were much the same. The strike commenced in early summer, the demand for domestic coal was slack, the farmers and their labourers were able to come to assist in the opening of the ports before the export season commenced, and present indications are that many of the farm and casual hands will make their temporary positions permanent.

In the 1890 strike a considerable section of the strikers was unable to assign any definite cause for the strike. In 1913, the original causes were lost sight of in the wider questions, which had to be settled as the strike area extended. In the end the point at issue was the definition and assertion of the authority of the two organisations.

The strike of 1890 began in Australia, and, while the struggle was going on there, it was the policy of the labour party in New Zealand to help their brethren in Australia. This could be done only by keeping their own hands free. Instead of doing this they began a quarrel with the Union Steamship Company, which almost immediately brought them face to face with the whole of the employers of the Dominion. In 1913, the strike began in, and was almost solely confined to, New Zealand, although at a late stage in the dispute the unions of the Commonwealth attempted to force the employers into compulsory arbitration by boycotting all New Zealand goods. A word of praise is due to the Australian labour leaders for the manner in which they held in check the more impetuous classes of workers, and so preserved industrial peace in the Commonwealth.

Both strikes have shown that in any conflict the probability of supplies being obtained from other countries in the circle of international trade has to be considered. In 1890, supplies of coal came from Cardiff and Japan, and in 1913 from Japan and South Africa.

The labour party has been praised for the orderliness with which it conducted the 1890 strike. Similar praise can also be given to most of the strikers in 1913; but there were scenes of violence, and public opinion supported the Government in the vigorous steps it took by swearing in special constables to assist in maintaining public order. The majority of the people of the Dominion do not regret that the magistrates closed the hotels at the critical stages of the strike.

At present it is not possible to say what the cost of the strike has been; but some of the estimates made are worth noting. On 13th November, it was stated that the special constables in Auckland were costing the country over £2,000 per day. On 24th November, it was estimated that the loss in wages in Auckland alone since the beginning of the trouble was over £46,000. On 26th November, Sir Joseph Ward stated that his estimate of the cost of the strike was a quarter of a million sterling weekly. On 12th December, it was announced that the strike was costing the Otago Harbour Board about £1,500 a week, and that the total loss to the Board would be about £10,000. On 15th December, Parliament voted £100,000 to cover estimated strike expenditure. On 20th December, the Mayor of Auckland said that on a conservative estimate, Auckland workers had lost about £60,000 in wages; that business and shipping would show a shrinkage of £100,000 during the strike period; and that the province had lost at least £200,000 by the strike. One thing is certain; when to the cost incurred by the State in the suppression of rioting, in the maintenance of law and order, and in the preservation of the right to work to those who desired to work, are added the loss in wages on the part of the workers who threw up their employment, the loss in wages on the part of the workers who were thrown out of employment through the dislocation of trade, the loss in one way and another suffered by the importers, manufacturers, and producers, the loss of trade suffered by the retailers, and the loss to which householders were required to submit through the increased price of commodities, the sum total will be a very imposing amount.

G. G. HANCOX.
J. HIGHT.

CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND.
January 7, 1914