object of legislation would be to bring about as early as possible some agreement between capital and labour—perhaps you cannot go farther than that at present—some agreement between capital and labour whereby the differences which lead to strikes and riots and difficulties of that kind can be submitted to some tribunal the award of which both parties would agree to observe. If you accomplish that by legislation, or if you take a step towards the accomplishment of that, then you have accomplished a very great thing, but it does not seem to me, with all deference to the views of the hon. minister, that the legislation which he has now introduced into this House is legislation which is calculated to bring about any such useful results as those which he anticipates.

Mr. A. W. PUTTEE (Winnipeg). I look upon the Bill which is before the House as being practically an extension of the Conciliation Act, and looking at it in that light, I think we can make up our minds that it will not do any harm whatever. At all events, the Conciliation Act cannot be charged with having caused one strike in the country since it was put on the statute-book.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Would the hon. gentleman think it much of a compliment to the Conciliation Act which was designed to prevent strikes, to say, that it had not caused any strikes.

Mr. PUTTEE. I do not. When the Conciliation Act was being passed in 1900 I expressed the opinion that it would not be very effective and that it would be far better for us to attempt something more radical. However, since the leader of the opposition has pointed out that during the last few years, in connection with the growing times strikes have also grown, it is perfectly fair for me to add that so far as the Conciliation Act is concerned it is not responsible for causing a solitary strike.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I did not suggest it did.

Mr. PUTTEE. The Conciliation Act has been useful in closing up a good many disputes ; not more than I expected it would and in comparison with the number of strikes in the country very few indeed. I believe that such a voluntary Conciliation Act is necessarily limited to disputes that have grown old, disputes which both sides are tired of, and disputes of trivial importance.

The Bill introduced last year was practically a compulsory arbitration Act. That Bill has been withdrawn and we may assume that the reasons given by the minister were sufficient cause for him withdrawing it. I agreed last year that the Bill instead of being passed into law should be submitted to the criticism of all parties in the country, and there is no doubt that it was condemned, and condemned almost unanimously. I regret that, because most of the people in condeming it also condemned the principle of compulsory arbitration. I belive that had that Bill of last year been more thoughtfully and carefully drawn, it would not have been so generally condemned. A number of organizations, however, made this distinction : they condemned the Bill but they did not condemn the principle of compulsory arbitration. For my part I am in favour of compulsory arbitration and I admit that in that respect I am not in entire touch with the majority of the labour men in this country. Since New Zealand put the Compulsory Arbitration Act into effect in 1896, I have carefully watched all the findings that have been made and all the operations of their various conciliation and arbitration boards, and up to the present time there has been no distinct set-back met with. It does look as if now they were coming to the first test. It is pointed out that these years have all been practically on a rising market, and the test of the Act has not yet come. But, Sir, I notice that the Australian commissioner who went to New Zealand, after thoroughly investigating, reported to his government in such a way, that they have not only adopted the principle of compulsory arbitration, but that they have stricken out the conciliation part of the Act and adopted only the arbitration boards. These are in operation now in Australia. I believe that compulsory arbitration is far better than any process that has yet been tried to do away with strikes. At the same time I must say that I do not think that public opinion in Canada is prepared for a compulsory arbitration measure. I am thoroughly convinced myself that it is the proper method and why I stay with it now is because my experience is that strikes are a loss to the labouring men themselves ; that the defeats are too disastrous and that the victories are too dearly bought. I am aware, Mr. Speaker, that we have more strikes to-day than ever we had before. In the last few years the number of strikes has been increased and in the years to come the number will increase. We are not on the threshold of a period of peace in the matter of industrial disputes. Probably this is the outcome, first, of the combinations of capital that preceded the combinations of labour, but at all events we can rest assured that there will be more strikes in the future than there have been in the past. That is why I believe we should go to the full extent that public opinion will let us go, to try and provide for the proper arbitration or conciliation of those disputes that are bound to occur.

I am quite in sympathy with the leader of the opposition when he asked why this principle of compulsory investigation should only apply to the railways. Last year I introduced a Bill to amend the Conciliation Act, and for that matter I have introduced