

in a great industrial centre is able to speak for his people we may make some progress, but there is no such practicable method as he suggests for ascertaining public opinion. This discussion will perhaps lead to the general public taking an interest in this idea. From time to time discussions on this line are developed. This afternoon I threw out a hint which I hope will bear fruit, that the employers and employees should endeavour to consider this question, and perhaps they might organize with the object of getting representatives together to debate it. But it cannot be done without the fullest discussion, and that is a process involving a considerable length of time. Employers or employees would not be able to give a valued opinion upon the question without full discussion. Discussions such as these prepare public men to consider public questions and to give valued opinions upon them. I have to thank the House for allowing me the privilege of a second time of addressing it on the subject, although I had no intention of suspending action for the purpose of considering any of the points that were raised by the hon. gentleman.

Hon. JOHN HAGGART (South Lanark). Mr. Speaker, I intend to say a few words in reference to this, what I call, peculiar legislation, introduced by the hon. Postmaster General (Hon. Sir William Mulock), legislation introduced for the purpose of informing the community and which is to be acted upon by public opinion. The hon. gentleman mentioned some legislation of this kind in the state of Massachusetts, and we had legislation of a similar character introduced in 1900, legislation, as the hon. minister says, which is intended to carry out some views, or some ideas of some people in this country with means of enforcement and penalties attached when its provisions are not carried out. This legislation has no effect at all. This Bill is evidently prepared on the lines of the New Zealand legislation, introduced in 1894 or 1895, providing for the creation of conciliation boards and boards of arbitrations. I listened to the hon. minister and he particularly stated that as long as times were prosperous and as long as wages were advancing in the country the awards of the board of arbitrament would be accepted both by the employees and by the employers of labour in the community. But the moment depression comes, it is likely one or the other will object to the award. I have read an American author who speaks highly of the New Zealand system, and who says it is in advance of any legislation in any part of the world. I have also read the report of the Australian commissioners who inquired into the New Zealand system with a view to its adoption in Australia. On the other hand, I have read a New Zealand author who condemns the system altogether, and indeed the opinion now seems to be, that the result of the arbitration law in New Zealand law is not as sat-

isfactory as its friends hoped for. I believe there is a necessity for legislation in some direction for the settlement of these labour disputes, but whether it is within the authority of this federal parliament or of the provincial legislatures is a question for serious consideration. My hon. friend (Mr. Monk) pointed out that this Bill took jurisdiction over provincial railways and electric railways, as well as Dominion railways, and the minister replied to him that this Bill was only for the purpose of finding out the facts and influencing public opinion. It is notorious that the control over provincial and electric railways is in the provincial legislatures, and thus it is that we are legislating here to influence public opinion to influence the local legislatures to pass laws to remedy grievances. The minister told us that the simple fact of the finding of an arbitration board in Massachusetts so influenced public opinion that the disputants were compelled to settle a strike. If the hon. gentleman inquires, he will find that the Massachusetts Railway Commission has the power to remedy such grievances, but legislation of this kind, although it may be passed by the legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is not the sort of legislation that is usually adopted by a British parliament. What is the need of this Bill at all, if it is only for the purpose of reporting the facts. The government have power now to appoint a Royal Commission at any time, and the report of that Royal Commission may affect public opinion and what is better still, it brings the matter before this House. There should be an alternative in this Bill, so that if public opinion is not sufficient to enforce the award of the board of arbitration, then the law should step in to enforce it. That is what I would call proper legislation. This Bill is simply parade legislation. It can be of little or no utility when there is no penalty provided to enforce its provisions.

Mr. CLARKE. I congratulate the Minister of Labour upon the decided change he has made in this Bill as compared with the Bill which he introduced last session. Last year's Bill was on the lines of compulsory arbitration, but the minister had an opportunity of meeting those who would be affected by such legislation, and he ascertained public opinion so quickly that the result was that he introduced the measure which we are now discussing. I shall not offer any opposition to this Bill. It certainly cannot do any harm, but I do not expect that much good will come from it. However, the minister hopes a great deal from the Bill, and I trust that his expectations will be more than realized. Last year, with a great flourish of trumpets he proposed compulsory arbitration; but he recedes from that position now, having ascertained what public opinion was in the meantime.

An hon. MEMBER. What was it?