

**STATE REGULATION OF
LABOUR AND LABOUR
DISPUTES IN NEW ZEALAND. A
DESCRIPTION AND A CRITICISM**

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State regulation of labour and labour disputes in New Zealand. A description and a criticism by Henry Broadhead

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HENRY BROADHEAD

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State Regulation of Labour and Labour Disputes in New Zealand.

A DESCRIPTION AND A CRITICISM.

BY

HENRY BROADHEAD,

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years Member of the Canterbury Conciliation Board.*



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PREFACE.

Among the countries that have attempted, during recent years, to solve the Labour Problem by means of Legislation and State Regulation, New Zealand has occupied a conspicuous place. The operation of our Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act has been keenly watched by many throughout the civilised world, who recognise that New Zealand is conducting a bold experiment in regulating the conditions of labour by law. Many visitors, most of them representatives of Governments, have come to our shores for the purpose of enquiring into our Arbitration system, and into the truth of the widespread reports that it has been an unqualified success, and has been the chief factor in producing a period of unprecedented prosperity within the Dominion.

Indeed, nearly all the books and reports which have hitherto dealt with the Arbitration Act, have been written by men who live outside New Zealand. Admirable as many of these publications are from some points of view, they hardly touch more than the surface of the subject. My experience leads me to the conclusion that, in order to be able to study thoroughly the working of the New Zealand Act, one must reside in the country for at least a few years, and be continually in touch with the system. Having occupied the position of Secretary to the Canterbury Employers' Association for more than seven years, and having been a member of the Canterbury Conciliation Board for nearly three years, I have had exceptional opportunities of closely observing the manner and effects of the regulation of labour by the State. This, I think, will be obvious when I state that the Secretary to an Employers' Association in New Zealand must be conversant with the provisions of the Arbitration Act, and with many of the awards of the Court, while his more responsible work includes the assisting of employers in preparing cases for the Court, in attending conferences between employers and workers, and in representing employers before the Court. The Secretary is also constantly consulted as to the interpretation of awards, and thus becomes acquainted with the troublesome points which not infrequently confront employers in their endeavours to adhere to the terms of the awards.

PREFACE

The aim of the present work is to give, in the smallest compass, a comprehensive and unprejudiced view of the working of compulsory arbitration in New Zealand. By way of introduction a brief account is given of the two important labour events—the Sweating Commission and the Maritime Strike—which heralded the advent of the Hon. Mr. Reeves' Conciliation and Arbitration Bill. The passing of the Bill having been dealt with, the main provisions of the Compilation Act of 1905, and those of the Amending Act of the same year, are summarised, with explanatory comments wherever these have been thought necessary. The succeeding chapters describe the operation of the Act and its effects on industry and commerce, and contain numerous decisions bearing upon the points discussed.

Great care has been exercised in the preparation of the work, which was begun nearly two years ago. Since then a number of important decisions have been given, and these have had to be incorporated in the various chapters from time to time. Only a few months ago the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act Amendment Bill, by which drastic alterations in the Act are proposed, was introduced into Parliament by the Minister for Labour, and a summary of this measure has been given as an Appendix. The work is, therefore, in every respect quite up-to-date.

Regarding the opinions I have ventured to express throughout the book, I wish it to be clearly understood that they are my private opinions, and that they must not be taken as representing those of the body with which I am officially connected. Whether they agree or disagree with these opinions, all interested in labour questions will, I hope, find the book useful as a work of reference for years to come.

H. B.

CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.,
7th December, 1907.

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