Members of the engineering unions are wise in promoting a free and general discussion of the Arbitration Court's 48-hour award before deciding upon definite action. The question at issue is of grave importance to the trades and also to the country. In deciding that the standard working week should be 48 hours the Arbitration Full Court pointed out that the circumstances had changed since Mr. Justice Higgins awarded timber workers and engineers a working week of 44 hours. Mr. Justice Powers observed that "one judge of the Court in 1920, "when industries were active and prices "high, decided that the standard hours "could safely be reduced." Sir John Quick said the evidence was overwhelming that the reduced hours per week had substantially caused a reduction of the output, and a corresponding increase in the cost of production in the timber and engineering industries. In consideration of the colossal obligations and burdens which the people of the Commonwealth had to bear at the present stage of their history, it was not desirable that there should be any alteration under arbitration awards of industrial conditions which would inevitably result in an alarming loss of the producing powers of the country. The second deputy president, Mr. Webb, added that "the unemployment that "existed was due substantially to overseas "competition and the conditions imposed "in Australia by the 44-hour week." After hearing and weighing the evidence, the Court came to the conclusion that as the case affected many workers it was not a question of working 44 or 48 hours, but one of 48 hours or no employment at all. The engineering trade has suffered a depression. Local firms have been unable in many cases to hold their own against outside competition despite substantial protection. Men have been on short time or have been out of work. It is clear, therefore, that the best efforts of employers and employed are needed to increase the output and regain the market. Failing that, it seems certain that the trade will suffer a long period of dullness, with loss and hardship to all whom it employs. The recent engineers' strike in England failed because the circumstances of the country, like those of Australia, were not favorable to the workers' demands, desirable though it might have been to concede them were conditions otherwise. Continental workers are working long hours for comparatively low wages in order that the national trade may hold its own against the fierce after-the-war competition. When the engineers weigh the facts they must admit as reasonable men that any industrial dislocation at this time would be specially disastrous to the country and all its workers.

There is a stake in this threatened industrial dispute even more important than immediate self-interest. For years the country has been working under industrial laws which were enacted in the face of stubborn Conservative opposition to meet the wishes of the wage earners. It may be admitted that the Arbitration Act has serious faults, but it is the law of the land, and therefore binding upon all good citizens. There is no doubt that in many trades, including the engineering, it has legalised higher wages and better working conditions. Generally speaking the awards of the Court have been faithfully observed. When increased wages have been ordered they have been paid, although those who were compelled to pay them felt aggrieved. When shorter hours have been decided upon the Court's decree has been honored. In accordance with the ordinary rules of fair play as between men and men, it is not possible to accept an umpire's decisions when they are favorable and repudiate them when they are adverse. It is not reasonable, to say the least, to accept the advantages of arbitration, and to quarrel with it when the award goes the other way. Were that practice to be followed, it stands to reason that the Arbitration Act and all other industrial laws must be swept away in indignation or derision. The appeal to law and reason was substituted for the appeal to force. Neither one side nor the other is entitled to both. Faulty as some of the industrial laws may be, the workers of Australia, speaking generally, would be very sorry to see them abolished. Anyone who remembers the general conditions of employment before the legislative enactments of the last twenty years is repelled by the thought of returning to freedom of contract, with its insecurity and unfettered competition between worker and worker. Yet the repudiation of industrial awards is the most effective way of destroying this legal protection in its entirety. The danger is a real one and by no means remote. The forces that objected in the first instance are only dormant. A serious engineering dispute cannot fail to make them active, and the action of those who put themselves in the wrong by disputing the umpire's decision, after a fair trial and a careful

in the wrong by disputing the umpire's decision, after a fair trial and a careful examination of all the evidence, will enlist on their behalf a powerful public sympathy. The engineers may easily inflict injustice and hardship upon great bodies of their fellow workers, as well as destroy

their own employment and privileges. Fortunately the engineering unions are generally free from the agitation of "direct actionists," who counsel strike for the sake of turmoil and destruction, or who falsely affect to see in an arbitration award, as delivered by independent men of actual experience as workers, a conspiracy against unionism and fair working conditions.

Members of the conference that meets to-morrow at the Trades Hall may reasonably ask themselves whether a strike against the law is really worth while. The engineers or their fellow workers are not threatened with a reduction in wages or with anything that will seriously affect the well-being of themselves and their families. The working week will still be only five and a half days. The issue — whether the men will work another four hours each week—an average of 40 minutes extra per day. It is not suggested, and it cannot be maintained, that these additional minutes will place any undue strain upon the wage earners, subject them to hardship or severe fatigue, or rob them of time needed for rational recreation and self-improvement. The average worker is thoroughly capable of working 48 hours within five and a half days, and after his labor, as well as on his Saturday and Sunday, he has abundance of opportunity for amusement, study and rest. The issue, so far as it affects the men in working time, especially considering the dire consequences threatened by a stoppage, with the certainty of failure on the part of the unions, is actually trivial. The conditions of Australia, its enormous obligations, the severity of outside competition with its industries, and the uncertain outlook for every man who lives by his labor demand that Australians should pull together in unremitting industry for greater security and better circumstances. The workers of Great Britain and America who appealed to the strike to defend them against after-the-war conditions learnt a bitter lesson. They failed almost consistently, and impoverished both themselves and their industries, with the result that they returned to work—those of them for whom any work was still available—on worse terms than those against which they rebelled. Australia's workers are entitled to as high a standard of life as the country can afford them, but we cannot maintain that standard of life or make the country prosperous by working only 44 hours, when our determined competitors work considerably longer. By following the path of knowledge and reason the Engineering Conference will exert its efforts to keep the wheels of industry moving, and thus help towards making possible better working terms and results for everybody.

"Up to the breach, you dogs! Avaunt, "you cullions," shrieked Fluellen, the eccentric little Welshman in Henry V., "a' "will plow up all if there is not better "directions." "Abate thy rage, great "Duke," advised the sarcastic Pistol; "good bawcock, bate thy rage; use lenity, "good chuck." The boy in the play, who was even more sardonic, observed with Welsh shrewdness that the Welshman had "never broke any man's head but his own, "and that was against a post when he was "drunk." There is a parallel to Fluellen's excited valor in Mr. Hughes's fire-eating speech before the shrewd, calculating members of the Nationalist Association in Sydney. Had Shakespeare's boy been there he might have added that the over-zealous Prime Minister "never broke any "man's head but his own, and that was "when he fell off a horse." While Fluellen delivered his lightning and thunder in face of the French at Harfleur, Mr. Hughes delivered his against the Country party, whom he threatens in effect to "blow up" or "plow up" in a way quite as complete and merciless. The extraordinarily timid and apprehensive Prime Minister, who by an effort of will manages to talk in public with an audacity and daring almost terrible, delivered an ultimatum to Mr. Page and his followers, as if he were the British Empire addressing a predatory band of rebellious Turks. An indulged and ungrateful little immigrant never bullied, ordered and lashed spirited Australians with greater impudence. "I give the Country party a "certain number of days to accept peace "or prepare for war," said Mr. Hughes. . . . "I shall not draw the sword from "the sheath until a certain number of days "have elapsed, by which time they will "have been able to indicate their views." He offers the Country party the alternative of serving under his dictatorship and of sharing responsibility for his odious

tive of serving under his dictatorship and of sharing responsibility for his odious political record. It sounds like a prophecy of another battle of Warwick when Mr. Hughes, being struck by an egg, hurled himself into a throng of panic-stricken countrymen like another Shaw the Life guardsman at Waterloo, and emerged, according to the official report, "with "blood on his fist and not on his face." Puerile braggadocio of this kind sounds very small amongst sensible grown men. What a gigantic self-conceit it betokens, and what contempt for the Australian people? What can he mean by "drawing "the sword"? It must be a brand, by the way, much like that wielded by Astor, the assailant of ancient Rome—one which could be wielded by no other man, and which two ordinary men could barely lift. Apparently a declaration of war against the Country party means that Mr. Hughes will order the country constituencies not to vote for country candidates. He can give his orders, of course. Hotspur could "call spirits from the vasty deep," but they did not come when he called them. The fact of the matter is that the domineering leader of a desperately discredited Government is merely playing the part of another little Gulliver shaking his fist at the giant Brobdignagians. That arrant poltroon Bob Acres, in The Rivals, always swore, "odds swords, daggers, knives "and pistols." Clearly a man of the Prime Minister's might and valor should not have run away from the political fight at Bendigo. He should have drawn his terrible sword there. Naturally enough the Country party treats his defiance with mockery and scorn. Comparatively new as most of its members are to political tactics, they know too much to associate themselves with a Government that has to answer for so many grievous political offences, and that is held in so keen a detestation. Apparently the Prime Minister has made up his mind to brazen through the pools and the combines organised as political bribes. He audaciously tries to make a virtue of the thing that involves his own condemnation. The Sydney speech, with its silly, bumptious threats of swords, fights and battles, and the even more ridiculous vanity it discloses in the rest of its absurdities, is additional proof that Australia has already had more of Mr. Hughes than is good for it. When this absurd political Fluellen is removed, Parliament may do sensible work and the country be saved from the turmoil of a mischievous agitation.

of a mischievous agitation.

To some extent the system of cadet training in Australia has filled the place that in other countries is taken by the Boy Scout movement. But that there is room in this country for both organisations was shown by the fine turnout of 600 metropolitan scouts who attended the annual church parade at St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday afternoon. The experience of Australia when it had to rely for the rapid formation of an army upon the fighting qualities of civilians who had received their training under the cadet system was proof of the value of the education in discipline, in character and in physical fitness that is the principal aim both of the cadet system and of the Boy Scout movement. In other countries where there is no general provision for the training of youths, the Boy Scout movement has become an institution which, in the extent and international character of its organisation, is rivalled only by that other great militant institution the Salvation Army. As the Salvation Army owed its birth to one man of great personality and power, so the Boy Scout movement has always been associated with the personality of Sir Robert Baden-Powell, whose romantic career in the service of his country has made him even a greater hero among boys than he is among men. The movement that Sir Robert Baden-Powell initiated twenty years ago wrapped up in such externals as delight the hearts of boys a sound training in body, mind and character. He gave his scouts a uniform, taught them discipline as a game, and adorned the rules of manly conduct with a halo of romance. His idea was preceded in England by the Boys' Brigade movement that was started in connection with the churches, but the wider scope of the Boy Scout movement, its cunning appeal to that element in youth that delights in tales of Red Indians, soon caused it to absorb and solidify the spirit and the organisation of the Boys' Brigade. From small beginnings the Boy Scout movement has grown to huge dimensions. During the war its usefulness was recognised by the British Government, which employed it in many directions of home and quasi-military service. Shackleton paid a fine tribute to the organisation when he included two Boy Scouts in the little company he led upon his last journey into the Antarctic. But it is not only in England and throughout the British Empire that the Boy Scout movement has become a great factor in the training of youth. With its allied organisation, the Girl Guides, it is to be

the training of youth. With its allied organisation, the Girl Guides, it is to be found in every country "from China to Peru." At a conference of Girl Guide officials recently held at Cambridge there were gathered together delegates of twenty-five different nations, representing nearly half a million girls who are training as Guides. And at a subsequent conference of Boy Scouts held in Paris there were assembled five delegates from each of thirty nations, representing an aggregate of a million and a half Scouts.

The contemplation of such an organisation of the youth of all countries, bound together in a brotherhood and astemoot by the same high code of conduct and ideals, inevitably suggests the possibility of its use in cultivating that spirit of international brotherhood upon the growth of which the hope of world-wide peace depends. The Boy Scout movement embodies all the glories and romance of militarism that appeal to youth, but it is not militant in the sense of encouraging the spirit of war. It is an international brotherhood, bound together by a common ideal, ceremonial and dress, and already, because of the close mutual understanding between its million and a half of members, does to a much larger extent than the conclave that sits occasionally at Geneva play the part of a real League of Nations. The possibility of the Boy Scout movement becoming an important factor in international peace thinking was foreshadowed at the International Moral Education Congress which was held at Geneva this year. The Congress had specially asked for addresses on the subject of the Scout and Guide training, and its peaceful influence on education and in the cause of peace. Sir Robert Baden-Powell attended in person and in his address to the Congress emphasised the point that if we are to bring about peace in the world the way will be not so much in legislation to control the warlike propensities of existing Governments as in the will of the peoples for peace. This implies education of the oncoming generation to international good will. "The Boy Scout movement," said Sir Robert Baden-Powell, "is a natural "brotherhood whose members feel themselves bound together by natural ties "without regard to class, color or creed—a "league where they have learned to think "in terms of friendship towards each other, "and where already, by interchange of "correspondence and personal visits, they "are becoming comrades full of sympathy "and mutual understanding." The nations therefore have to their hand, in the international unity of the Boy Scout and the Girl Guide brotherhood, the machinery for infusing into the coming generation that spirit of international good will and understanding that will be the world's best protection against future wars.