

tradesmen who belong to outside organizations, and who are subscribing to another organization outside, who are admitted at the rate of 5s. per year. Now, sir, of the former we had 1,143 members, and of the latter 197—a total of 1,338. I hand in for the information of the Committee a return setting that forth. Now, sir, some reference has been made to the question of the amount that an apprentice earns as compared with a junior labourer over a given period of years. A statement was published by the tradesmen to show that this was so, and in the circular that has been sent to various members of Parliament it will be found that they state there is about £40 in favour of the labourer. Now, sir, that is only half a truth. As I have shown to you as we have gone along, the statement to the Committee and to members of Parliament is that we have refused to ask for an increase in remuneration. We did nothing of the kind. We refused to ask for an increase of 2s. per day. Here again they issue a statement showing the tradesman starting as an apprentice, and the labourer starting as a junior labourer; but they conveniently leave out the fact that the apprentice starts at fifteen years of age, whereas the junior labourer has to wait until he is eighteen years of age before he can commence to earn his money with the Railway Department. I think you will, as practical men, recognize the difference in value as between the boy of fifteen years of age and the youth of eighteen. Further than that, it is assumed that he rises to the position of tradesman and stops there. That is the case with the labourer, who scarcely ever goes beyond 10s. per day. In fact, I do not think the Department could produce half a dozen instances where a labourer has gone beyond 10s. per day; but the apprentice has avenues of promotion after he has completed his trade both in the Railway service and out of the Railway service by which he can procure increased remuneration. Mr. Hampton reminds me that there are about fourteen leading lifters, but those men are regarded as leading men who can go up to 12s. per day. Now, I find upon computing the position of the apprentice starting at eighteen and the junior labourer at eighteen, that in six years the apprentice earns £819, and the junior labourer £694 4s. Taking an additional fourteen years, which covers a period of twenty years, the apprentice earns £3,330 12s. and the junior labourer £2,659 16s. The balance in favour of the apprentice is £124 16s. in the six years, and in twenty years £670 16s. Had we succeeded in the demand of the tradesmen of 2s. per day increase it would have meant to the Railway Department an increase of at least £52,000 for the tradesmen alone, and if that request had been put forward for the whole of the Railway service it would have cost the Department approximately £312,000. Now, sir, I ask you if any sane body of men would be justified in doing so in war-time—and that at a time when we had pledged ourselves to stand by the Department and the Government as far as possible—would we have been justified in making a demand for that increase? It would have been hypocrisy pure and simple for us to have done so. I hand in to the Committee a tabulated statement I have prepared in regard to that. There is just one other matter I wish to refer to before I conclude, and that is the recognition of our society. In 1890, as probably a number of members of this Committee will remember, there was great industrial strife in this country by reason of the fact that the A.S.R.S. at that time was affiliated with the Maritime Council. The result was a strike, and the society after that made representations to the Government for official recognition. They recognized that they had made a mistake. They asked for official recognition, but it was denied them except upon certain conditions. Now, sir, the conditions are here enumerated, and I will hand in a copy to the Committee. They are as follow:—

*Conditions upon which the Society was recognized.*

1. The general executive (annual conference) to consist of representatives from various sections to meet yearly to transact business.
2. The society not to be affiliated with any other union.
3. The officers of the society to be railway employees, the (general) secretary excepted, who need not be a railway employee.
4. No persons other than employees of the New Zealand Government Railways, the Wellington and Manawatu Railway, and the New Zealand Midland Railway are to be members of the society.
5. The local branches of the society to retain their organization, but all officers to be railway employees.
6. It must be open for all employees either to join or withdraw from the society at pleasure under reasonable regulations, and the society must not interfere with the individual privileges and rights of any employee.
7. The Commissioners will grant leave on pay and passes to members of the general executive of the society (delegates) so constituted to enable them to meet once a year.
8. The Commissioners will grant leave on pay similarly for a period of one month in each year to the secretary to enable him to attend to the society work should such officer be a railway employee.
9. The objects of the society to be exclusively confined to the consideration of matters affecting their interests as railway employees.

Now, sir, I would ask the Department to tell the Committee if we have in any respect broken that compact which was entered into between us and the Railway Department at that time. We have faithfully adhered to it, and the Department has faithfully adhered to it. And, sir, is it going to be the Parliament of this country that is going to break a compact which was entered into by its employees and the Department? Reference has been made to the question of our organizing for the purpose of a strike. Let me carry you back just a little way. Not long ago we had the Waihi strike. We were condemned from one end of the country to the other for our action in standing by the country and the people and running the train services as they