

purposes of the Empire at the present time, and the fact remains that that having once got a start the tradesmen throughout the world are going to have a great difficulty in shaking it off. When I came here yesterday I heard for the first time that it was possible for a labourer who had not served his time to do tradesmen's work. I always thought that that was impossible, but now I find from the tradesmen themselves that any handy kind of man can cut in on their employment.

22. You stated to us at the conference that if we thought we were better able to represent our own case, by all means do it; but when we wish to do so I want to know why you are opposing us?—I do not remember saying it, but if I did I have no objection to it personally. I have shown to the Committee that our representations on behalf of tradesmen have been successful.

23. The A.S.R.S. say they stand to keep up the wages as far as tradesmen are concerned?—That is so.

24. That is to say, if the labourer is brought on, or if any one who has not served an apprenticeship is called upon to do a tradesman's work, he must be paid a tradesman's wages—the A.S.R.S. stand for that?—Oh, yes.

25. Then it was pointed out at conference that lifters were doing tradesmen's work in the bedding of brasses. You were told about that, and did you take steps to bring that under the notice of the Department?—I am not aware that it is tradesmen's work. What I do know is this, that the tradesmen themselves do not know where their particular calling commences and where it ends.

26. I ask you when we represented that matter whether you brought it under the notice of the Department?—No, we did not. It is a lifter's duty; but I wish to point out to the Committee that the tradesmen do not know where their particular calling commences or ends. For this reason I have just recently had a request to get a definition from the Department as to what is a fitter's work and what is a boilermaker's work. Two men had wrangled as to whether it was a fitter's duty to bore a hole in a boiler, or whether it was a boilermaker's duty.

27. I am glad that has come up because it is the duty of the general secretary to find out for us. We call it the "line of demarcation"?—Do you not know your own line of demarcation?

28. Yes; but, as you know, there is a difference of opinion, and it has got to be settled by the conference sometimes by a little give-and-take?—Yes, that is so.

29. You spoke about men having to do clerical work without having served an apprenticeship. Do you not think they were extenuating circumstances—you said those men had been injured?—There are always extenuating circumstances. If a man is injured he still has, in the majority of cases, to earn his own living, and if a man is able to do a tradesman's work and his employer is satisfied with his work, and agrees to pay him tradesman's wages, why should he be debarred from earning a better living in that way?—That is what I want to know.

30. You stated that one of the things you had done for tradesmen was to secure the war bonus. Was the war bonus due to your request, or to the request of the Engine-drivers, Firemen, and Cleaners' Association?—The request was first put forward by the A.S.R.S. for an increase of 1s. per day. The A.S.R.S. never at any time asked for a war bonus. We asked for an increase of 1s. per day for everybody to meet the increased cost of living, just as we told the tradesmen when they met us and asked us to apply for an increase of 2s. per day for them. We told them we were going to advocate for a substantial increase for all branches of the service to meet the increased cost of living, but that was conveniently kept back from the Committee.

31. You said you would press for all branches of the service?—Yes, that is so.

32. Then how is it that it is stated in the *Review* that the request you made to the Minister of Railways was for all branches of the service, but especially for the lower-paid men?—Because we received opposition from the Minister of Railways. I can produce before this Committee, and will do so, the whole of the correspondence. We went before the Minister and he informed us that the finances of the country would not bear the strain at that particular time, that there was grave doubt as to what the position would be, and that he was not in a position to say what he could do. I then urged this point upon him: I said, "If it is impossible to give it to all branches of the service, for Goodness' sake take into consideration the man who is getting 9s. per day, and upon whom the cost of living bears more heavily at the present time than upon any other class of worker." Was that an unreasonable thing to say?

33. My point was this: you said you would not give preference to any particular class, and when you found you had opposition you said, "If you cannot give it to all give it to the lower-paid man"?—And under those circumstances I say quite candidly that this Committee will, I think, admit that I did quite right.

34. *Mr. Veitch.*] Reference has been made to a branch having urged the executive to hold a stop-work meeting. Did any branch ask the executive to do that?—Yes.

35. Were resolutions passed by some of the branches to the effect that they were not satisfied with the executive not fighting hard enough for them, and urging them to take drastic action?—Yes, that is so. If this Committee chooses I am prepared to place correspondence and resolutions before them. I can assure you it will take the Committee at least three or four days to read them through.

36. In the face of strong pressure from large numbers of men in the service to take some drastic action, whatever that might mean, the executive council firmly stood through its agreement with the Government and the Department and fought for an increase on constitutional lines?—That is so, and they refused a request by a majority of the branches in the Dominion to call a general meeting of all employees in Wellington. They said, "No, we are managing the organization in our own way, and we are going to carry it on in our own way." They asked the Department to liberate a number of men in order to hold a meeting in Wellington for the purpose of approaching the Prime Minister.