

by their own indifference to their own society, have allowed this spirit to creep in. I may state further that through their not attending the meetings they hear all kinds of garbled statements being made through the works, and they run away with the idea that they are true, that the executive council is not urging the requests of the tradesmen. All that sort of thing causes discontent amongst the men, and those men who should know better simply join hands against the organization that is at present in existence. When the Tradesmen's Association was first brought into existence one of the first resolutions agreed to was that it had every confidence in the A.S.R.S., but even the members passing that resolution did not bestir themselves to take any interest in the society, and they just drifted along in the same old way. By no improvement taking place on account of their not attending to the work of the society, and carrying out the requests of those whom they were supposed to represent, they simply dropped out through their own fault. Of course, I must contend that it is not in the interests of the workmen themselves that two separate organizations should exist. A statement was made before the Committee in regard to the question of casual employees joining the Amalgamated Society. I might state that men have come to me and asked if I would nominate them for membership in the society. I have asked how long they have been in the service, and if they have said "A matter of two months or six weeks" I have replied, "You do not know how long you will be employed. You are now a casual; you have had a certain amount of time out of work; you require the money in your own pocket; and when you are there and certain of employment for twelve months or a couple of years I will hit you up again and see whether you will become a member or not. In the meantime I advise you not to join. Anything we can do for your welfare we will be only too pleased to do." The executive council and the general secretary have represented matters that I have sent forward both to the General Manager and to Mr. McVilly, and those matters have been redressed even when the men have not been members of the society.

3. *Mr. McDougall.*] You said it was unfortunate that tradesmen did not take a greater interest in the branch meetings of the A.S.R.S. Could you give any reason for that?—I take it they are absolutely indifferent.

4. You said yourself that you have every confidence in the A.S.R.S.?—Yes.

5. You were present at a meeting when the election of the delegate who was to represent the tradesmen to the conference in 1915 took place?—Yes.

6. If you had every confidence in the A.S.R.S., why was it that you moved that particular remit before the tradesmen's conference, the necessity of urging again on the A.S.R.S. with reference to the foreman painter in Petone?—The reason is simply this: while the Tradesmen's Association was working in with the A.S.R.S. I, claiming to be a unionist and a labour man, was able to join with the Tradesmen's Association that was working and acting, as I understood it was intended in the first instance as an advisory to the A.S.R.S., gave it my whole-hearted support. When it sent forward a delegate I also wished to use every plank possible in furtherance of my trade and to see that the foreman painter was appointed.

7. You stated that in the Wellington Branch there were 414 members?—Yes.

8. And of that number 220 were tradesmen?—Yes.

9. Can you say how many branches there are in the A.S.R.S.?—Forty-seven.

10. Do you know of any other branch in which the tradesmen have a majority?—I do not know. I am only speaking of the Wellington Branch.

11. *Mr. Hampton.*] Could you tell me if during the last few months, since some tradesmen have become hostile towards the A.S.R.S., there has been any falling-off so far as tradesmen joining the society are concerned?—As far as tradesmen are concerned the membership has been increasing.

12. Just state the figures?—From the 1st January, 1915, to the 31st December there were thirteen new members elected, and from the 1st January, 1916, to the 13th June there were thirty-five members elected—they were all tradesmen—making a total of forty-eight members.

13. *Mr. McDougall.*] Would you state if those tradesmen joined before or after it was put about that we were to receive that war bonus?—I might state that there was a very large number who came before the war bonus was talked about—while we were urging for increase in pay. It came about through a circular issued by myself asking all men to link up in unity, and to make one common effort for the common good. That was to better their position by having unity of strength. I attribute it to that circular, and I believe it can be borne out by other members of the branch.

14. How long ago is it since that circular was issued?—I cannot tell you now, but the date is on it.

15. It was somewhere within a month?—It is four months ago if it is a day.

TUESDAY, 4TH JULY, 1916.

Mr. Hampton: Before going any further, sir, I should like to ask whether the petitioners have lodged a copy of their rules of their association.

Clerk of Committee: No.

Mr. Hampton: Do they propose to lodge a copy of their rules?

Mr. McDougall: I might say that we stated that this was an association working within another. Our rules only provide for the procedure in the branch. You will understand that this association is only asking that we shall have recognition. That is all we are asking for.

Mr. Hampton: The reason I had for asking the question was that a gentleman who joined the association at Addington has had supplied to him a rule-book headed "N.Z.R. Tradesmen's Association (Canterbury Branch), 1915." I would draw the attention of the Committee to Rule 5,