

79. In view of there being some tradesmen getting a special allowance—say, acetone workers getting 12s. 6d. a day—you would not say that all the men got 12s. 6d. : because a few got a little extra you would not go round the country and say all the men got 12s. 6d. a day ?—No. I would like to say, in connection with lifters, that I am told that in some countries a lifter is classified as a mechanic and is called a “carriage-fitter.”

JOHN HENRY JONES examined. (No. 13.)

1. *Mr. Hampton.*] What are you ?—A leading turner employed at the Addington Workshops.
2. How long have you been there ?—Close on thirty-five years.
3. You have known of my connection with the A.S.R.S. at Addington ?—I have known it very intimately.
4. You heard the statements I made yesterday as to my attitude towards what is known as the “Red Fed.” element ?—I did.
5. Are those statements correct generally ?—Absolutely correct so far as my memory goes. I know you took a most prominent part in condemning the proposed assistance in connection with the Waihi strike and other things that have occurred during the period of unrest at that time, and possibly it was entirely on your efforts on that occasion that that was knocked on the head.
6. Do you think that the tradesmen, from your knowledge of them at Addington, really want complete separation from the A.S.R.S. ?—I am satisfied from those with whom I have come in contact that they do not require severance from the A.S.R.S., I think that to a very large extent those who have signed the petition have signed it under a misapprehension as to its real meaning, and when the real meaning was put to them, numbers of them in my hearing repudiated their desire for severing their connection with the A.S.R.S. under any conditions.
7. Have you taken any part in the tradesmen’s movement ?—I have. I was one who represented the tradesmen at a deputation on two occasions, and I was asked on two other occasions to represent the tradesmen at Addington. On one occasion I could not go owing to domestic arrangements, and on the other occasion I could not get away owing to a departmental matter. I was engaged upon some important work and my superior officer did not wish me to go away, otherwise I would have been up here on four different occasions.
8. Were you satisfied with the treatment you received at the hands of the executive ?—I was quite satisfied with the treatment we got from the executive, and I can fully bear out the statements made by Mr. Barnett that one of the first resolutions passed when the delegates met in Wellington was to the effect that all our requests should be put through the A.S.R.S.
9. Do you know of any reason why that should be departed from ?—I do not know of the slightest reason why it should be departed from. In fact, I think it would be a mistake under any circumstances to depart from that course.
10. You have heard clauses 3 and 4 of the petition read out condemning the A.S.R.S. : are those statements true ?—I think those statements are misleading. I do not think the compilers think they are true. I think they go too far.
11. Are you a member of the South Island Appeal Board ?—Yes, I have been so for nearly twelve years.
12. Whom do you represent on that Board ?—The entire workshops branches right through the Middle Island.
13. Have you any reason to suppose that the labourers are antagonistic or hostile to the tradesmen ?—I have not had the slightest reason to suppose they were so. I come in contact with the labourers and tradesmen a great deal, and I have heard nothing that would lead me to form such an opinion.
14. Do you think the other side could obtain many witnesses from Addington to state that their desire was to leave the A.S.R.S. and separate entirely from us ?—I cannot speak really as regards a large proportion, but I am of opinion that they could not obtain very many witnesses. If they got a dozen it would be about the limit of their capacity.
15. What do you think is the object of the petition—what is behind it ?—I consider the object of the petition is to form an entirely different society.
16. But after that do they want an increase in wages ?—After that I presume they would petition the Department for restricting certain workers or for an increase in wages. I think that that is behind the whole thing.
17. *Mr. Field.*] Do you suggest that the signatures to this tradesmen’s petition were unfairly obtained ?—I do not know that I could say definitely that they were unfairly obtained, but I can say truthfully that large numbers of men who signed that petition signed it under a misapprehension as to its true purport. They considered that the petition was really one from inside the A.S.R.S. Of course, I was asked to sign the petition myself, but I did not do so, and of course did not read it.
18. Have any of those who signed it told you that they did not read it before signing it ?—Yes, they have.
19. Would you be prepared to abide by the result of a new ballot ?—Most certainly. I think it is a most necessary thing to do. If the whole position was explained to the tradesmen beforehand I am satisfied that the petition would be reversed in a large number of cases.
20. *Mr. Dickson.*] In speaking of the petition you said you thought the petitioners could not get a dozen men to come along and give evidence in favour of the petition from your workshops ?—Yes, I stated that, and that is my opinion. I do not lay that down as an absolute certainty.
21. You saw the voting-papers sent around ?—No, I did not.
22. Well, this is the voting-paper [produced to witness] ?—I have not seen this before.