

36. The position that your society takes up is so different to what your old union did?—No, there is no difference. In the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters if a man proves himself capable and the employer says he is capable and pays him the Arbitration Court rate of pay, the Carpenters' Society accepts him as a safe member of their society, providing they are satisfied and the master is satisfied; but they will not even recommend a man who has got indentures to a master unless they are absolutely satisfied that he is a good man. They will put him down to work on the transport ships and so forth.

37. *Mr. McDougall.*] Are you in favour of the abolition of the apprenticeship?—I am if you can bring in a better scheme, and I think there is a better scheme coming into existence. The present system can be improved upon.

38. Can you give a definite answer—are you in favour of the abolition of the apprenticeship question?—I have given you my opinion that the apprenticeship question can be greatly improved upon, and we are here as a society to do so. I would just like to say, Mr. Chairman, that I strongly protest on behalf of a large number of men, unfortunately placed like myself, who are unable to produce indentures or other written document except from the Department, and if this association is recognized we are going to be debarred from becoming members and protecting our own interests in the A.S.R.S.

39. That is not the case? I should like to point out that that is according to the rules which have been handed to me. Another thing is that I am absolutely certain that if this splitting-up of the society is allowed to go on it will not be in the interests of the Department or in the interests of the public. There is no greater safeguard than the New Zealand Railways have than the A.S.R.S. in the way they do their work and in protecting this country from any industrial strike so far as the railway men are concerned. We have a job, I admit, to satisfy every one—no one can do that, and it is no use trying. I am absolutely satisfied that it will be far more satisfactory for the men themselves to have one society such as the A.S.R.S. than to have this splitting-up into small sections of trades societies.

(GEORGE YENN examined. (No. 15.)

1. *Mr. Hampton.*] What are you?—A leading carriage-trimmer at Addington; and I have been in the service for thirty-six years.

2. Have you taken any part in the working of the branch of the A.S.R.S. at Addington?—Yes, I was the first chairman of the Addington Branch.

3. Do you know of any who have held the position of chairman who have been tradesmen like yourself?—I think every chairman of the branch has been a tradesman.

4. How many would that be?—Seven, including the present.

5. You have heard what Mr. Jones and Mr. Cameron have said here regarding the position at Addington?—Yes.

6. You generally endorse what they have said?—Yes, I do.

7. Have you seen that famous circular, “Junior Labourer v. Apprentice”?—Yes.

8. Have you seen that in circulation at Addington?—Yes.

9. Do you think that was a factor in the working up of this agitation amongst the tradesmen?—I think it had something to do with it.

ALFRED PETERS examined. (No. 16.)

1. *Mr. Hampton.*] What are you?—A fitter at Hillside.

2. What length of service have you had?—About eighteen years.

3. Are you secretary of the Hillside Branch of the A.S.R.S.?—I am, and I have held the position since 1912.

4. How many members are there on the branch books?—Three hundred and sixty-two.

5. And how many members are tradesmen?—One hundred and ninety-three.

6. You have heard what Mr. Barnett has said about the position of Invercargill and Hillside in regard to the tradesmen's movement: do you generally endorse what Mr. Barnett has said?—I do.

7. And you have a good knowledge of the men there?—I have very fair knowledge of the men there. I was secretary of the Tradesmen's Association when it first started at Hillside. I have been elected as delegate for the tradesmen, and sat in conference with the delegates in 1914. I believe that the tradesmen as a whole are quite content to remain under the A.S.R.S. I believe that as far as Hillside is concerned the men have not realized what the prayer of the petition means. In my opinion the men have been misled, and that is by the fact that they were told that it did not mean separation. That has been argued by the chairman of their branch and by others in the shop. Whenever I had an opportunity I pointed out that it did mean separation, and wherever I did that the men expressed their regret at having signed the petition for separation.

8. *Mr. Sidey.*] Do I understand you to say you were secretary of the association?—I was secretary of the Tradesmen's Association at its inception. Of course I am a member of the present Tradesmen's Association, but as soon as I found out where I stood I protested strongly against any separation, and seeing that I am so opposed to it I cannot continue my association as a member under the circumstances.

9. Are you still a member or have you withdrawn?—I have not withdrawn. I believe there may yet be developments which will enable me to remain a member of the association.

10. *Mr. McDougall.*] You know remits 13 and 14 which were forwarded by our executive to the last conference?—Yes.

11. Did you agree with us in regard to those two things?—I am of opinion that the A.S.R.S. made a mistake when they turned down that remit, but my opinion is that the tradesmen are making a far more serious mistake in seeking for separation.