

12. You were at that meeting at Dunedin a few months ago when I spoke and made the statement that a petition was shortly to be circulated asking for official recognition. Do you remember my making that statement?—Possibly you did.

13. The question came up as to whether that necessarily meant withdrawing our membership from the A.S.R.S. You heard that discussed, did you not?—Yes.

14. And I stated that we would never ask any man to withdraw his membership from the A.S.R.S. if we received recognition?—You have no control over the men as men; you are withdrawing as a body, and to withdraw as a body is separation.

15. Is it not possible that any one could retain membership in the two bodies?—Yes, they could, but if I have my way they will not do so for long.

16. Have you attended all the meetings of the Tradesmen's Association at Hillside?—Not all—I have missed one or two of them.

17. Then I suppose you do not know what took place at those meetings?—I cannot say that either. A man hears a good deal that he does not hear at a meeting.

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ARTHUR EDWARD FISHER examined. (No. 17.)

1. *Mr. Hampton.*] What are you?—A painter at Newmarket; and I have been in the service for fifteen years.

2. Are you secretary of the Newmarket Branch of the A.S.R.S.?—I am.

3. How many members are there in the branch?—The total on the roll is 306.

4. How many are tradesmen?—One hundred and sixty-one.

5. Have you the register with you?—I have.

6. And you could give the name and occupation of every member?—I could.

7. *Mr. McDougall.*] As far as you are aware it is the feeling of the tradesmen in the Auckland Workshops that we should receive official recognition?—Well, as far as that goes I saw the petition going around and saw at least three men sign it. The men were just asked, "Will you sign this petition?" The man who took it round did not say what it contained or anything else.

8. To the best of your knowledge do you think the majority of the men in the Auckland Workshops are in favour of a separate organization of their own?—I was a member of the Tradesmen's Association when it started. I attended the meetings until a resolution was moved that when the Tradesmen's Association was strong enough they would withdraw from the A.S.R.S. That was afterwards rescinded; but as soon as the resolution was moved that they secede from the A.S.R.S. I resigned.

9. *Mr. Hampton.*] What year was that?—I could not say.

10. *Mr. Dickson.*] You say there are 161 tradesmen belonging to your branch of the A.S.R.S. Do you know how many belong to outside unions in Newmarket—those who pay 5s. a year: there are roughly about nineteen?—I would not be sure.

11. Were you present at the A.S.R.S. meeting when they passed a resolution against the A.S.R.S. for not taking action in connection with the tradesmen—did they not pass a non-confidence motion?—They passed a motion that they had no confidence in the executive as at present constituted.

12. Were you present at that meeting?—Yes.

13. They were almost unanimous, were they not?—Yes, almost unanimous.

14. *Mr. Hampton.*] Do you know if men were brought to that meeting for the purpose of voting for the motion?—I think so.

15. Was there any organized attempt made to get the men there?—I think so.

16. Was there a resolution written out and brought to that meeting before ever they heard Mr. Moore and myself speak?—I do not think so; I think the resolution was written after Messrs. Hampton and Moore spoke.

17. *Mr. Dickson.*] But they carried it?—Yes. Mr. Hampton and Mr. Moore addressed the meeting on the 10th June, and on the 17th June I received a list of resignations. I said to one of the chaps, "Why have you resigned?" He said, "After what Mr. Hampton said we are full up." At the top of that list of resignations was the date 1st June, before Mr. Hampton spoke at Newmarket. That list was signed by sixteen or seventeen men.

18. *Mr. Hampton.*] And the date at the head of the list was prior to my being there at all?—Yes.

19. And it expressed dissatisfaction with my action there?—The list I received only contained resignations. Dissatisfaction was expressed to me verbally when the list was handed to me.

20. *Mr. Dickson.*] Was not the same resolution carried at Hillside and Addington?—From what I have heard it was carried at every meeting.

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JAMES McDOUGALL further examined. (No. 18.)

1. *Mr. Veitch.*] Could you give the Committee any information as to the procedure that was adopted in connection with the taking of the ballot?—The procedure was that we got a little over two thousand ballot-papers printed, and distributed them to the various branch secretaries. We told them they were to endeavour to put the ballot-papers into the hand of every man in the service. They were to act as returning officers. When they received the numbers they were to wire the result, and then afterwards to send the ballot-papers forward in order that we could check them.

2. Was each man handed a ballot-paper?—They were reminded that each man had the opportunity of keeping that ballot-paper for a week.