

that our interests are not only not identical but often antagonistic. The engine-drivers, firemen, and cleaners found this same difficulty; in fact, I believe they instanced my particular trade as having very different interests from theirs. I agree with that statement, and if the Railway Committee recommended that the Engine-drivers, Firemen, and Cleaners' Association be accorded official recognition, surely you will not refuse the same privilege to the Tradesmen? Our opponents have often stressed the point of the advisability of one big union. But in its very size lies its weakness; so many divergent interests must be considered that there is not time for each one's claims—with all due deference to these gentlemen's abilities—nor expert knowledge, which is required to adequately represent our views. Let me give you an illustration of how our grievances are neglected by the A.S.R.S. compared with the way in which the E.D.F.C.s are looked after by their association. Fitters in a running-shed represented, through their branch, that owing to the very dirty nature of certain work, the extremely dirty state of drop-pits in which they worked, they considered themselves entitled to extra remuneration. The A.S.R.S., I believe, represented the matter to the Department, but did not take the trouble to see personally the state of the drop-pits and the conditions under which the fitters worked. The result was that nothing has been done for the fitters. On the other hand, cleaners in a certain running-shed complained to their association of the condition of some pits they did duty in. Note what took place. Officials of the E.D.F.C. Association visited the pits, saw the conditions, took up the cleaners' case, and the cleaners had the pits put in good condition for them. Why? Because their officials were able to speak from knowledge at first hand, and also because these men had been "through the mill" themselves. In conclusion, I desire to hand the following memorandum of reasons why official recognition should be accorded to the New Zealand Railway Tradesmen's Association: Firstly, the tradesmen's interests have been neglected by the A.S.R.S. Secondly, more important still, the great majority of the A.S.R.S. have conflicting and hostile interests to the tradesmen. Thirdly, the tradesmen have for years been dissatisfied, but have endeavoured by every manner of means to be loyal to the A.S.R.S. They are forced by sheer impossibility of remaining any longer in the society to form their own association. Fourthly, tradesmen have substantial identity of interests. Their interests and grievances are different from those of the great mass of unskilled labour, such as porters, general labourers, keepers, surfacemen, and suchlike. Fifthly, matters touching special trades must be represented only by men in those trades. Sixthly, there is no reason why any requests or grievances or demands of the tradesmen should first be censored by a body representing unskilled labour, and if the unskilled be in any way affected or thinks itself affected that it should have power to block the grievances, demands, or requests of the skilled men. Seventhly, there is perfect unanimity amongst the tradesmen. The ballot shows how unanimous they are. Eighthly, their numbers are sufficiently large to have recognition accorded to them. Ninthly, they represent a body of men larger than the Engine-drivers, Firemen, and Cleaners' Association, and they have as substantial identity of interests as have these men. Tenthly, tradesmen have formed their association and they have got the fixed and deliberate intention of continuing it; and, moreover, whether official recognition be accorded or not, to continue it. They will never be satisfied until they get official recognition. Eleventhly, essentially all they desire is permission to represent to the Department their own affairs. They are not now asking for any increase of wages in this petition, nor are they asking for the remedy of any grievance. They simply ask that the Department shall hear them upon their own requests, and shall not require that any request they make shall be first submitted for the approval of a body having hostile and conflicting interests. That is all I desire to say, gentlemen, and I thank you for the attentive hearing you have given me.

4. *Mr. Veitch.*] Do I understand you to say that there are seventeen hundred tradesmen in the service, and that, roughly, five hundred of those are in the A.S.R.S. now?—It is like this: We estimated those numbers: we cannot get the definite number. I said there were seventeen hundred tradesmen employed in the service at the present time, and out of that seventeen hundred I believe only five hundred of them are in the A.S.R.S.

5. That is approximately the proportion in the A.S.R.S.?—Yes.

6. Can you say whether that small proportion is the result of men leaving owing to dissatisfaction which you say exists now, or has that always been the proportion?—Partly owing to the dissatisfaction I know some members have left; but, as I pointed out, the great majority of the tradesmen are in their own trades-unions outside, and they feel that they cannot join a body such as the A.S.R.S., whose interests are different.

7. With regard to the question of all tradesmen having indentures, did you mean that to apply to men in the service now or merely to fresh appointments?—When we brought that remit forward we were requested to explain that, and we said that as far as the men at present in the service were concerned we had no fault to find with them whether they had served an apprenticeship or not. We asked that they should represent to the Department that when they were employing tradesmen in future they would see that those men had served their apprenticeship, and that they had their papers or indentures or something equivalent. By "indentures" I do not mean the hard-and-fast legal term to apply. It is not the custom for outside employers to give indentures. Sometimes they simply give a written statement that So-and-so has served his apprenticeship for five years. That was all we wanted. If any one could vouch that a certain man had been employed in the trade for five years as an apprentice we had no objection.

8. You will recognize, of course, that it is possible for a man to serve his term of apprenticeship without learning his trade?—Yes, we recognize that.

9. There was one point I did not understand. You say the A.S.R.S. were asked to make representations about the dirty nature of the work in the engine-shed for a special allowance for fitters and boilermakers working in the engine-sheds?—Yes.

10. Do you really think it is necessary for a man to require expert knowledge to know whether a pit is dirty to work in or not—do you not think you were spreading that grievance