

is the case. We do not want to do that, but if we have our organization we will be able to protect ourselves against that sort of thing, and that is why we ask the Committee to give official recognition to the New Zealand Railway Tradesmen's Association. Another matter brought before the Committee by the E.F.C.A. was the question of strikes. At that time the question of strikes was mythical, because we had at the head of the A.S.R.S. a level-headed man in Mr. Veitch, who always set his face against anything of a revolutionary character, but the position to-day is not so secure. Since 1910 this country has been deluged with revolutionary literature, and the recent waterside workers' strike in Wellington was an echo of it. I can tell you also that the men in the Railway service are being contaminated with stuff of a like nature. That is what we fear; we fear that we may be dragged at the heels of these men because we are in a minority; and in May last we had the executive of the A.S.R.S. listening to two speeches delivered by those agitators who brought out the waterside workers. Our parents are the pioneers of this country; my mother reared five sons, and had us all apprenticed to trades on a working-man's wages. That was the best she could do. She did it by self-denial, even to the extent of denying herself the very necessities of life. It is because of those things, gentlemen, that we want our own organization. We are afraid that our dignity is being undermined, that our birthright is about to be taken away from us, and we ask that you will pass your judgment in our favour. We are only asking that we shall have an organization whereby we can deal with the management direct, so that we can get justice meted out to us.

3. *Mr. Sidey.*] How long was that employee receiving full wages as a labourer before he went into the paint-shop?—In the first case I mentioned the man was a labourer for about six years. All the time that man was there he was receiving the full rate of wages as a labourer, which was quite sufficient to keep him. He was a single man. In the other case the man came right into the service as a tradesman on tradesman's wages.

4. *Mr. Field.*] The Department seems to be under the impression that the interests of the tradesmen have been fully served by the A.S.R.S., and you are quite satisfied that you have not been looked after by them?—I say that we feel it would be rather incongruous for us to come here without giving evidence on some grievances that have occurred in the service, but we are not here to put the Department on its trial. It is the A.S.R.S. that is on its trial, and we ask that this Committee will give us the chance to rectify the little grievances that are existing in the Department. I say that during this crisis in the world's history we tradesmen do not want to take up the wages question at all, and we only mention it to show that there are other grievances besides those statements in the petition.

5. Do you think that the granting of recognition to the association would have the effect of forcing the Department to increase the staff on account of the executive having to be away on matters connected with the association?—That is a question I have not gone into, but I think we could come to an arrangement with the Department whereby the position would not be worse than it is at the present time.

6. *Mr. Hampton.*] Would you have any objection to give the name of the man you referred to so that we could verify it if necessary?—Most decidedly I would object. I want you to take my evidence as the evidence of an honest man who has not come here with any flamboyant statements.

7. *Mr. Hiley.*] Will you give the name to the Department afterwards?—Yes.

8. *Mr. Hampton.*] What trade are you in?—I am a painter.

9. What wages do you receive?—11s. 6d. per day.

10. That is without the war bonus?—That does not include the war bonus—we have not received it yet.

11. You referred to a tradesman getting 1s. a day more than you?—Yes, he was a leading hand on the road.

12. And you decline to give his name?—I do. He has left the service

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*Mr. McDougall:* That, Mr. Chairman, is all the evidence we desire to bring before the Committee.

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FRIDAY, 30TH JUNE, 1916.

MATTHEW JOSEPH MACK examined. (No. 6.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are general secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants?—Yes.

2. Will you make your statement to the Committee in regard to the petition of the New Zealand Railway Tradesmen's Association?—Yes. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, at the outset I must candidly say that after hearing the evidence yesterday I am somewhat perplexed as to what is the real basis of the petition. The prayer of the petition says, "The policy of the society on matters touching the skilled labour of tradesmen is in conflict with the interests of tradesmen. The society has absolutely refused to represent questions touching the remuneration, protection, and conditions of the skilled labour of tradesmen. Tradesmen accordingly were compelled to form their own association." The only inference that can be drawn from that statement, sir, is that the tradesmen are suffering as regards remuneration and in their conditions as tradesmen,