13. xii. 60

Abstract of Thesis

Submitted for the D.Phil

P.S. Gupta,

'History of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, 1871 - 1913'.

Trade Unionism among British railwaymen developed in the course of the second wave of trade union growth which occurred during the prosperous years towards the end of the third quarter of the Nineteenth Century. Until then self-organisation among railwaymen had been hampered by certain features of the industry in its period of expansion.

An exceptionally authoritarian tradition of management, a high proportion of young and unsettled workers, the policy of recruiting new entrants from the ranks of agricultural labourers, and a tendency among different grades of railwaymen to keep aloof from one another - these factors hindered the growth of trade unionism. The Locomotive grade possessed a scarcity value which made its members more susceptible to organisation. But they also cultivated an attitude of exclusiveness. The history of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants is largely a story of a struggle to maintain a trade union in spite of these handicaps.

With the generous financial assistance of M.T. Bass, the Liberal M.P. who represented the big railway centre of Derby, the A.S.R.S. was founded in 1871. Although an organizational shape was thus given

to the numerous movements for shorter hours and higher wages started by railwaymen in 1871-2, the early years of the society were marked by inefficient management and conflicts between the trade union and the friendly aspects of the society. Under the influence of middle-class philanthropists the A.S.R.S. disavowed strikes altogether. Many members regarded the society as being purely a friendly society.

The depression of the last years of the eighteen-seventies revealed the inability of the union to organise effective resistance to the cuts imposed by the Companies. The secession of a number of Locomen to form the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (A.S.L.E.F.), and a rapid decline in membership finally made the A.S.R.S. abandon some expensive friendly benefits and introduce benefits aimed at giving protection against victimisation. Though strikes were no longer disavowed by the new rules adopted in 1880, the procedure for starting them was complicated.

Growth of trade unionism in Durham and Northumberland in the short-lived boom of the early 'eighties marked a turning point in the history of the A.S.R.S. The employees of the North Eastern Railway, working in this area, henceforth set the pace in all industrial movements organised by the A.S.R.S. The union's member-ship began to grow after 1882, and further industrial experience made it alter its rules in 1888 to streamline the procedure for calling strikes. In 1887 the General Secretary advocated a national standard rate, and planned to win recognition, which none of the Companies had yet accorded to it. Contrary to the generally held view, the transformation of the A.S.R.S. from a friendly society

into a militant trade union occurred before 1889..

In the period of the New Unionism - between 1889 and 1892 - the A.S.R.S. fought a few successful strikes, and secured recognition for a short period in South Wales, North Eastern England, and Ireland. A General Railway Workers' Union was formed to recruit all classes of railwaymen in 1889. The A.S.R.S. marked itself off from this and other 'general' unions by refusing to recruit casual labourers and workmen in railway workshops. It concentrated only on a vertical extension of trade unionism down the hierarchy of the permanent staff of railway servants in four main departments. It had a cautious policy on sympathetic strikes and on forming general federation of trade unions.

Meanwhile the A.S.R.S. had tried to extend the powers already exercised by the Board of Trade over the Railway Companies so as to make the latter more accountable to the State for the safety of their employees and for long hours of work. As the practice of regular consultation between the Board of Trade and the Union had not developed yet, the legislative achievements of the union until 1893 were not commensurate with the efforts made in campaigning. The success of the A.S.R.S. in putting the Employers' Liability Act of 1880 on the statute-book owed a great deal to close liaison with Liberal members of Parliament. The A.S.R.S. deliberately isolated itself from the Trades Union Congress in its campaign for this Act.

As the work of many grades of railwaymen differed from factory work in not being of a stationary character, the A.S.R.S. was at first reluctant to support the agitation for a legal eight hour day. The

reluctance was strengthened by the decision, taken in 1889, to campaign for a National Programme in which overtime at a daily rate featured prominently. The uncertain outcome of a few railway strikes in 1890 and 1891 made it more interested in the regulation of hours by the State. A well-planned campaign inside and outside Parliament led to the passage of an Act in 1893, which gave the Board of Trade powers to reduce hours. In the course of using these powers, the officials of the Board of Trade became accustomed to consult the officials of the A.S.R.S. fairly regularly.

The general determination of the Companies not to recognise trade unions was stiffened after an Act of 1894 made their rates and charges very inflexible. The national programmes with which the A.S.R.S. accompanied its demands for recognition were considered too expensive by the Companies.

Between 1890 and 1897 the A.S.R.S. extended its activities in Ireland, winning concessions from some railways. But after the failure of an Irish all-grades movement in 1897, which had been started with the aim of winning recognition, the Irish membership dwindled rapidly.

In the same period, membership grew among certain senior grades of railwaymen in the industrialized areas of Great Britain. In 1896 the union asked the Companies to establish a national standard rate for these grades and accept the principle of collective bargaining by reaching settlements with deputations sponsored by the A.S.R.S. The North Eastern Railway (N.E.R.) took the dispute to arbitration against the wishes of other Companies. Being elated by this success,

the A.S.R.S. launched a national all-grades movement late in 1897 to win recognition. A number of leading Companies entered into a secret agreement to fight the threatened strike. Realising that its preparations had been inadequate, the union asked the Board of Trade to mediate. When the latter refused, the union leaders lost their nerve and did not fight. In spite of the failure of the general movement the well-organised grade of Goods Guards obtained uniform conditions on almost all railways. Some Companies came to accept collective bargaining with their own employees.

The need to promote the growth of the union by encouraging the active membership to participate in its government had made the A.S.R.S. develop a democratic structure in which the influence of part-time activists could be predominant, unless the full-time officials worked together and the General Secretary showed strong qualities of leadership. The enforced resignation of a veteran General Secretary in 1897 in painful circumstances weakened the authority of that office. In the unsettled years immediately afterwards, the unofficial strike on the Taff Vale Railway, called by a rebellious organising secretary, involved the A.S.R.S. in a famous lawsuit. The verdict made a trade union liable in its corporate capacity for the tortious acts of its agents. While this crippled industrial movements until the Trades Disputes Act of 1906 reversed the judgment, the shock administered by the decision enabled the new General Secretary, Richard Bell, to carry out constitutional alterations in 1903. These enhanced the powers of the General Secretary.

The only success achieved in industrial disputes since 1897 was

the winning of full recognition on the N.E.R. in 1900. As Bell's policy was to avoid strikes on the N.E.R. in order to show that recognition contributed to industrial peace, the rank-and-file on that railway showed increasing signs of militancy as concessions fell far short of demands.

In spite of the reluctance of the Board of Trade to assist the A.S.R.S. in the aim of winning recognition, the practice of consultation between the departmental officials and the A.S.R.S. survived. This was a major factor behind the passage of the Railway Employment (Prevention of Accidents) Act of 1900. The experience of campaigning for this Act strengthened the desire to return a member of the A.S.R.S. to parliament.

Hitherto efforts at direct parliamentary representation had been bedevilled by the opposition of Conservative members to the Liberal-labour sympathies of those union officials who had parliamentary ambitions. This opposition weakened towards the end of the eighteen-nineties as a result of the industrial experience of the union. A determined group of Socialists made sure, however, that any bargains with the major political parties, in all attempts to find a suitable constituency, were ruled out.

They were also successful in making the A.S.R.S. promote a resolution at the T.U.C. of 1899, which led to the foundation of the Labour Representation Committee (afterwards the Labour Party). Richard Bell, who had been elected to Parliament in 1900, refused to sever his links with the Liberals, but in spite of his opposition the Socialists reaffirmed the policy of independence. After the

Labour Party returned a large number of members to Parliament in 1906, including two members of the A.S.R.S., very little co-operation developed between Bell and the parliamentary Labour Party. Relations between Bell and his union became so strained over conflicts on parliamentary tactics that he resigned in 1909.

Meanwhile Bell's favourite industrial strategy of starting a national all-grades movement to win recognition had led to a new departure in railway labour relations with the introduction of the Railway Conciliation Scheme of 1907. In the years immediately after the Taff Vale judgment, the membership of the A.S.R.S. had begun to decline, for the first time in many years. Technical changes introduced by the Companies had adversely affected Locomen and Signalmen. The two sectional unions catering for these grades - the A.S.L.E.F. and the United Pointsmen and Signalmens' Society (U.P.S.S.) - began to strengthen their position at the expense of the A.S.R.S.

A scheme to federate the A.S.L.E.F. and the A.S.R.S. broke down because Bell was mainly interested in amalgamating the two unions, while the A.S.L.E.F. aimed at becoming the only union which had the right to speak on behalf of Locomen.

When, early in 1906, the A.S.L.E.F. launched a national Locomen's movement and appealed to the Locomen inside the A.S.R.S. to join it, Bell decided to start a national all-grades movement whose main aim was to win recognition for the A.S.R.S. alone. Lack of support from other unions and an inadequate growth of membership in course of 1907 made the union hesitate before declaring a strike. Although a strike ballot was taken, the union was aware of its weakness and so it was

obliged to accept a Conciliation scheme drafted by the railway Companies and offered to them by Lloyd George, who was then President of the Board of Trade. Under this scheme union officials were not recognised, but collective bargaining was introduced through a series of sectional conciliation boards, presided over by a central board, on each railway. Members of the A.S.R.S. captured the vast majority of the seats in the elections to the Conciliation Boards, but the A.S.L.E.F. and the U.P.S.S. showed their strength in some areas. The scheme assisted the union in increasing its membership in all the industrial areas with a tradition of trade unionism. But a majority of the eligible labour force still remained unorganised, even on the N.E.R.

The history of labour relations between 1907 and 1911 was marked by frequent differences between the men and the management on each Conciliation Board on the procedure to be followed and on the interpretation of agreements. The A.S.R.S. also became doubtful of the sincerity of the Board of Trade in operating the scheme in a manner fair to both sides.

Rising prices and stagnant wages affected the goods staff and draymen employed by railway Companies so much that they came under the influence of syndicalist and other left-wing leaders in some areas, especially in Liverpool. By August 1911 the union leadership had little control over strikes among these grades in Liverpool and afterwards over a general strike on the L. & Y. railway. Then the A.S.R.S. called a national railway strike, jointly with the other railway unions, with the twin aims of regaining the initiative and winning full

recognition.

The strike was successful in strengthening the position of the officials of each union, bringing the unions closer together, and effecting a speedy review of the Conciliation Scheme by a Royal Commission. The railway Companies accepted the verdict of the Commissioners, which was in favour of giving freedom to the men's side in each Conciliation board to elect a union official as their secretary.

While the more militant elements inside the A.S.R.S. were in favour of pledging the union to radical doctrines of Syndicalism and the sympathetic strike, the union leaders successfully resisted these pressures. The leaders concentrated on merging all railway trade unions, by taking advantage of the goodwill created by joint action during the national strike. Although the A.S.L.E.F. held aloof, the other unions joined the A.S.R.S. to form the National Union of Railwaymen in 1913.

The new union differed from the A.S.R.S. in being willing to recruit casual labourers and people employed in railway workshops. It showed a greater tendency to support the sympathetic strike. But it made only one - albeit important - alteration to the structure of organisation built up by the A.S.R.S. in course of its history. While a federal structure was rejected, the introduction of the departmental principle in the constitution of the N.U.R. gave some recognition to the divergent needs of different grades. The A.S.R.S. had failed to do so adequately. The formation of the N.U.R. marks a turning point in the history of railway trade unionism.

The History of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, 1871-1913

P. S. Gupta

(Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.)

Preface

The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants has featured prominently in the history of the British Labour movement, but no systematic account of its history has been attempted hitherto. G.W. Alcock's Fifty Years of Railway Trade Unionism (1922) is unsatisfactory, although some of Alcock's direct personal experiences, which he has recorded in that book, have some value to the historian. A re-examination of the original sources was overdue.

In the following pages an attempt has been made, within the framework of a narrative history, to cover many different aspects of the forty years of the A.S.R.S. - the chequered story of the growth of the union; the pattern of demands put forward by it for different grades; its links with other industrial movements of the period; the evolution of its power-structure; the way it worked as a pressure-group; and the part played by it in the political history of the labour movement. It is hoped that within the limits imposed by the requirements of a thesis, a satisfactory answer has been given to most of the questions raised by these aspects.

In a short introduction to the Bibliography I have indicated the main problems connected with the nature of the available evidence. The main sources have been the official records of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (A.S.R.S.), the railway Companies, and the railway department of the Board of Trade.

The voluminous documents belonging to the A.S.R.S. are now kept at Unity House, the office of the National Union of Railwaymen. I am most sincerely grateful to Mr. Sidney Greene, the General Secretary

of the N.U.R., who gave me permission to consult these papers; to Dr. P.S. Bagwell, who, after his appointment as the official historian to prepare a work for the golden jubilee of the N.U.R. in 1963, allowed me to continue my work without the slightest hindrance. Above all I am grateful for the courtesy and kindness shown by the Office Manager of the Union, Mr. A.E. Branson, who gave me a completely free access to the archives.

I have benefitted considerably from the encouragement and advice given by my supervisor Dr. Henry Pelling. I am also indebted to Mr. Hugh Clegg, who read part of the work in progress. Needless to say, I alone am responsible for all the shortcomings of the work.

June 1960. P.S.G.

CONTENTS

		Page
List of Abbreviations.		vi
Chapter I.	Introduction.	1-9
	Notes.	10-12
Chapter II.	The Transition to Militancy, 1871-1888.	13-41
	Appendix A. Membership: Distribution among different Grades, 1875.	42
	Appendix B. Membership: Geographical Variations. 1872,1875 and 1880.	43-4
	Appendix C. Membership: Geographical Variations, 1880 and 1883.	45
	Appendix D. Proposed National Standard, 1887.	46
	Appendix E. The Darlington Programme, 1888.	47
	Notes to Chapter II.	48-58
Chapter III.	Parliamentary Work, 1871-1889.	59-90
	Notes.	91-8
Chapter IV.	Strife and Growth, 1889-1893.	99-130
	Appendix A. Growth of Membership, 1887, 1890 and 1893.	131-2
	Notes to Chapter IV.	133-42
Chapter V.	State Regulation of Hours, 1890-96.	143-71
	Appendix A. Operation of the Railway Regulation Act. 1893.	172-3
	Notes to Chapter V.	174-80
Chapter VI.	Harford's Challenge, 1893-97.	181-210
	Appendix A. Growth of Membership, 1893-96.	211
	Notes to Chapter VI.	212-9

		Page
Chapter VII.	All-Grades Movement, 1897-8.	220-39
	Appendix A. Membership: Geographical Variations, 1896-98.	240-1
	Appendix B. Geographical Variations of the incidence of trade unionism, 1896-98.	242-3
	Appendix C. Goods Guards' Conditions.	244
	Notes to Appendix C.	245
	Notes to Chapter VII.	246-51
Chapter VIII.	Unsettled Years, 1898-1903.	252-82
	Appendix A. Membership: Geographical Variations, 1898-1903.	283-4
	Appendix B. Geographical Variations in the Incidence of Trade Unionism, 1898-1903.	285-6
	Notes to Chapter VIII.	287-95
Chapter IX.	Parliamentary Work, 1894-1900.	296-317
	Notes.	318-23
Chapter X.	Labour Representation and Socialism, 1880-1900.	324-52
	Appendix A. The Socialist faction in the A.S.R.S.	353-58
	Notes to Chapter X.	359-66
Chapter XI.	Richard Bell and Recognition, 1903-1909.	367-403
	Appendix A. Membership and the Labour Force. 1903 and 1909. (Actual Figures).	404-5
	Appendix B. Membership and the Labour Force. (Mutual ratio).	406-7
	Notes to Chapter XI.	408-20
Chapter XII.	Political Dissensions, 1900-1910.	421-40
	Notes.	441-4

		Page
Chapter XIII.	Strife and Fusion, 1910-13.	445-79
	Appendix A. Conditions of Goods Staff and Draymen.	480-1
	Appendix B. Incidence of Trade Unionism, 1910 and 1912.	481-2
	Notes to Chapter XIII.	483-93
Chapter XIV.	Conclusion.	494-505
Note on the Use of Census Reports.		506-7
Bibliography.		508-37

List of Abbreviations used either in the text or in the notes.

A.G.M.	Annual General Meeting
A.S.E.	Amalgamated Society of Engineers
A.S.L.E.F.	Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen
B.T.C.	British Transport Commission
Brit.Lib.Pol.Sci.	British Library of Political and Economic Science
E.C.	Executive Committee
G.C.R.	Great Central Railway
G.E.R.	Great Eastern Railway
G.F.T.U.	General Federation of Trade Unions
G.N.R.	Great Northern Railway
G.R.W.U.	General Railway Workers' Union
G.W.R.	Great Western Railway
L. & N.W.	London & North-Western (Railway)
L. & Y.	Lancashire & Yorkshire (Railway)
L.B. & S.C.	London Brighton & South Coast (Railway)
L.C. & D.	London Chatham & Dover (Railway)
L.E.A.	Labour Electoral Association
L.R.C.	Labour Representation Committee
M.F.G.B.	Miners' Federation of Great Britain
Min.of Ev.	Minutes of Evidence
M.S. & L.	Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire (Railway)

List of Abbreviations (Cont'd)

N.B.R.	North British Railway
N.E.R.	North Eastern Railway
N.U.R.	National Union of Railwaymen
Parl.Deb.	Parliamentary Debates
Parl.Pap.	Parliamentary Papers
R.Com.	Royal Commission
R.R.	Railway Review
R.S.G.	Railway Service Gazette
Sel.Cttee.	Select Committee
T.U.C.	Trades Union Congress
U.H.	Unity House
U.P.S.S.	United Pointsmen and Signalmens' Society

Chapter I. Introduction

In the Nineteenth Century British Trade Unionism had three periods of rapid expansion. The first occurred in the late 'twenties and early 'thirties, when there were attempts to form general unions, which were associated with Robert Owen(1). The last period covered the years between 1888 and 1892, when the 'New Unionism' is said to have been born. The period between 1863 and 1874, during which there was a cyclical upswing in the economy,(2)saw another revival of trade unionism. It was in this period that the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (A.S.R.S.) was founded, in 1871.

For about twenty years before 1871, the trade union world was dominated by - though not exclusively composed of - organisations of highly skilled artisans whose industrial policy was to maintain a permanent scarcity of skilled labour. Unions of Bookbinders, Compositors, Engineers, Flint glass makers, Potters, etc., accepted that wages would have to depend on the law of supply and demand.(3) They aimed to strengthen their position vis-a-vis their employers by charging high dues, providing a number of friendly benefits, and maintaining a policy of restriction of entry to the trade.(4) Some exceptionally skilled craftsmen like the Flint glass makers could afford to reject a policy involving a general strike of a number of operatives. Instead, the use of the "out-of-work" pay to finance a silent withdrawal of its members one after another from shops which did not pay the union rate, was often quite effective in bringing a recalcitrant employer to book.(5) Other skilled trade unions had to supplement such a policy by organizing strikes against employers who

had refused to accept collective bargaining, and its usual correlative, trade union recognition. The Engineers did this in 1852, and the Building trades in 1859-60.(6)

The legal position of all trade unions and all strikes remained uncertain until 1871, though not entirely insecure. The skilled trade unions, which had built up accumulated funds, felt that by registering themselves with the Registrar of Friendly Societies, they provided adequate legal protection to their funds.(7)

The type of 'New Model' organization built up by these unions - led by the Amalgamated Society of Engineers - was distinguished by the policy of centralization, with only a minimum amount of funds being left in the hands of the branches.(8) In course of the eighteen-sixties, some of the London-resident leaders of these 'Amalgamated Unions' - who came to be known as the 'Junta' - developed an ultra-cautious attitude to strikes. So it seemed, on occasions, when George Potter would support strikes led by provincial branches of these unions,(9)that the conflict between centralisation and de-centralisation was a conflict between industrial caution and militancy.

But a centralised organisation did not necessarily mean the absenc of an aggressive trade policy. During the economic recovery of the last years of the 'sixties, the Amalgamated Association of Miners was founded, in 1869. It boasted of 90,000 members by 1873, had a militant policy, and an army of full-time officials who organised weak areas with the help of a centralised fund.(10) The Miners differed, like many cotton textile workers, from the skilled craftsmen in one respect. It needed periods of full employment to encourage trade unionism among

them. But when such a period did occur, between 1869 and 1874, a great many other workingmen were also capable of being organised and winning concessions.(11) By 1872 the movement had spread to agricultural labourers, who were organised under the leadership of Joseph Arch.(12)

II

As in coal-mining and cotton textiles, employment on the railways was of an 'open' character, that is to say, most workingmen started at the bottom of the ladder, and some of them worked their way up to senior grades like Drivers, Guards, Foremen, Inspectors etc. Experience, rather than apprenticeship, was all that was required for promotion.

Up to the middle years of the 'eighties the railway industry went on expanding, although the rate of increase in the labour force slowed down considerably. An increase of 170% occurred between 1874 and 1860, of 115% between 1860 and 1873, and 34% between 1873 and 1884.(14) Although many branches of railway work was dangerous,(15)the prospects of promotion were relatively high.

Although a large casual staff had been employed in the early years, by the late sixties and early 'seventies, a big hierarchy of permanent staff, with an elaborate division into different grades, crystallized, as a result of the evolution of different types of work. Signalmen, for example, ceased to be part of the railway police force, and became a grade on their own. Within each grade a system of classification according to the nature of work strengthened the forces

working against unity. The prospects of trade unionism were also darkened by the fact that most of the fourteen major railway companies then operating in Britain covered a wide area. Even if a rudimentary organization developed in any one area, it was difficult to spread it everywhere.

Agricultural labourers were the main source of recruitment,(16) and their wages provided the starting-point of the wage-structure of the whole industry.(17) Other sources of recruitment were ex-soldiers and servants of middle-class families. In the early years a great many posts were filled by the patronage of the directors, although by the 'seventies it was becoming rare.(18) Such a labour force was more than usually permeated by the habit of obedience and discipline.

A sense of unity could be fostered more easily among the senior grades of each department, but the high rate of staff turn-over in the early years militated against it. This turn-over can be attributed to the large number of young unsettled workers who would join a particular company only for a short while.(19) In 1870 the age group between 25 and 34 was 44.1% of the total labour force.(20)

The Locomotive grade was exceptional in having very little turn-over, probably because of the higher standard of living enjoyed by the Driver, and the prospects of promotion which were before a Cleaner and a Fireman.(21) The promotion line on all railways, so far as the Driver was concerned, was invariably based on the Cleaner and the Fireman. The departmental loyalty which the Locomen developed as a result remained - and remains - a marked feature of the railway Service. Militant trade unionism was relatively easy to develop

among them, especially as the demand for them was greater than the supply in the early years.

For nearly the whole of the period surveyed in the following chapters, most railway managers remained hostile to trade unionism. In the early years of the period they showed themselves to be against any form of collective action by their employees, who were among the few categories of workmen described as "servants"!(22) The exceptionally authoritarian mentality of the railway managers probably derived from the conditions prevailing at the time of the establishment of the railway network in the eighteen-forties, when pioneering engineers and entrepreneurs had to fight against both the physical problems of railway building and the opposition of landed interests.

Sections 13 and 14 of the Railway Regulation Act of 1840 (3 & 4 Vic. c. 97) had given powers to the management to fine and produce before the magistrate any employee whose action was against the Company's bye-laws or likely to endanger human life.(23) The Companies built up their own system of discipline on the basis of this Act. Encouragement of inter-grade prejudice, dismissals, and fines were as much a feature of this system as the payment of gratuities for good conduct and the promotion of religious service and education.(24) After the passage of the Employers and Workmen Act of 1875, however, only these clauses of the Act of 1840 gave the Companies some powers over their employers. As we shall see, after militant railway trade unionism was born, its strategy was guided by the need to fight the Companies while being careful not to infringe the rules in a manner that might lay the men open to prosecution under this

Act.

But this is to anticipate the great days of the A.S.R.S. In the middle years of the eighteen-sixties there were only sporadic attempts at organising unions on a national scale. There was a great deal of industrial unrest in 1866, when trade had dropped severely.(25) In April J. Thompson and J.O. Putley started the "Engine Drivers and Firemen's United Society", whose delegate meeting in November put forth a national demand for a ten-hour day, higher rate of overtime, and Sunday Pay.(26) While some Companies conceded a few of the demands, the North Eastern Railway (N.E.R.) refused. The strike that occurred in April 1867 failed, and this marked the end of this Society.(27) About the same time other attempts were made to organise Signalmen and Guards in London.(28) In the Midlands a young railway clerk called Charles Bassett-Vincent founded a trade union called the 'Railway Working Man's Provident Benefit Society', with dues of threepence per week and headquarters at Birmingham.(29) While living in London until 1865, as a clerk at the Railway Clearing House, he had resented the bad working conditions of his grade, and learnt the rudiments of trade unionism at London workingmen's Societies.(30) After his transfer to Worcester he learnt more about the conditions of other grades and decided to found a union.(31) He was able to maintain some sort of an organisation among Locomen, Guards and Signalmen on the Midland, Great Western, and London & North Western railways - with a fluctuating membership. But when in 1867 - at a time when trade unionism was generally under attack(32) - the Companies dismissed most of the leading members, the union could not survive the attack.(33)

III

In the years immediately after 1867 railway trade unionism was dead, with its leaders living in obscurity and penury. The only lasting result of these movements was to make a few of them known to a number of railwaymen in different parts of the country, which proved to be useful for the future. But it needed the subsequent years of exceptional prosperity, when even agricultural labourers could organize themselves, for railway trade unionism to be given a fresh lease of life.

Meanwhile, the various movements for political reform and the reform of the laws relating to Master and Servant reached a critical stage. The leading trade union leaders had participated in the movement to extend the franchise since the early 'sixties. The Reform League, founded in May 1865 as the workingclass wing of this movement, contained among its active members, working-class leaders like Robert Applegarth, George Odger, and W.R. Cremer.(34) A powerful movement, organised in the course of 1866 and 1867, was so effective that Disraeli took a "leap in the dark" and carried the Reform Act of 1867. Its effect on the balance of political forces were, however, confined to the large industrial boroughs.(35) But Members of Parliament representing these towns did henceforth have to take into account the opinions of newly enfranchised working-class householders. (The path to full democracy was taken only after the extension of the county franchise in 1884).

Hardly had the Reform movement been successful when Trade Unionism was under attack from public opinion for the conspiratorial violence

associated with the Sheffield outrages of October 1866.(36) A few months later the judicial decision in Hornby v Close deprived trade unions of the right to register as a friendly Society and protect their funds, because they were in illegal restraint of trade. The 'Junta' formed the 'Conference of Amalgamated Trades' to present the trade union case before the Royal Commission on Trade Unions between 1867 and 1869. They did it so well that the Commission, set up originally to investigate the outrages, concerned itself mainly with safeguarding the legal status of trade unions.(37)

Meanwhile, for some time past, provincial trade union leaders, like Alexander Campbell, had also been working to remove disabilities from trade unions, by trying to amend the Master and Servant laws, so as to remove the stigma of criminality from offences relating to contract committed by workmen.(38) Though both provincial leaders and the London 'Junta' were actively promoting the same causes, signs of London-provincial antagonism were often revealed, when they had occasion to meet, as at the London conference organised by George Potter in March 1867.(39) When the Trade Union Congress was founded, mainly through provincial initiative and the help of Potter in 1868,(40)the 'Junta' would have very little to do with it at first. As late as 1875 signs of London-provincial jealousy could be seen in the debates at the T.U.C.(41)

Nevertheless, the Junta and the T.U.C. joined hands early in 1871 when the Trade Union Bill introduced by the Liberal government, while safeguarding union funds without incorporating a trade union, codified in its third clause all the recent judicial decisions adverse

to strikes and to picketing.(42) Though they were not immediately successful, the Act passed in 1871 protected the funds, while the laws against picketing were codified separately. After prolonged agitation, in 1875, the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act and the Employers' and Workmens' Act were passed. While the former narrowed the application of the law of Conspiracy to trade disputes, the latter made employers and workmen equal parties in a civil contract.(43)

IV

There is little evidence of any close connexion between the trade union agitation of the eighteen-sixties and the early attempts at railway trade unionism between 1865 and 1867. Nevertheless, the general climate must have influenced Thompson, Putley, Vincent and the others. How far the second wave of growth, which coincided with the legal and political battles described above, would bring railway trade unionism in close contact with the general movement remained to be seen.

NOTES

(1) S. & B.Webb, History of Trade Unionism (London 1920 ed.) Ch.III, passim.

(2) W.W. Rostow, British Economy of the Nineteenth Century (Oxford 1948) p.24.

(3) S. & B.Webb, Industrial Democracy (London 1920 ed.). pp.573-77.

(4) ibid. part II, ch.i, passim; ch.ii passim. The method of mutual insurance and the method of collective bargaining are not alternative methods, but part of the same process.

(5) ibid. p.169.

(6) Webb, History of Trade Unionism (1920 ed.) pp.215-7; 227-32.

(7) ibid. p.261f.

(8) ibid. pp.217-22; N.Barou, British Trade Unions (1947), p.15.

(9) See for example his support to the Staffordshire Iron Puddlers. (B.C. Roberts, The Trades Union Congress, 1868-1921, (London 1958) p.25.)

(10) G.D.H.Cole, 'Some notes on British Trade Unionism in the third Quarter of the Nineteenth Century'. International Review for Social History, II (1937), pp.10-12.

(11) ibid. p.21.

(12) Webb, op.cit. pp.328-34.

(13) Railway Review (hereafter R.R.) 8 Jan.1882, New Year Special Number, p.1.

(14) P.W. Kingsford, 'Railway Labour, 1830-1870'. (unpublished Ph.D. thesis London, 1951), p.4. Dr. Kingsford's work forms the basis of a great deal of what follows in the following paragraphs, about staff characteristics.

(15) Accidents to Railway Servants. Royal Com.Rep. p.6. (Parl.Pap., 1900, (cd.41), XXVII.)

(16) Kingsford, op.cit. ch.1. passim; also see N.E.Railway, Wages Arbitration and Award of Lord James of Hereford (1897), (hereafter N.E.R., Arbitration 1897), p.1214ff; also see Railway Servants (Hours of Labour), Sel.Cttee., min.of ev. Qq. 5784-87. (Parl.Pap., 1890-91, XVI.)

(17) Kingsford, op.cit. p.145.

(18) ibid. p.19.

(19) ibid. pp.71-34.

(20) ibid. p.72.

(21) ibid. p.86.

(22) ibid. Ch.V. gives instances of directors telling members of a deputation that each man should speak only for himself.

(23) ibid. p.41.

(24) ibid. Ch.II, passim; for the paternalist benevolence of the L. & N.W. in these directions see W.H. Chaloner, The Social and Economic Development of Crewe, 1780-1923, (Manchester 1950) pp.48-66.

(25) B.C. Roberts, The Trades Union Congress, 1868-1921, (1958), p.32f.

(26) P.S. Bagwell, 'Early Attempts at National Organization of the Railwaymen, 1865-7'. Journal of Transport History, III. (1957) p.97.

(27) ibid. pp.99-101.

(28) Many reports of wages and hours movement appear in the Bee-Hive and Commonwealth but not many acquired an organizational form, except of a rudimentary character; also see G.W. Alcock, Fifty Years of Railway Trade Unionism (London 1922) Ch.II passim.

(29) C. Bassett-Vincent, An Authentic History of Railway Trade Unionism. (Derby 1902) pp.19,25. Vincent hyphenated his surname later in life; so he has been referred throughout as Vincent.

(30) ibid. pp.11-14.

(31) ibid. pp.16-18.

(32) See below, p.8

(33) Bassett-Vincent, op.cit. pp.22-28.

(34) F.E. Gillespie, Labour and Politics in England, 1850-67. (Durham, N.Carolina 1927), p.253.

(35) H.J. Hanham, Elections and Party Management (London 1959), p.ix.

(36) Webb, History of Trade Unionism. (1920), p.259.

(37) H.W. McCready, 'British Labour and the Royal Commission on Trade Unions, 1867-9', University of Toronto Quarterly, XXIV, (1954-5), p.392f.

(38) Webb, op.cit. pp.249-53; D. Simon, 'Master and Servant' in J. Saville, (ed) Democracy and the Labour Movement (London 1954), pp.173-89, for an account of the campaign.

(39) Roberts, op.cit. p.38f.

(40) ibid. p.44ff.

(41) ibid. p.83.

(42) H.W. McCready, 'British Labours' Lobby, 1867-75'. Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science, XXII (1956), p.146; Webb, op.cit. 276ff.

(43) Webb, op.cit. p.291.

Chapter II. The Transition to Militancy, 1871 - 1888.

The collapse of the sporadic efforts at organising railwaymen in 1867 was followed by an upswing of the trade cycle, during which the Companies enjoyed a spell of economic prosperity. In 1871 the ratio of working expenses to gross recipts for the railways of England and Wales was as low as 46.9%.(1) The railway stockholders' journal said that in no other year except 1845 had "there been so great an advance in the market value of railway securities."(2) As the increase in traffic had not been accompanied by an increase in the number of men employed, hours of work were almost systematically lengthened, making locomen resume their agitation.(3)

A number of railway accidents occurring at this time had focussed public attention on their causes.(4) Charles Bassett-Vincent, who was then living at Birmingham, wrote a letter to the local paper, referring to long hours as being one major cause of accidents, and pleaded for "some generous railway 'John Howard'" to come to their help. This brought him in touch with Michael Thomas Bass, Liberal M.P. for Derby and owner of a famous brewery.(5)

Derby, the centre of the Midland railway, had recently added to its electorate a great many railwaymen as a result of the Reform Act of 1867. Bass had been in touch with a local Signalman called John Graham about their wages.(6) Perhaps motivated both by political considerations and by philanthropical impulses, Bass wished to make a special survey of the hours and wages of railwaymen, and their proneness to accidents. Graham and a few of his friends had known

Vincent from the days of the earlier union, and so the latter was employed by Bass on a fact-finding mission. Bass had already asked the Chairman of the Midland railway - of which he was a big shareholder - to look into the conditions of pointsmen (Signalmen), but had been politely told not to interfere.(7) He raised the matter in the House of Commons in March, 1871, during a debate on the Railway Companies' Bill, explaining that "he felt specially interested in the question" because Derby "was the centre of a great railway system."(8) His facts, based on Vincent's conversations with railway servants, were at first doubted, but a reporter of the Daily Telegraph, James Greenwood accompanied him on some of his tours, and confirmed Vincent's findings.(9)

The pace of the trade union movement was being accelerated just then by the agitation over the Trade Union Bill introduced by the government in February, because its obnoxious third clause needed amendment.(10) While this was happening in London, the engineers of Sunderland started their struggle for a nine-hour day in April, under the unofficial leadership of John Burnett, and were victorious by October.(11) When Vincent asked Bass to support his plans for reviving railway trade unionism, he was possibly inspired by these events, as well as by finding, in the course of his travels, that many railwaymen were keen on the idea, among them Passenger Guard Edward Harford of Penistone.(12) Bass had hardly any connexion with the agitation to reform the laws on Trade Unions, never having spoken or voted during parliamentary debates on them. But he encouraged Vincent to organise meetings in various provincial towns, in the last quarter of 1871.(13)

He had given additional publicity to railwaymen's grievances by carrying on a controversy, in the correspondence columns of the Times, with the chairman of the Midland railway, in the third quarter of 1871. One of these letters show clearly that he had begun to take an interest in railwaymen's conditions when some of his constituents brought them to his notice. As evidence accumulated of the long hours and low wages of grades responsible for running the traffic, he thought that this was "injurious to the permanent interests of the share-holders" and "inconsistent with the public safety."(14)

An embryonic organization had developed in Derby since July 1871.(15) The agitation of Bass and Vincent, the success of the nine-hours movement, and the growth of trade unionism generally gave a strong impetus to the desire for self-organization among railwaymen. From the end of October in places as far removed as Liverpool, Leeds, and South Wales, various grades of railwaymen were agitating for either a 54 hour week or a 60 hour week.(16) Some of their meetings were addressed by Vincent, who had also persuaded Bass to start a journal advocating railwaymen's interests. The first number of the Railway Service Gazette - as the paper came to be called - appeared on 3rd February 1872.(17)

Meanwhile, in London, George Chapman, a mechanic at the Woolwich Arsenal,(18)who had already been active in organising Signalmen of the South London railways in 1865,(19)formed the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants on 27th November, 1871, elected himself as its Secretary, and Vincent as its President, and formally inaugurated it on 4th December.(20) On 28th January 1872 the London railwaymen

enlisted the help of Dr. Baxter Langley, a well-known Radical who had spent his career more in various reforming crusades and radical journalism, than in the medical profession, for which he had been trained.(21) In his youth he had agitated with Richard Oastler in Lancashire for the ten-hour bill, and afterwards worked on the Morning Star, on the Peoples' Paper, which he had bought from Ernest Jones, and on the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle. Shortly before the foundation of the Reform League he had moved to London, and joined the Executive Committee of the League from its foundation. Since 1865 he had been nursing the constituency of Greenwich,(22)and it is possible that the growth of railway trade unionism in that area, associated with Chapman's work in Woolwich and Deptford, brought him into contact with the movement among railway servants. On his advice the London members registered the Society under the Trade Union Act of 1871, to safeguard the contributions paid already and going to be paid, prior to the election of a permanent executive committee.(23)

In their meetings the London members had frequently referred to Bass, and considered themselves to be part of the movement started in the provinces. But Chapman's practice of not indicating in his correspondence that he was only a temporary Secretary, the registration of the Society with the Registrar of Friendly Societies, and the delay in summoning a delegate meeting - all these made the provincial railwaymen suspicious. The suspicion was fostered by James Greenwood, editor of the Railway Service Gazette, who supported Vincent's ambitions to get the Secretaryship.(24) Eventually, at a meeting held at Bass's residence and at his expense, the London and the

provincial leaders came to an understanding, and arrangements for convening a delegate meeting were made fair and above board.(25) Nevertheless, these bickerings at an early stage left a cloud of mutual suspicion among ill-informed members both in London and the provinces. The early years of the A.S.R.S. showed many symptoms of London-provincial hostility - an attitude which, as we have seen, had also been evident in the early years of the Trades Union Congress.(26)

Langley presided over the delegate meeting in London on 24th June 1872. On his advice the headquarters were set up in the metropolis, in view of the need to be in touch with members of Parliament.(27) To save expense the Executive Committee of the Society was fixed at twenty-one members from branches in the London postal area, with the right of properly accredited provincial members to attend.(28) Before the delegate meeting, the Committee arranging it had also organised - albeit rather amateurishly - the election of the General Secretary by a poll of the existing membership. Chapman was elected, on a minority vote, John Graham coming a close second. Vincent did not stand.(29) The delegate meeting elected Langley as the President of the Society - Bass having expressed a wish to remain only loosely connected, as the Patron.(30)

The influence of Bass had been in the direction of making the A.S.R.S. stress its friendly benefits(31)and disavow "a hostile attitude towards their employers."(32) The first delegate meeting lived up to these ideals. Most of the delegates were keen for establishing superannuation, accident, and sick funds,(33)because railway work was very dangerous,(34)and very few of the forty-five

friendly societies run by railway companies made provisions for superannuation through old age or permanent disability.(35) Only John Graham said that "a protective union was of far more importance than a sick fund."(36) In the end, however, the only benefits payable out of the compulsory dues of 1/- per month were Superannuation, Legal Assistance, and the 'out-of-work' (Donation) benefit. It remained to be seen whether the latter, defined as "temporary assistance when thrown out of employment through causes over which they have no control",(37)could provide an element of strength in industrial bargaining. That, after all, was the basic reason why the "new model" trade unionists adhered to this benefit even when they had to abandon all other friendly benefits.(38)

The emphasis on accidents and long hours of all classes of railwaymen in the campaign of Vincent and Bass had contributed to making the A.S.R.S. cater for all grades of railwaymen. The future was to show if the interests of all grades could be adequately served by one union.

The influence of middle-class patrons was emphasised in the statement of the objects of the Society, which were to promote good relations between employers and employed, to prevent strikes, and to advocate arbitration for the settlement of disputes.(39) Public figures who spoke at an open meeting after the Delegate meeting were an odd collection of philanthropists, Radicals and trade unionists - Bass, Lloyd Jones, Samuel Morley, Langley, George Potter, and Douglas Straight. While Bass and Straight had no connexion with the movement to reform the laws on trade unions(40)the interest of Samuel Morley in the trade union movement was prompted as much by his belief that

trade unions helped to bring masters and men together,(41)as by a desire to win working-class votes for the Liberal party by making use of trade union leaders.(42) Lloyd Jones and Potter, however, had begun, from 1871 on, to use the Bee-Hive to foster the more militant trade unionism of the early 'seventies, although in a more discriminating manner than in Potter's younger days.(43) Langley campaigned against the imprisonment of the London Gas Stokers in December 1872, making this an issue in his electoral policy.(44) When, at the bye-election in Greenwich in July 1873, he polled more votes, as an Independent Radical, than the Liberal candidate, and caused the return of a Conservative,(45)Professor E.S. Beesley jubilantly declared that the result reflected the workingmen's disgust with the lukewarm policy of Gladstone on reforming the labour laws.(46)

II

A militant thrust was given to the A.S.R.S. soon after the delegate meeting by the strike of Goods Staff and Draymen at Camden Town in London in July. Langley tried his best to make it a success, but to no avail.(47) It had to be financed by a special levy, which raised £726,(48)but Chapman's book-keeping was so primitive that the auditors had to complain. The Executive Committee soothed their ruffled feelings by saying that all payments had been authorised by it, even though records did not exist.(49) This only increased the suspicions of provincial members, some of whom had been alarmed at another experiment of the London committee.

Under the influence of some ex-railwaymen who served on the

Committee, but were also officers of recently started unions of Carmen and Lightermen and allied transport workers, the A.S.R.S. Executive proposed that their union should become part of a projected Amalgamated Labourers Union. Nothing ultimately emerged out of this proposal, although meetings were held on 6th and 16th December 1872 between the A.S.R.S., the Labour Protection League, the Amalgamated Carmen, and the Amalgamated Lightermen.(50) It was indicative, however, of a tendency to build federations of cognate trades that recurred in the course of the history of the A.S.R.S.

The idea, however, was unpopular with some provincial members,(51) and with Edwin Phillips, who now edited the Railway Service Gazette on behalf of Bass.(52) When another delegate meeting was held on 27 June 1873, the provincial delegates carried constitutional amendments aimed at curbing the authority of London.(53) Under the chairmanship of Canon C. Jenkins, vicar of Aberdare parish church, a Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford, and a vice-president of the A.S.R.S., the delegates decided to divide the society's government into eleven districts, each with a full-time secretary, and a committee of local members. Out of the fourpence per month allocated for management purposes the branches and the districts got threepence, leaving the rest for general management. F.W. Evans, who had proposed this,(54) admitted to a friend some years later that this innovation was harmful: "the system ... was fast preparing the A.S.R.S. for a division into several societies."(55)

The ill-informed delegates had re-elected Chapman, and had not heard a statement sent by Langley which had given details of the

Secretary's incompetence.(56) This made Langley send a telegram announcing his resignation of the Presidency, and Canon Jenkins was elected in his place. A new Executive Committee, elected annually by each district sending one member, took charge of the administration of the Society. At its first meeting Jenkins hoped that factionalism was now over.(57) Soon afterwards, Chapman's incredible incompetence was revealed to them.(58) With the help of Jenkins they got rid of him by declaring - untruthfully - that the Secretary was required to seek re-election every year.(59) In the fresh elections held in 1874, F.W. Evans defeated Chapman, and took over the reins of office in November.(60)

F.W. Evans of Bristol had been a railway clerk on the G.W.R. until January 1874, when he was dismissed for political and trade union activity.(61) He had made his debut in the A.S.R.S. at the Manchester delegate meeting, and served on the Executive Committee afterwards, giving an impression of drive and ability. In the General Election of 1874 he had actively campaigned for Samuel Morley, the Liberal candidate for Bristol, but does not appear to have stressed the reform of the labour laws, which was exercising the minds of leading trade unionists at that time.(62) But he certainly was anxious to bring the A.S.R.S. into touch with other unions, if only to learn from better organised societies the art of good management. Participation in trades Councils had not developed properly as late as April 1874.(63) A lack-a-daisical approach had prevented the A.S.R.S. from being represented at the Leeds Trades Union Congress of 1873 - the biggest so far held.(64)

In the course of 1874 Evans had learnt a lot about trade unionism from the officers of the Amalgamated Association of Miners, who had built up a strong organization in South Wales, and wrested a great many concessions from their employers.(65) Their policy of centralising all funds, and using the money to assist weekly organised districts, appealed to him.(66) In a series of articles on the "Future of the Society" in September 1874, he admitted the need for welding the whole membership together for the common purpose of national campaigns. In 1873 he had won popularity by proposing the district system. But now he argued that the "Society (sc. was) powerless as a united body without a strong central fund immediately available for emergencies," and pleaded for raising the dues from threepence to at least fourpence per week, in view of liability to pay superannuation benefits that would occur very soon.(67) (Under the rules, all members above fifty years, or incapacitated permanently by accident, were entitled to five shillings per week.) (68)

The delegate meeting which assembled in January 1875 was not favourable to Evans's plea for centralisation. Superannuation seemed the most popular benefit. While dues were not raised generally, an extra penny, for this particular fund was added on to the dues of those aged between 35 and 45. A portion of the entrance fees were to be sent to the General office for this purpose as well. Apart from these remittances, and the basic threepence per member per quarter sent to the General office for management, delegates were reluctant to send any more money to the centre. Evans managed to get another threepence per member per quarter for legal assistance, assisting

weak branches, and "any other lawful purpose."(69) The revised rules of the Society, however, stated clearly, in Clause V, Section III, "The funds of every branch shall be the common property of the Society."(70) The power of the Executive Committee to levy the branches was maintained, despite opposition.(71) Evans strengthened his own position by making the Secretaryship no longer annually elective.(72)

Unlike in the 'Amalgamated' unions of the 'Junta', the advocates of decentralization inside the A.S.R.S. were almost always those least anxious for industrial militancy. Members of the Manchester district adopted the motto 'Defence, not defiance',(73)and their delegates had been the most vehement opponents of Evans's aims at the delegate meeting.(74) Strikes, indeed, were generally unpopular with the railwaymen of that generation. Fortunately for subsequent generations, the railwaymen were exempted from special disabilities, unlike those working in Gas and Water supply, when, in 1875, the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act and the Employer & Workmen ...nt Act, were passed.(75)

Many of the officials were not against strikes as such. Vincent, now Birmingham district Secretary, had persuaded the Society to help the agricultural labourers in their lock-out;(76) Evans had tried to get similar support for the South Wales miners' strike.(77) But being aware that "a strike of railway servants ... would paralyse the whole trade of the country",(78)Evans published a recruiting leaflet in September 1875, in which he wrote,

"Does the Society encourage strikes? No; it avoids

them as an evil to masters and men. But it courts favour from the Public and the Press ..."(79)

On the other hand, after having committed the Executive to launch a campaign, in July 1875, for the payment of Sunday duty,(80)he referred to strikes at one of the meetings called to promote the campaign, and said,

"he did not mean to say that if the men were cruelly treated, they ought not to resort to this mode of enforcing their rights."(81)

This campaign was a very amateurish effort. Hamstrung by lack of funds at the centre, and being anxious to agitate also for the prevention of accidents, Evans spent most of his time and energy between 1876 and 1880 on the latter, abandoning the agitation for Sunday pay.(82)

III

The depression of the late 'seventies - which marked the beginning of the 'Great Depression' - falls in two phases.(83) Until 1877-8 entrepreneurs felt the impact of falling profit margins, and showed a tendency to cut costs, but economic activity did not languish, and among skilled artisans employment remained as high as 95%. In this period the one serious casualty among trade unions was the Amalgamated Association of Miners, which fought in vain the cuts imposed by the South Wales colliers, who were feeling the effects of declining orders.(84) From the last quarter of 1877 until the last quarter of 1879, the end of the building boom aggravated the general recession, with unemployment becoming 23.9% in the first quarter of 1879.(85)

In 1878 and 1879 trade unions engaged in an increasing number of futile struggles against attempts by the employers to lengthen their working day or to take away wages concessions given in the early 'seventies.(86)

According to Sir John Clapham, the railways could consider a ratio of 51% between working expenses to gross receipts to indicate a prosperous year.(87) After the very favourable years of 1871 and 1872, when the ratio was 46.8% and 49% respectively, it changed slightly for the worse, becoming 54.2% in 1876. Gross receipts went on rising until 1878.(88)

Part of the increased working expenses was doubtless due to concessions given to many grades in the first four years of the decade, when many railwaymen were going on deputations before the officials, who were anxious to prevent the A.S.R.S. from exploiting their discontent. The most tangible gain was the ten-hour day, as the following table illustrates.(89)

Table I

Proportion working ten hours

Year	10 hours and less	10½ hours to 11	11½ hours to 12	12 hours and more
1871	7.2%	22.8%	66.4%	3.6%
1874	46.9%	14.1%	38.3%	0.7%
1879	41.8%	15.1%	42.1%	1%

The table also shows how, with the beginning of depression, the Companies began to cut costs.

When cuts had been imposed on the platelayers in South Wales the Executive Committee, in January 1876, had granted them the

Donation benefit if they were dismissed for refusing to accept adverse conditions.(90) At its next sitting, when Canon Jenkins was absent and Vincent was in the Chair, it passed the first remotely militant resolution since the foundation of the Union. Referring to attempted encroachments on the conditions of the Goods Guards of the Midland railway, it said that if similar developments recurred, the Council would feel justified, "after reasonable means (sc. had) failed, to take extreme measures in the interests of its constituents."(91)

Yet like Jenkins, his successor to the Presidency,(92) P.S. Macliver, abhorred strikes.(93) He had been elected President at Evans's suggestion. He was the proprietor of the Western Daily Press, the leading Liberal newspaper of Bristol, Evans's home town. He possibly took an interest in the A.S.R.S. with an eye to securing a railway constituency for his parliamentary ambitions.(94)

In a report published in July, 1877, Evans had given a long list of cuts imposed by the Companies, but the delegate meeting which was called in the following October was concerned mainly to discuss the solvency of the Society and better management.(95) The district system was abandoned, as it had proved too expensive, and, since 1875 it had been possible to run only six large districts; of these only three /now had full-time officials. The three men concerned - John Graham, James Cordwell, and Charles Bassett-Vincent - were made travelling secretaries, working under the control of the general Secretary.(96) Periodic delegate meetings were abolished. An annual general meeting of sixty members - elected by grouping the branches into fairly equal constituencies - was made the supreme government

of the Society. Though the delegates showed a strong desire to cut management costs, they agreed to the expenses of this annual event, because lately there had been complaints about the servants of the Society becoming its masters. Evans visualised it more as a sounding board for his parliamentary efforts.(97)

Evans would have preferred the thirteen-member Executive Committee, which was also instituted, to have plenty of discretionary powers, but while it had the authority to interpret doubtful rules, the delegates decided to give the members a right to appeal to the A.G.M.(98) The election of the Executive Committee from each A.G.M. was decided upon to save expense and in preference to the other expense-saving device of election from the London postal area.(99)

The Annual General Meeting, a thirteen-member Executive Committee, and a General Secretary assisted by three travelling secretaries - these reforms partially achieved Evans's aim of centralisation. But the debate on finance showed the strength of the traditions of de-centralisation and of emphasis on friendly benefits. His plea for raising the dues from threepence to fourpence per week was rejected in favour of a proposal to levy each member an extra threepence per quarter, solely for the purpose of the superannuation fund. Evans was infuriated by the practice of earmarking each additional penny for a specific purpose.(100)

In course of the next two years the conflict between the trade union and the friendly aspects of the Society split it wide open.

In January 1879 the Midland railway Goods Guards struck in protest against the lengthening of their hours from 60 to 66 per

week, and the introduction of the 'trip' system, which meant loss of overtime earnings.(101) In 1878 Evans had strongly argued against strikes, as it would alienate public sympathy necessary for his parliamentary efforts.(102) But the determined efforts of the Company to bring about this reduction brought out the old war-horse in him. He promised the donation benefit to the strikers, opened a subscription list for the victims when the strike ended in defeat, wrote to the press, and organised mass meetings at which he advised changing the character of the Society.(103)

At the Executive Committee meeting at the end of the month,(104) Macliver was absent. Edward Harford said that so far "they were in the position of being able to bark, but not to bite."(105) Evans argued that if the union possessed a strike fund the cause of arbitration would be facilitated:

> "the inconvenience to the public arising from equally balanced disputes between companies and the men would be the strongest inducement to the legislature to establish a board or boards of arbitration as suggested."(106)

The Executive Committee almost unanimously decided to issue a circular explaining that the Society should now aim at possessing the funds needed to launch aggressive movements in time of prosperity. Compulsory arbitration in railway labour disputes was also advocated.(107)

Evans issued another circular in June, as instructed by the Executive,(108)outlining "the proposed future policy of the Society, with draft rules of a protection fund."(109) Evans tried to disarm

opposition from supporters of the Superannuation Fund by suggesting that, at the end of each year, any surplus in the Protection Fund above £5,000 would be handed over to the other fund.(110)

Nevertheless, these circulars caused "considerable discussion and excitement,"(111)and there were proposals from fourteen branches in favour, and eighteen against the Protection Fund.(112) When the debate was going rather in favour of the fund, Macliver's intervention with a note of warning, and a threat that the patrons would all be aghast at a protection fund, helped to carry an amendment postponing the question.(113) The A.G.M. further added to the confusion by abolishing the posts of the travelling Secretaries by a snap vote,(114) in an attempt to cut costs. To examine the structure of the friendly benefits, for which all these cheeseparing methods were employed, a special committee was set up.(115)

This Committee accepted Evans's analysis that the Superannuation Fund was actuarially quite unsound, and that it would be better to wind it up, have only one compulsory 'trade union fund', and optional Accident and Superannuation funds - benefits for which were to be fixed by an actuary.(116) Next year an actuary's report showed in detail how unsound was the superannuation payment of 5/- per week.(117)

The Locomen had constituted an important section of the membership in 1875. (Appendix A), but they maintained their 'aristocratic' aloofness by insisting on forming separate branches.(118) Although in 1878 the Executive Committee had granted twice the normal amount of donation benefit to the Locomen who had been dismissed for agitating against the 'trip' system on the L. & N.W., the A.G.M. of

1878 had rejected the proposal to grant them full wages.(119) This prevented whatever plans the Locomen might have had of adopting the policy of 'strike by detail',(120)and doubtless made this powerful grade doubt the usefulness of the A.S.R.S. The postponement of the question of a Protection fund was the last straw. After the A.G.M. of 1879, a number of Locomen seceded to form the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen.(121) Evans had warned about the possibilities of secession, if the protection fund was not adopted, as early as February 1879.(122)

This secession of members as well as the arguments adduced by the special committee and the actuary, enabled Evans to persuade the A.G.M. of 1880 to adopt an altered scale of dues and benefits. For fivepence per week members were entitled to legal assistance, Donation benefit, protection benefit, the lump sum of £20 for superannuation, and the benefits of the orphan fund.(123) The last-named fund was a favourite idea of Evans, who had budgeted a half-penny per week to board out the orphans of deceased members with families.(124) It proved to be popular, as only two of the Company Insurance funds provided for widows and orphans.(125) Existing members on the Superannuation fund were given a lump sum of £20 in commutation. The A.G.M.,at which Macliver was not present, passed all these measures by 40 votes to 13.(126) The funds were now centralised sufficiently to leave with the branches 1½d. of the weekly fivepence - for the donation benefit and branch management.(127) Under rule XX they could set up an optional sick and burial fund. Two travelling Secretaryships were created, for T. Duffin and Edward Harford.(128)

Rule XV, dealing with the Protection Fund, showed that it was still more of a victimisation fund than a strike fund. Members downgraded or dismissed for trade union work were given a weekly allowance or a lump grant of £35. But for all industrial agitations, which could be started by the rank-and-file, strikes were permissible only if two offers of arbitration by the Executive Committee had been refused by the Company, and a majority of the entire membership had voted by ballot in favour of any particular strike. This stamp of compromise and caution reflected the bitter internecine disputes of recent years.

Until the beginning of 1880, the Railway Service Gazette had been owned by Bass, who was now a very old and ailing man. It was then sold to other people, which made the A.S.R.S. think of starting a journal of its own.(129) Evans started the Railway Review in July 1880, and the Executive Committee on behalf of the A.S.R.S., bought it from him early next year for £100.(130) After a long drawn out battle of words with the new paper, the Railway Service Gazette closed down in June 1881. But in the meantime its slanging match had contributed to the exodus of members from the A.S.R.S.

IV

Appendix B shows that the union's membership had declined sharply with the secession of the Locomen in the winter of 1879-80. The abandonment of superannuation led to a further decline, which was not arrested until 1883. By the middle of 1882 Evans's estimate of the membership was 6,000(131) - and this was possibly a little

exaggerated. The 1,354 new members who joined in 1882(132)offset the heavy losses among the older membership.

Immediately after the A.G.M. of 1880, when the exodus was at its height, Evans started a Nine Hours' Movement as a means to recruit members and to boost the morale of his Executive Committee. At a special meeting on 2nd January 1881, Evans introduced a veteran trade unionist, Thomas Mottershead, who lectured the committeemen on the primacy of the trade union side of the Society. Mottershead, who had been active in the First International and the Labour Representation League, said that he "never knew a patronised society to succeed."(133)

This committee planned to start a Nine Hours' Movement, which was approved by the A.G.M. of 1881, and the upswing in the economy seemed to offer a prospect of success.(134) The A.S.R.S. had guaranteed £1,000 towards its expenses, but an attempt was made to raise more funds by an appeal to all railway servants for the donation of one day's pay.(135) The immediate effect was to accelerate the exodus in many areas, which alarmed the Executive Committee.(136) The appeal raised, by May 1882, only £568 from 3,000 members; the Executive Committee closed the movement and returned the donations.(137)

As Evans had already spent a great deal in publicity, the Hours' Movement account was left with a deficit of £570.8.0.(138) Evans was so disheartened that he threatened to resign, but was persuaded to stay on.(139) But his heart was no longer in the work, and so he did not return from a three month's holiday which he was given in February 1883. The Executive Committee declared the post vacant.(140) The only applicant for it was Travelling Secretary Edward Harford.(141)

When Evans left the Society, membership was at a low ebb, but the accumulated funds held by the branches amounted to £18,121, and by the trustees of the general fund to £18,811.(142) By centralising most of these, by employing more officials, and by abandoning actuarially unsound scale of benefits, Evans had hoped to turn the A.S.R.S. into a fighting union, when he became the general secretary seven years earlier. The preceding account has shown how circumstances were against him. The existence of a group of philanthropic patrons, the need to win public sympathy for parliamentary agitation, the inadequate scale of dues, the non-militant tradition of decentralisation and friendly benefits - all these factors had prevented him from taking crucial decisions at the right moment. Nevertheless, the alterations that he advocated and partly carried through in 1879-80 made the union potentially capable of a militant policy, aimed at using the threat of a railway strike to encourage the Companies or the Government to accept Conciliation and Arbitration in labour disputes on the railways.

His successor Edward Harford (b.1838) lacked the brilliance of Evans, but had a clearer grasp of priorities. Harford, who was of the same generation as Thomas Burt, George Shipton, and Henry Broadhurst, had started life as a Confectioners' apprentice, but later became a railway porter on the Midland railway. In the late sixties he joined the M.S. & L. as a Goods Guard, becoming a Passenger Guard when Vincent was making his inquiries.(143) He had resigned to become District Secretary for Sheffield in 1873, but with the enlargement of the districts in 1875, he lost this employment and took work in an

Ironworks.(144) However, he retained his union membership, attended the delegate meeting of 1877, and served on the Executive in 1878 and 1879. In 1879, when the union was split over the introduction of a Protection Fund, Evans had employed him as a special organising Secretary for the N.E. Railway - which was very disorganised until then.(145) In the summer of 1879, when the Locomen and Mineral Guards in that area were suffering severe hardships as a result of the miner's strike, he went round persuading them to organise and make the most of the next cycle of prosperity.(146) At the stormy A.G.M. of 1879, branches at Darlington and Gateshead were strongly in favour of establishing a Protection Fund.(147)

As the Assistant Secretary to the Nine Hours' Movement, Harford had realised the futility of starting large-scale movements to recruit members. Soon after taking office, he said, "I firmly believe it is not necessary that our members be always kept in a state of effervescence to induce railwaymen to join a society such as ours."(148) He welcomed and encouraged the gradual growth of membership in some localities, and stressed the need for "voluntary missionary" work in course of the next few years.(149) It helped to increase the membership slowly but steadily from approximately 6,000 in the middle of 1882 to 10,848 at the end of 1887.(150) The accumulated funds increased from £27,176 at the end of 1882 to £62,186 at the end of 1887. The shift in favour of Centralisation effected at the A.G.M. of 1880 was reflected in the fact that of the funds held in 1887, £38,359 lay with the Centre, while £23,827 with the different branches.(151)

V

After Harford had prepared the ground in 1879, the northern section of the N.E. Railway was the one area where the seed of militant railway trade unionism struck root during the boom of 1880-83, when the annual dividend of the Company, for four years, ranged between 8 to 8¾ per cent.(152) Circulars and petition forms sent out by Evans during the hours movement in the winter of 1881-82 created enough enthusiasm at Gateshead to infuriate the Locomotive Superintendent, who wrote, "I am afraid that the Railway Servants' Association is going to give us much trouble ... (sc. Petitions were) becoming almost a daily thing now."(153)

The impetus given by this was maintained by the work of a twenty-six year old new recruit, William Foreman, who had joined the Sunderland branch in June 1881. He had joined this railway as an office boy at the age of eleven, and had graduated through the hierarchy to become Goods Guard.(154) In the autumn of 1882 an agitation in the Locomotive department of Gateshead, concerning hours and wages of Locomen and mineral guards, was only partly successful, as the superintendent ignored the demands of the mineral Guards, and did not concede overtime at a daily rate.(155) Foreman used this dissatisfaction to start an "all-grades" movement in January 1883, aimed at extending the concessions to Guards, Shunters, and Signalmen, and to Locomen in less important sections.(156) After his first interview with the officials had failed,(157)he spent the rest of the year in a recruitment drive. The A.S.R.S. Executive promised the protection benefit.(158) In August a demand for the recognition of the local

committee was made, together with a declaration that concessions given only to a few grades would be declined.(159) Talks between Foreman and the General Manager on 15th October 1883 foundered on the rock of the status of the "all-grades" negotiating committee. While the General Manager wanted each grade to treat with their respective managers, the men demanded that the all-grades committee should be allowed to meet a committee of all the heads of departments, which should have been fully empowered by the Board of Directors to settle all labour questions.(160) The officials did agree to meet the men's committee on one day, but, before the interview, split them into separate grade groups for a statement.(161) Concessions were few.

Foreman decided to start a fresh recruitment drive in January 1884,(162)but the depression in trade that followed shortly after led the Committee, at a meeting attended by Harford, to suspend the agitation, and concentrate on consolidating the membership.(163) In spite of its failure to win any concessions, this movement helped to arrest the decline of the A.S.R.S., and created a nucleus of active members, who were anxious to resume the fight when better times returned. The leaders of the movement included locomen like William Keel and G.A. Henderson, whose efforts made the locomen of the N.E.R. join the A.S.R.S. rather than the A.S.L.E.F. Keel was so free from grade prejudice that he advocated recruiting supernumerary platelayers in 1887, but the Executive Committee decided to exclude those not on the permanent staff, to avoid heavy withdrawals of the donation benefit.(164) Appendix C shows that while membership was almost the same in 1880 and 1883, the proportionate distribution among different

counties had altered, with a significant shift in favour of Durham.

William Foreman revived the Sunderland Trades Council, becoming its secretary.(165) A young Seaman called Havelock Wilson struck up a close friendship with him, and was encouraged to form a sailors' union.(166) When Wilson started to do so, Foreman lent him many copies of the rules of the A.S.R.S., which were all "Greek" to the sailor at first, but he mastered them soon.(167) Foreman resigned the railway service in May 1886 to become the sub-editor of the Railway Review, to which he had contributed a column under the pseudonym 'Canny Man' since 1882.(168)

Mainly to placate the N.E. railwaymen, a constitutional amendment was carried in 1884, which prescribed thirteen equal electoral constituencies of the whole membership for the election of the thirteen members of the Executive Committee. No one was to be eligible to serve on it consecutively for more than two years, although one could become re-eligible after a lapse of another three years. Being new arrivals, the delegates at the A.G.M. from the N.E.R. had not succeeded in getting adequate representation on the Executive. This reform served the need to encourage participation by the membership at a time when the paramount task was to build up the Society from the grass roots.(169)

VI

The depression of the mid-eighties was keenly felt by the railway companies - the G.W.R. losing confidence in 1885 to the extent of suspending passenger traffic.(170) The Midland railway economised by

withdrawing the guaranteed week's pay from the terms of service of the Locomen in July 1887. The strike which followed made the A.S.R.S. realise that the alteration of rules, carried out in 1880, was still inadequate.(171)

The Locomen's strike was a spontaneous local movement. Between 15th July, when the circular was issued, and 5th August, when the new regulations were to come into force, discontent rose to fever pitch. On 31st July a delegate meeting at Derby decided to strike on 4th August, unless the guaranteed week's pay was kept. Last-minute interviews with the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Board of Directors on 3rd August did not satisfy the men, and the strike took place as planned. For the first four days nearly the entire locomotive staff of that railway were on strike. From the fifth day a trickle back to work began, and this became a deluge by the end of the week. Derby, the headquarters of the strikers, held out till 14th August.

In the last week of July, as it appeared that if the A.S.R.S. remained passive the six hundred Locomen members on that railway might be lost to it, Harford promised the victimisation grant from the Protection fund. On 29th July, being aware that in such situations of approaching crisis the strike referendum of all branches was useless, he inserted, on his own initiative, amendments to Rule XV for consideration by the A.G.M. - a clause deleting the need for a ballot, and giving the right of sanctioning a strike to the discretion of the General Secretary and a special meeting of the Executive Committee.(172) He tried his best to avert a breach, but when the strike occurred, he went down to help with the picketing, promised

the strike pay to the strikers, and the victimisation grant to all men who refused to act as blacklegs.(173) After the failure of the strike, a specially summoned Executive Committee meeting unanimously approved Harford's action, supported the amendments to the rules, and expelled all those who had acted as blacklegs.(174)

An excited A.G.M., in October 1887, did not pass the amendments to Rule XV proposed by Harford,(175)but defeated by 33 votes to 13 resolutions criticising Harford's support to the strike.(176) In a calmer atmosphere, next year, the amendments were again brought up and passed by 37 votes to 16.(177) Macliver, who was still the President of the Society, had given a long sermon on the wickedness of strikes and the importance of the orphan fund at the A.G.M. of 1887.(178) His absence next year from the A.G.M., on account of ill-health, might have helped the passing of the amendment.

In October 1887 Harford proposed a national standard scale of hours and wages, "which should be at all times as high as the state of the labour market (sc. would) justify, taking into account the qualifications required, and the responsible nature of the work; and fixed by common agreement between the men through their Union and the directors."(179) Appendix D shows, that from a comparison with the wage census of 1886, that these demands aimed to level up the wages to those obtaining in the best paid Companies. The absence of any reference to platelayers and porters showed that while Harford supported a militant trade policy, he was still sceptical of the possibilities of trade unionism among the very low-paid grades.

Commenting on the trade revival at the end of 1887 William

Foreman urged members early in 1888 to strengthen their organization rapidly to benefit as much as possible from the prosperity.(180) The railwaymen of the N.E.R. took up the suggestion, under the leadership of Walter Hudson, a mineral Guard of Darlington, and drafted a programme in the following summer, which came to be known as the Darlington Programme.(181) (Appendix E).

At the A.G.M. of 1888 the difficulty faced by the delegates from the N.E.R., in trying to persuade the conference to grant them money to build up organisation and promote this programme, brought to the surface a problem inherent in the all-grade character of the union. The wages programme either seemed lower than the regional rates elsewhere, or appeared to some locomen to narrow differentials by letting porters rise to 21/-. Harford, who had approved the N.E.programme,(182) suggested that the clauses on a ten-hour day, overtime at a daily rate, the Guaranteed weeks' pay, and the six-day week be passed, for the sake of unanimity. After private consultations during an adjournment Walter Hudson agreed to abandon his wages clauses, doubtless feeling that at a time of brisk trade the rest of the programme, if accepted in full, would increase earnings.(183) In this way, mainly for organisational reasons, the A.S.R.S. became tied to the policy of giving priority to shorter hours and overtime pay.(184) Throughout its subsequent history an inability to work out a universally popular wages policy bedevilled its organizational efforts.

Two N.E. delegates also carried a proposal suggesting that the 'Darlington Programme' should be the basis of a universal national movement.(185) While other areas could take up the suggestion if they

wished, the N.E. railwaymen were given the opportunity to fight a sharp and swift local strike as a result of two crucial decisions of this A.G.M. - the alterations to Rule XV mentioned earlier, and the approval of the 'Darlington Programme'. The A.G.M. also declared, with reference to the legal eight hours agitation conducted by the Socialists,(186)that for railwaymen the present moment was inopportune for a legal eight hour day; shorter hours should be aimed at by trade union effort.(187)

The opposition of the A.S.R.S. to the legal eight hours agitation was due to the multi-grade character of the union, and the dissimilarity of the work of Guards and Locomen from factory work. These two grades had been aiming to recover the 60-hour week and over-time at a daily rate - which many of them had lost in 1877-80. Letters published in the Railway Review indicated that many of them felt that a legal eight-hour day would only give an excuse to the Companies to reduce wages, in their present disorganized state.(188) William Foreman was a very determined opponent of this agitation, believing that wage reductions would be impossible to resist under it.(189) Letters from H.H. Champion suggesting that state action should supplement trade union effort,(190)did not convince him.(191)

From the end of 1888 the popularity of a legal eight hour day became intertwined with the success or failure of the organisational breakthrough to which the experiences and achievements between 1880 and 1888 pointed. But there could be no doubt that with the alteration of Rule XV, and the approval of the 'Darlington Programme', the A.S.R.S. had completed its transition to militancy.

Appendix A.

Membership: distribution among different grades, 1875

(Source: Report and Financial Statement, 1875, p.1; ex-railwaymen and honourary members have been excluded).

Total Membership. 12,799

Supervisory Grades:	
Managers	1
Station Masters	67
Inspectors	188
Foremen	203
Clerks	133
Locomotive Grade:	
Drivers	3,374
Firemen	1,623
Cleaners	50
Traffic & Coaching Staff:	
Goods Guards	2,018
Passenger Guards	544
Shunters	285
Signalmen	1,685
Ticket Collectors,) Policemen,Porters)	1,930
Permanent Way Dept.	564
Mechanics	134

Appendix B.

Membership: Geographical Variation, 1872, 1875, & 1880

(Source: Report and Financial Statements; Handbook of Stations and Depots.)

N.B. - The percentages of those counties where membership was less than 1% of total membership have been omitted, but the actual figures given, as usual.

Year	1372	% of total	1875	% of total	1880	% of total
Total U.K.	15,457		12,191		7,844	
Scotland	-		-		84	1.0
Ireland	-		-		-	
England & Wales	15,457		12,191		7,760	
Beds.	61		40		29	
Berks.	137		14		12	
Bucks	59		85		50	
Cambridges:	111		100		40	
Cheshire	593	3.8	325	2.6	156	1.9
Cornwall	-		-		-	
Cumberland	104		15		23	
Derbyshire	200	1.3	212	1.7	157	2.0
Devon	-		230		57	
Dorset	-		27		17	
Durham	239	1.5	123	1.0	252	3.2
Essex	-		-		-	
Glos.	251	1.6	460	3.7	131	1.7
Hants.	81		158		119	
Hereford	116		59		26	
Herts.	46		52		27	
Huntingdons.	-		-		-	
Kent	145		42		24	
Lancashire	2,917	18.9	2,234	18.3	1,766	22.5
Leicestersh.	40		79		62	
Lincolnsh.	144		208	1.7	110	1.4
London & Middx.	3,778	24.4	1,939	15.9	1,360	17.3
Norfolk	43		-		61	
Northants	143		398	3.2	199	2.5
Northumberlnd.	167	1.1	45		-	
Notts	110		410	3.3	89	1.1
Oxon.	163	1.0	160	1.3	70	
Rutland	-		-		-	
Salop	417	2.7	133	1.0	109	1.3
Somerset	106		218	1.7	119	1.5
Staffs.	817	5.2	364	2.9	222	2.8

Appendix B (Cont'd)

Year	1872	% of total	1875	% of total	1880	% of total
Suffolk	-		59		12	
Surrey	86		60		58	
Sussex	217	1.4	60		74	
Warwicks.	444	2.8	370	3.0	327	4.1
Westmorland	-		-		-	
Wiltshire	168	1.1	110		73	
Worcestersh.	377	2.4	254	2.0	108	1.3
Yorks, E.	35		32		28	
" N.	-		71		25	
" W.	1,670	10.8	1,127	9.2	1,031	13.1
York City	33		40		-	
South Wales & Mon.	1,288	8.3	1,221	10.0	588	7.5

Appendix C.

Membership: Geographical Variation 1880 & 1883.

(Source: as in Appendix B.)

N.B. - The purpose of this table is to show, from a selection of Counties, the shift to the N.E.R.

Year	1880	% of total	1883	% of total
Total U.K.	7,844		7,990	
Derbyshire	157	2.0	244	3.1
Durham	252	3.2	1,062	13.3
Lancashire	1,766	22.5	1,255	15.7
London & Middx	1,360	17.3	864	10.8
Northumberlnd.	-	-	47	0.6
Notts.	89	1.1	185	2.3
Staffs.	222	2.8	305	3.8
Yorks. E.	28	0.4	102	1.3
" N.	25	0.3	175	2.2
" W.	1,031	13.1	759	9.5
South Wales & Mon.	588	7.5	762	9.5

Appendix D.

I Proposed National Standard, 1887.

(Source: A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1887, p.5.)

Hours: (i) Guaranteed week's pay (ii) Ten hour day; eight hour day for shunters in busy goods yards and signalmen in busy boxes; each day to stand by itself. (iii) Overtime and Sunday pay at 'rime and a quarter'.

Wages: Enginedrivers: starting 5/6 per day rising to 7/6.

Firemen: starting at 3/6; 4/- at the end of first year; 4/6 at the end of the second year; 5/- when appointed on drivers' duties.

Guards: starting at 26/-...1/- per year... 30/-

Underguards & ordinary shunters " " 21/-...1/- " " ... 25/-

Signalmen: (weekly wages)
class I boxes 27/-...1/- per year...30/-
class II " 25/-...1/- " " ...27/-
class III " 21/-...1/- " " ...24/-

II Actual Wages (England & Wales), 1886.

(Parl.Pap., 1893-4 (c.6889), LXXXIII, part i.)

	Percentage earning between											
	15/-20/-	20/-25/-	25/-30/-	30/-35/-	35/-40/-	40/-45/-	45/-50/-	50/-60/-
Drivers			0.2	14.8	23.1	59.8	2.1	
Firemen	13.6	59.6	25.7	1.1				
Guards	2.1	35.9	51.8	8.3	1.4	0.5		
Shunters	42.0	49.1	8.7	0.2				
Signalmen	19.8	65.7	13.6	0.9				

Appendix E.

The Darling Programme, August 1888.

Hours: (i) Guaranteed week's pay (ii) Ten hour day; eight hour day for shunters in busy yards and signalmen in busy boxes; each day to stand by itself (iii) Overtime at 'time and a half'; Sunday pay at 'time and a quarter' (iv) A 54 hour week for platelayers.

Wages:

Enginedrivers	(daily wages)	starting 5/6...third year 6/-...fourth year 6/6...fifth year 7/-...tenth year...7/6.
Firemen	(daily wages)	starting 3/6...second year 3/9...fourth year 4/-...seventh year 4/6...tenth year 5/-.
Guards	(weekly wages)	27/-...1/- per year...30/-; on reaching eleventh year 32/-.
Under Guards	(weekly wages)	23/-...1/-...26/-
Shunters	"	22/-...1/-...25/-
Signalmen	"	21/-...1/-...30/-
Assistant Signalmen	"	10/-...1/-...20/-
Porters	"	19/-...1/-...22/-
Platelayers	"	19/-...1/-...26/-

NOTES

(1) Calculated from W. Page, Commerce and Industry, II, (London 1919), p.172.

(2) Railway News 30 Dec.1871, p.879.

(3) L. Phillips, Full Report of the First General Delegate Meeting of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants together with a concise history of the Union from its commencement. (London 1872) p.1f; on hours also see below, p.15.

(4) A survey of the Times and provincial papers brings this out. See also Railway Accidents; Royal Com.Rep.,p.6. (Parl.Pap. 1877, XLVIII, 1).

(5) C. Bassett-Vincent, An Authentic History of Railway Trade Unionism (Derby 1902) p.33f.

(6) John Graham's interview with G.W.Alcock, reported verbatim in R.R. 13 May 1910, p.1f.

(7) Intervention at half-yearly meeting. Railway News, 18 Feb. 1871, p.238f.

(8) Parl.Deb. 3rd s, CCV, 34.

(9) Bassett-Vincent, op.cit. pp.35-40.

(10) S. & B.Webb, History of Trade Unionism (London 1920 ed.) pp.277-81.

(11) ibid. pp.314-6.

(12) Bassett-Vincent, op.cit. p.41.

(13) Bee-Hive 11 Nov.1871, p.4.

(14) Times 2 Oct.1871, p.6; the other letters are in ibid. 25 Aug. 1871, p.9; 15 Sep.1871, p.6; 29 Sep.1871, p.3.

(15) Derbyshire Advertiser & Journal 8 July 1871, p.6; Bassett-Vincent, op.cit. p.49f.

(16) Bee-Hive 28 Oct.1871, p.4;; ibid. 2 Dec.1871, p.6; ibid. 16 Dec.1871, p.4.

(17) Bassett-Vincent, op.cit. p.52; Phillips, op.cit. p.8.

(18) For Chapman's occupation Bassett-Vincent, op.cit. p.53.

(19) See account of J. Pilcher, trustee of the A.S.R.S., who was a member of this earlier union. (R.R. 7 May 1910, p.15).

(20) Bee-Hive, 16 Dec.1871, p.3; for date of founding the Society see Rules of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants ... February 1872 (Deptford 1872), kept in the Registry of friendly Societies.

(21) The following account of his life is based on A Brief Biography of J. Baxter Langley, Esq. M.R.C.S.,...(London 1867), kept in the Bishopsgate Institute, London. (Press-mark 283/8); also see F.E.Gillespie, Labour and Politics in England, 1850-67 (Durham, N.Carolina 1927.) pp.162f, 253; J. McCabe, Life and letters of George Jacob Holyoake, I.(1908), pp.253,276,283; J. Saville, Ernest Jones, Chartist (London 1952) p.71.

(22) In 1868 he withdrew before the actual contest. (H.J. Hanham, Elections and Party Management (London 1959) p.331 n.1.)

(23) R.S.G. 2 Mar.1872, p.7, for report of Southwark branch, where the London Executive Council used to meet. Also see Bee-Hive 27 Apr.1872, p.2, for Langley's explanation as to why he had felt it necessary to arrange the election of a provisional committee and the registration of the Society.

(24) See R.S.G. 9 Mar.1872, p.1 and other issues following; G.W.Alcock, Fifty Years of Railway Trade Unionism (London 1922) pp.55-63 for letters from Chapman and John Graham.

(25) R.S.G. 6 Apr.1872, p.7; also see R.S.G. 27 Apr.1872, p.7 for arrangements of the delegate meeting; Alcock, op.cit. p.62f. for John Graham's satisfaction.

(26) See above p.*8*

(27) Phillips, Full Report of the First General Delegate meeting ... p.31f.

(28) ibid. p.35.

(29) Alcock, op.cit. p.78

(30) Letter to Chapman, 27 Dec.1871 in Alcock, op.cit. p.39.

(31) See editorial in R.S.G. 18 May 1872, p.2.

(32) Speech after the delegate meeting, in Phillips, op.cit. p.45.

(33) ibid. pp.28f, 34, 40.

(34) Accidents to Railway Servants, R.Com. Rep.pp.6,11f. (Parl.Pap. 1900, XXVII).; also see below chs.III, IX.

(35) P.W. Kingsford, 'Railway Labour, 1830-1870' (unpublished Ph.D.thesis, London University, 1951). Ch.IX Appendix I; also see ibid. pp.271f, 275f.

(36) Phillips, op.cit. p.33.

(37) ibid. p.34.

(38) S. & B.Webb, Industrial Democracy (1920 ed.) pp.161-70 for a discussion of this.

(39) Advertisement of the A.S.R.S., R.S.G. 23 Mar.1872, p.12; R.S.G. 18 Jan.1873, p.14.

(40) Straight, who was the Conservative M.P. for the railway centre of Chester, had voted in favour of the amendment of the House of Lords which made picketing very difficult. (Bee-Hive 1 July 1871, p.13)

(41) E.Hodder, Life of Samuel Morley (London 1889).,p.299f; also see his work for Boards of Conciliation and arbitration, ibid. p.269ff.

(42) Hanham, Elections and Party Management, p.329ff; R.Harrison, "Practical, Capable Men" New Reasoner, No.6. (Autumn 1958) pp.111-13.

(43) S.W. Coltham, 'George Potter and the Bee-Hive Newspaper'. (Unpublished D.Phil.thesis. Oxford 1957). p.252ff; see, in particular, ibid. pp.259f, 271f, 275f.

(44) R.S.G. 8 Feb.1873, p.13.

(45) Times 5 Aug.1873.

(46) S. & B.Webb, History of Trade Unionism (1920 ed.) p.238.

(47) R.S.G. 27 July 1872, p.13; R.S.G. 3 Aug.1872, pp.1f,12,14.

(48) A.S.R.S. The First Annual Report of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants... 1872 (1873) p.iii.

(49) ibid. pp.67f, 74f.

(50) R.S.G. 14 Dec.1872, p.10; R.S.G. 21 Dec.1872, p.12.

(51) R.S.G. 1 Feb.1873, p.4; R.S.G. 1 Mar.1873, p.6. for Newcastle branch report.

(52) See editorial R.S.G. 15 Feb.1873, p.1.

(53) A.S.R.S. Programme of the Second Delegate Meeting Manchester... June 25th,1873; A.S.R.S. Delegate meeting...Manchester..1873. The numbers of the Railway Service Gazette relating to this meeting are missing from the file in the British Museum. But some idea of what happened can be had from references at subsequent meetings.

(54) See his reference to this in R.S.G. 18 Sep.1874, p.3.

(55) F.W. Evans to John Abbott, 1st Oct.1880. (Kept in A.S.R.S. 'Proceedings & Reports 1880').

(56) All these came out at a subsequent meeting of the London Committee and the new committee; see R.S.G.16 Aug.1873,p.11ff.

(57) R.S.G. 11 Oct.1873, p.15.

(58) Some idea of his inefficiency would be found in R.S.G. 15 Jan.1875, p.13.

(59) R.S.G. 23 Apr. 1874, p.12.

(60) R.S.G. 15 Jan.1875, p.13.

(61) Biography in R.R. 25 Feb.1881, p.5.

(62) R.S.G. 7 Feb.1874, p.6f.

(63) R.S.G. 23 Apr.1874, p.10.

(64) B.C.Roberts, Trades Union Congress, 1868-1922. (London 1958) p.73; R.S.G. 18 Jan.1873, p.5, for a brief reference to the "approaching Conference in Leeds" at the meeting of the Executive Committee.

(65) See above. p2.

(66) See his references to advice given by the President of the Miners' Association on how to run campaigns, at the meetings of the Executive Committee. (R.S.G. 17th Jan.1874, p.11); also see letters in R.S.G. 18 Apr. 1874, p.3f; R.S.G. 28 May, 1874, p.3.

(67) R.S.G. 18 Sep.1874, p.3f.

(68) Rules of 1872 as recorded in Webb. T.U. Coll. E-A. XLI,p.7.

(69) R.S.G. 29 Jan.1875, p.4f.

(70) A.S.R.S. "Rules...1875" (Rotherham 1875). (Kept in Registry of Friendly Societies.).

(71) R.S.G. 22 Jan.1875, p.3.

(72) ibid. p.12f.

(73) R.S.G. 27 Aug.1875, p.7.

(74) A close perusal of R.S.G. 22 Jan.1875 and R.S.G. 29 Jan. 1875 brings this out.

(75) Many years later the Railway Stockholders' Journal regretted this! Railway News 26 Oct.1907, p.710.

(76) R.S.G. 18 Apr. 1874, p.12.

(77) R.S.G. 19 Mar.1875, p.14.

(78) Speech at Birmingham, R.S.G. 20 Aug.1875, p.13.

(79) A.S.R.S. The Railwaymen's Catechism, Sep.17, 1875. (kept in A.S.R.S. 'Proceedings and Reports' 1876).

(80) R.S.G. 30 July 1875, p.5.

(81) R.S.G. 20 Aug.1875, p.13.

(82) For the agitation on accidents see Ch.III.

(83) The discussion on this depression is based on W.W.Rostow, British Economy of the Nineteenth Century (Oxford 1948). p.179, etc.seq.

(84) ibid.; also see S.& B.Webb, History of Trade Unionism (1920 ed.) p.343; G.D.H. Cole, "Some Notes on British Trade Unionism in the Third Quarter of the Nineteenth Century". International Review for Social History, II., p.12.

(85) Rostow, op.cit. p.181.

(86) Webb, op.cit. pp.345-50.

(87) J.H. Clapham, Economic History of Modern Britain, III, (Cambridge 1938) p.349.

(88) Based on Page, Commerce and Industry, II, 172.

(89) Kingsford, 'Railway Labour, 1830-70'. (Ph.D.London 1951).p.194.

(90) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, January 1876, p.6.

(91) ibid. July 1876, p.10; ibid. p.3 for the absence of Jenkins.

(92) Jenkins died on 11th Nov.1876. (Alcock, op.cit. p.183).

(93) See speech at the opening of the fourth delegate meeting, R.S.G. 5 Oct.1877, p.12.

(94) There was a still-born proposal to mobilise trade union support for his candidature if he was selected as the Liberal candidate for Cricklade, (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, July 1877, p.8.).

(95) A.S.R.S. Report and Financial Statement for 1876 (1877) p.7.

(96) R.S.G. 19 Oct.1877. Supplement p.vf; also see R.S.G. 22 Jan.1875, p.13.

(97) R.S.G. 5 Oct.1877, p.6; R.S.G. 12 Oct.1877, p.7 for method of election.

(98) R.S.G. 19 Oct.1877, supplement p.iii.

(99) ibid. pif.

(100) R.S.G. 19 Oct.1877, pp.7,14.

(101) R.S.G. 10 Jan.1879 to R.S.G. 31 Jan.1879 give very full accounts.

(102) A.S.R.S. Report and Financial Statement for 1877 (published in July 1878) p.1.

(103) See R.S.G. 17 Jan.1879, p.2; R.S.G. 24 Jan.1879, p.3; speech at Exeter Hall, R.S.G. 31 Jan.1879, p.1.

(104) The R.S.G. gives full reports of E.C. Meetings, but refers to the members by their branch. The minutes kept at Unity House only give resolutions, but give both the name and branch of each member. Thus one can identify the speaker in a report published in R.S.G.

(105) R.S.G. 7 Feb.1879, p.1f.

(106) R.S.G. 14 Feb.1879, p.3.

(107) A.S.R.S. E.C. Minutes, Jan-Feb.1879, p.5; the circular was issued in April. (R.S.G. 13 May 1879 p.6. refers to controversy over this.)

(108) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Apr.1879, p.5.

(109) A.S.R.S. The Proposed future policy of the Society, with draft of Rules of a protection fund. This four-page leaflet, marked 'Important - not for publication', is a very militant document, abounding in arguments that the capitalist was not "less

avaricious than human nature", and so would, when convenient, continue to lock-out or discharge men, unless there were "corrective influences to induce righteous conduct." (p.2).

(110) ibid. p.3.

(111) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1879, p.5.

(112) A.S.R.S. Annual General Meeting, Agenda of Proceedings... 1879. p.8.

(113) R.S.G. 17 Oct. 1879. p.3.

(114) ibid. p.2.

(115) A.S.R.S. The Financial Position of the Society. Important Consideration for members. Ordered to be printed and issued by the Annual General Meeting, 1879. (marked "Secret".)

(116) ibid. p.7f; pp.1-7. contains Evans's analysis.

(117) A.S.R.S. Financial Position of the Society - The Actuarial Report.

(118) The balance sheet for 1875 show that Sheffield had a separate Locomen's branch. The suggestion that there should be all-grades branches was defeated at the delegate meeting of 1877 with the argument that this would prevent the recruitment of Locomen. (R.S.G. 19 Oct.1877. supplement p.vii).

(119) R.S.G. 4 Oct.1878 p.3; R.S.G. 11 Oct.1873, p.4.

(120) On this see S. & B.Webb, Industrial Democracy (1920 ed.) p.167-9.

(121) R.S.G. 20 Feb.1880, p.3.

(122) R.S.G. 14 Feb.1879, p.3.

(123) Rule IX clause iii in Rules as passed by the A.G.M. at Cardiff 1880. (Registry of Friendly Societies: Intermediate File 8T, vol.I.)

(124) See his attempt to pass it at the A.G.M. of 1878. (R.S.G. 11 Oct.1878, p.4.)

(125) Kingsford, 'Railway labour, 1830-1870'. p.272.

(126) R.S.G. 15 Oct.1880, p.2.

(127) Rule VIII.

(128) R.S.G. 15 Oct.1880, p.5.

(129) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1880, p.6; Interview of Alcock with Edwin Phillips R.R. 24 June 1910, p.15.

(130) R.R. 13 May 1881, p.10.

(131) R.R. 13 Oct. 1882, p.4.

(132) Calculated from entrance fees paid R.R. 17 Aug. 1883, p.4.

(133) R.R. 7 Jan.1881, p.2.

(134) R.R. 7 Oct. 1881, p.13.

(135) R.R. 11 Nov. 1881, p.1.

(136) See long list of branches where special meetings for recruitment were badly needed. R.R. 17 Feb.1882, p.6f.

(137) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May 1882, p.4.

(138) ibid. p.9.

(139) R.R. 16 June 1882, p.4; R.R. 28 July 1882, p.4.

(140) R.R. 16 Feb.1883, p.11f; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May 1883, p.2.

(141) R.R. 6 July 1883, p.8f.

(142) A.S.R.S. Report and Financial Statement for 1883.

(143) Biography in Trade Unionist, 8 Apr. 1891, p.8; also see Railway Accidents; R.Com., min. of ev. Qq. 18,032-38. (Parl.Pap. 1877, XLVIII)

(144) Alcock, op.cit. p.105; Bassett-Vincent, op.cit. p.63.

(145) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1879, p.3.

(146) R.S.G. 30 May 1879, p.1; R.S.G. 6 June 1879, p.1; R.S.G. 13 June 1879, p.1.

(147) A.S.R.S. Annual General Meeting, Agenda of Proceedings, pp.6,8,11.

(148) R.R. 5 Oct. 1883, p.12.

(149) ibid. p.11; A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1885, p.9; A.S.R.S. Report and Financial Statement for 1886, p.5.

(150) Figures for 1887 from the Report and Financial Statement for that year.

(151) Source: Report and Financial Statement.

(152) W.W. Tomlinson, The North Eastern Railway (Newcastle 1914), p.754.

(153) E. Fletcher to C.R. Wilkinson, 17 Feb.1882. (Kept in N.E.R. 'Staff Records 1866'. Brit.Transp.Com. York location Register N.E.R. 15/6); also see Fletcher to Wilkinson, 14 Nov.1881, (Kept in N.E.R. 15/7.).

(154) R.Com. on Labour. min.of ev. Qq. 26242ff. (Parl.Pap., 1893-4 (C.6894-viii), XXXIII); Alcock, op.cit. p.257f.

(155) This is based on press cuttings and manuscripts in N.E.R. - 'Staff Records, 1882-83' (N.E.R. 15/13); also see successive issues of R.R.

(156) R.R. 12 Jan. 1883, p.6.

(157) R.R. 16 Feb. 1883, p.14.

(158) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May 1883, p.5.

(159) R.R. 10 Aug.1883, p. 7.

(160) R.R. 26 Oct. 1883, p.3f.

(161) R.R. 7 Dec.1883, p.10.

(162) R.R. 18 Jan.1884, p.14.

(163) R.R. 18 Apr.1884, p.9f; A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1884, p.7.

(164) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, July 1887, p.5.

(165) Sunderland Trades Council, First Annual Report. (Sunderland 1885) (Webb. T.U. Collection.).

(166) J.H. Wilson, My Stormy Voyage through Life, I, (1925), p.97, where he gives a full description of how the two used to spend hours discussing trade unionism.

(167) ibid. p.103.

(168) R.Com. on Labour. min.of ev. Q. 26,339f; Alcock op.cit. pp.257f, 264.

(169) R.R. 10 Oct.1884, p.4f.

(170) D.E.C. Eversley, "The Great Western Railway and the Swindon Works in the Great Depression", University of Birmingham

Historical Journal, V, p.180.

(171) Following account of the Midland Strike is based on R.R. 29 July 1887 to R.R. 19 Aug. 1887; also see Harford's speech to the A.G.M. in R.R. 14 Oct. 1887, p.5; A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1887, p.5f. Specific points where other sources have been used have been given additional references.

(172) A.S.R.S. Proposed Amendments to Rules to be submitted to the ... A.G.M. 1887, p.3. Though these amendments were issued in the name of the Executive Committee, the particular amendments to Rule XV are not mentioned in any previous minutes of the Executive. So they were Harford's own work.

(173) R.R. 5 Aug.1887, p.9.

(174) A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 30-31st. Aug.1887, passim. See, especially, p.6.

(175) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M. 1887, p.5.

(176) R.R. 14 Oct. 1887, pp.4-6.

(177) R.R. 12 Oct. 1888, p.484.

(178) R.R. 7 Oct. 1887, p.4.

(179) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1887, p.5.

(180) R.R. 10 Feb.1888, p.61. (editorial). Most of the unsigned articles were written by Foreman.

(181) R.R. 6 July, 1888, p.320.

(182) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1888, p.10f.

(183) R.R. 12 Oct. 1888, p.483f. Robert Collingwood, who was a delegate at this A.G.M. from Tyne Dock, later revealed in his evidence before the Select Committee on Hours of Labour that an average N.E. railwayman expected earnings to increase from the Darlington Programme. (Parl.Pap., 1890-91, XVI. Collingwood's evidence.).

(184) In 1883 Foreman had noted that all-grade movements tended to become split if demands on both hours and wages were made. (R.R. 3 Aug. 1883, p.9.)

(185) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M. 1888, p.5.

(186) H. Pelling, Origins of the Labour Party. (London 1954) p.63. B.C. Roberts, Trades Union Congress, 1868-1922. (London 1958) pp.119-22.

(187) R.R. 5 Oct. 1888, p.476. There was hardly any discussion on this resolution.

(188) See letters in R.R. 21 Sep.1888, p.449; also in R.R. 3 Aug. 1888, p.370; R.R. 17 Aug. 1888, p.387; R.R. 31 Aug. 1888, p.417.

(189) See his reply to Tom Mann's questions in R.Com. on Labour. min.of ev. Q. 26,339ff. (Parl.Pap, 1893-4, XXXIII).

(190) These appeared in R.R. 4 Jan.1889, p.10f; R.R. 18 Jan.1889, p.32; R.R. 25 Jan.1889, p.46.

(191) Editorial in R.R. 13 Sep.1889, p.433.

Chapter III. Parliamentary Work, 1871 - 1889.

With the exception of efforts to change the laws on Employers' Liability for compensation to workmen's injuries, all other efforts of the A.S.R.S. in the sphere of safety and shorter hours were aimed at increasing the powers of the Board of Trade, whose railway department used to look after the relation of the railways to the state.(1)

Since the Railway and Canal Traffic Act (1854), known usually as Cardwell's Act, parliamentary activity aimed at controlling the affairs of railway companies had been less intense than in the Eighteen-forties.(2) But there was a big revival in the tendency towards railway amalgamation in the early and mid-sixties of the last century, "which culminated in ... fresh inquiry into the whole question in 1872."(3) The most important recommendation of this inquiry committee was for the constitution of a three-member Railway and Canal Commission to act as a general court of arbitration regarding complaints about rates and fares. In due course the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1873 established this body. In spite of its defects the creation of the Commission marked the beginning of more effective state control.(4)

Meanwhile, as we have seen, the safety of the travelling public had been a matter of discussion inside and outside Parliament between 1870 and 1871.(5) As a result, the Regulation of Railways Act of 1871 strengthened the inspecting powers of the Board of Trade. The duties of inspecting officers were defined and compulsory reporting of Accidents was required wherever a passenger

train was involved, or in any accident likely to cause loss of life or personal injury. At Board of Trade inquiries the companies were compelled, for the first time, to produce any relevant evidence.(6) Before this Act the Board of Trade did not even have the right to demand information.(7)

Neither of these two developments directly affected the safety of railwaymen. The Railway Commission was concerned to arbitrate on commercial issues, and the Act of 1871 was designed to protect the public. But both of them provided an administrative framework which could be extended to include the working conditions of railwaymen as well. The parliamentary tactics of the A.S.R.S. were designed to achieve precisely that kind of orientation.

As we have seen, Bass had used a debate on Railway Accidents in 1871 to focus attention on the dangers of railway work, and had given figures from Vincent's researches.(8) With the publication of the returns of accidents from 1872, the number of railwaymen killed and injured in connection with the movement of traffic became common knowledge, and was used by the A.S.R.S. to enlist sympathy.

Within a year, in June 1873, Lord Buckhurst raised the matter in the House of Lords, being distressed at the large numbers of accidents to railwaymen as revealed by the returns. He called for a special return showing how many had got compensation.(9) In the following autumn, Bass asked Edwin Phillips, the editor of the Railway Service Gazette, to inquire into the accuracy of the official returns. Phillips's findings, based mainly on intensive

research on the L. & Y, said that the company had grossly understated the number of accidents to railwaymen, and Bass gave this wide publicity in the Press in December. Press comments ranging from surprise and shock, to disbelief, focussed public attention on the problem.(10) Though the Secretary of the L. & Y. company at first denied these allegations it later apologised to the Board of Trade and promised to provide better returns in future.(11) Shortly after this press publicity, the return asked for by Earl de la Warr was published in March 1874, and showed that compensation was not universal, was inadequate in amount, and most of it came out of companies' accidents funds, to which the men had to contribute in order to benefit.(12) The Conservative Earl de la Warr was so shocked that henceforth he became another ally of the A.S.R.S. Within a few days of the publication of the return he said that the Queen's speech should have contained a reference to legislation against railway accidents. While he did not want to embarrass the government he would bring in his own measure if the government was inactive.(13) On 27th April his motion on the appointment of a Royal Commission for a full-scale inquiry into all kinds of railway accidents was approved, after a long debate.(14) In this way, against the background of increasing railway accidents in 1871-72 - and some pressure from inside the Board of Trade(15) - a major inquiry was started.

The Commission was appointed on 8th June, 1874 with the Duke of Buckingham as Chairman.(16) For the next three years, while it took evidence, the A.S.R.S. tried, with varying degrees of success,

to put its case against the companies before it, and before the public. Bass had managed to have a progressive railway engineer - William Galt - appointed on the Commission to watch over the interests of railwaymen.(17)

In the latter half of 1874, the A.S.R.S. Executive, despairing of Chapman's incompetence, had put John Graham at the head of a 'parliamentary committee.' He reported in the following January that Bass had managed to get the Commission to agree to hear evidence from ex-railwaymen, thus giving a chance to James Cordwell, Edward Harford, and F.W. Evans to give evidence.(18)

Towards the end of 1875 Evans, after clearing up the mess Chapman had left behind, planned a signature campaign for a monster petition.(19) By the following March 10,000 signatures were collected for the memorial which made three points:(20) By way of replying to the argument of the Companies that accidents were caused by the negligence of the servants, it stressed six drawbacks in railway work which made men prone to accidents: excessive hours of labour, laxity in enforcing some service rules that had been drawn up to protect the men's lives, slowness in adopting the latest safety devices, lack of enough accommodation for the traffic, employment of ill-trained men, and insufficient number of men employed. To remedy these it suggested extending the powers of the Board of Trade, and investing the Railway and Canal Commission with jurisdiction to arbitrate in disputes between companies and servants on questions affecting safety. The final demand was for compensation for accidents for which the servant was not responsible.

The Companies had all denied the points made by the A.S.R.S.(21) A great deal depended on the evidence given by individual railwaymen, but Evans's own evidence was badly presented; he relied too much on official reports, and failed to give enough data based on knowledge obtained as secretary of the A.S.R.S.(22)

The Commission's report was not unanimous. While one railway official was in favour of complete laissez-faire, and William Galt in favour of enlarging the powers of the Board of Trade, the main report disappointed the A.S.R.S. in not proposing to give the Board of Trade powers of enforcement on the ground that this would make the Government legally responsible.(23) Constructive proposals were made, however, for the rapid introduction of the absolute block-system and the interlocking of points and signals - for avoiding collisions; also for the use of continuous brakes whose application could quickly stop all carriages and wagons, and which could, in cases of emergency, be self-acting.(24)

But none of these recommendations were taken up by the Conservative Government, who appear to have used the Commission as a delaying device. When the report was published in February 1877 the A.S.R.S. spent the next three months in an intensive campaign to get legislation along the lines of its recommendations. A meeting in Exeter Hall, with an overflow meeting in Trafalgar Square, was followed by a deputation to Sir Charles Adderley, President of the Board of Trade, who would not, however, commit himself. Other meetings were held in provincial towns, and Earl de la Warr was presented with a petition to the House of Lords of about 10[illegible],000

signatures.(25) The Earl pressed the government to state its intentions. The Prime Minister, the Earl of Beaconsfield, declared that the complexity of the question, the sheer bulk of the report, and the lack of unanimity among the Commissioners, made an early legislative effort out of the question.(26) Before the Conservative Government went out of office in 1880, the only innovation in this field was to pass an Act in 1878, asking for compulsory half-yearly reports from Companies about the number of Continuous brakes used by them.(27)

The Government's attitude of laissez-faire was based on the assumption that the managers knew best when and where to introduce new equipment, and it was true that on the better railway lines there was now a slow but general tendency to introduce efficient brake power. But, as Evans pointed out, goods and mineral trains were generally overlooked. Consequently the lives of many railwaymen still remained in danger, especially in the steep gradients of South Welsh Coalfields, where a large number of A.S.R.S. members lived.(28) In October 1880 Evans said that the Board of Trade's powers of inspection without the powers of enforcing its recommendations reduced their efforts to "an expensive farce."(29)

II

Yet in the same month Evans reported his victory in a related sphere. If he could not secure the prevention of accidents by legislation, he had obtained a law giving workingmen the right to sue their employers' for Compensation.

The main interest of the campaign of the A.S.R.S. to reform the laws on Employers' Liability lies in the way it was conducted. To understand that properly, a brief account of the state of the law, as it stood in the 1870's, is necessary.

Ever since the judicial decision of Priestley v. Fowler,(1837) the doctrine of Common Employment had prevented a servant from suing his master for industrial injuries caused by the fault of another servant. A judicial decision of 1850 clearly indicated the wide scope of the definition of a fellow servant. A railwayman was injured while travelling on duty in the Company's train, which collided with another belonging to the same Company, but he was held to be in common employment with the drivers of both trains.(30) Though Scottish judicial decisions of the Eighteen-Fifties were a little more favourable to the employee, even there 'Common Employment' was affirmed and reaffirmed and in the end firmly fixed by a decision of the House of Lords in 1868. In that year, in the Wilson v. Mary case it was said,

> "Workmen do not cease to be fellow servants because they are not all equal in point of station or duty."(31)

The primary aim of the legal battle waged by the A.S.R.S. and other trade unions in the next decade was either to abolish the doctrine of 'Common Employment' altogether, or to exclude from the definition of "fellow-servant" employees to whom employers' authority had been delegated wholly or in part.

Although the A.S.R.S. was born in the year when the Conference of Amalgamated Trades had wound up its business, and the Parliament-

ary Committee of the T.U.C. became the unchallenged parliamentary spokesman of organised labour, our trade union had very little direct connexion with that campaign. Its parliamentary links were provided, instead, by M.T. Bass, the Liberal M.P. As a result working with the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. was only one of a number of possibilities considered and tried by the A.S.R.S.

It was characteristic of the non-militant A.S.R.S. of the early 'Seventies to enlist the help of a railway magnate. Sir Edward Watkin, who had earned the nickname of the "Railway King" because of his Chairmanship of three railways,(32)stood as the Liberal candidate in a bye-election at Exeter in November 1873, and Bass requested F.W. Evans, then secretary of the Bristol branch, to go and campaign on his behalf.(33) His Conservative opponent was also a railway director, and the Liberal press was particularly anxious to win the railway labour vote.(34) Evans campaigned among railwaymen on behalf of Watkin, and made Watkin promise to introduce a Compensation Bill.(35) Watkin did not win, but after he was returned at the general election next year from Hythe, he introduced a bill in May.(36) While this bill made the plea of "common employment" invalid for the master's defence, it limited the amount of compensation to one year's wages, limited action to the three months after the accident, and had other defects. Evans strongly opposed fixing the amount at one year's wages.(37) The Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. opposed it too,(38)and the bill was dropped. A better bill was prepared by Bass, in which the amount of Compensation was to be fixed by the jury,(39)but ill-health

prevented him from pressing it that year.(40) The Union Executive was informed in January 1875 that since the Royal Commission on Accidents had recently been appointed, Bass's bill might have to be postponed.(41)

The Union Executive then decided to send delegates to attend the T.U.C. on the 18th January when it was scheduled to discuss the Compensation question. Action in concert with other trade unions was accepted as a matter of principle.(42) This was the time when, as we have seen, Evans, having taken over the reins of the Society, was anxious to make it rather like the Amalgamated Association of Miners, and keen to bring railwaymen into touch with other trade unions.(43) At the T.U.C. Evans seconded a resolution of George Potter on workmens' Compensation. This did not raise the question of abolishing the doctrine of Common Employment, but, in a general manner, declared that an extension of the Employers' Liability from mere personal negligence to a wider range was desirable.(44)

But Evans's fondness for quick results was displayed that summer in his support of another bill introduced by Sir Edward Watkin, in which the "Railway King" raised the amount of Compensation to a ceiling of £300.(45) Other A.S.R.S. members were more sceptical, as it still had loopholes, like the exclusion of contributory negligence from actionable cases.(46) The bill had to be withdrawn, because the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. opposed it on the three counts of limitation of amount, limitation of period during which a claim had to be made, and the right of the

Employer to take into account payments from its provident funds.(47) But Evans had been sufficiently involved in this effort of Sir Edward - who had given him £50 when he had been dismissed from the G.W.R.(48) - that he defended his bill strongly, after it had been withdrawn, at a 'post-mortem' discussion in the Executive Committee.(49)

The T.U.C. of October 1875 marked the point when Evans definitely decided that to join the other unions in a concerted effort might well achieve the right of Compensation in a reasonably short time. He moved the main resolution of the Congress on this subject. Once again, the resolution was moderately worded, and no attempt was made to reject the judicial doctrine of "Common Employment' outright.(50)

In January 1876 the A.S.R.S. Executive decided to give the Compensation question top priority.(51) Presently, a private members' bill, which was introduced by the Miners' leader Alexander Macdonald, M.T. Bass, and a few others,(52)was debated in May - the first debate ever held on the subject. As Macdonald's bill wished to sweep away 'Common Employment' altogether, many M.Ps. opposed it. A possible middle course that was likely to win more support was indicated in the speech of J.G. Dodson, Liberal M.P. for Chester, who said that the "rationale of Common Employment ... altogether broke down" in the case of accidents to railway servants.(53) Bass declared that "some legislation on the subject was absolutely required," but was personally willing to accept the government's assurance that they would legislate without unnecessary delay.(54)

The bill was withdrawn, after a Select Committee had been promised by the Conservative Home Secretary.(55)

The Select Committee was appointed on 22nd June 1876, was re-appointed in March 1877, and published its report in June 1877.(56) Its Chairman was Robert Lowe, who had been an opponent of Gladstone's Reform Bill in 1866, but had helped the passage of the Labour laws of 1875, and earned the gratitude of the T.U.C.(57)

Evans gave evidence before the Select Committee towards the end of 1876.(58) He had already in the previous May raised the Compensation question in his evidence before the Royal Commission on Accidents.(59) He had noticed that opinion had been favourable to giving Compensation to railwaymen because their work was dangerous.(60) So his line of argument was not an outright denial of 'Common Employment' but a plea for making valid distinctions between different levels of authority.(61) But he included actual working-men in his definition of persons in authority, by stating that the Driver was the master of the Fireman, and both the Driver and the Guard were under the control of the Signalmen.(62)

While the Select Committee was still sitting the Royal Commission had published its report in February 1877. On Compensation it said,

> "The Company should in every case be liable to its servants for the negligence of those to whom it delegates its authority as master."(63)

Evans's efforts henceforth depended on what construction was put on these recommendations. The Companies were opposed even to a narrow interpretation of this. Before the Select Committee - which

was still sitting - one General Manager said that there could be no half-way house between abolishing 'Common Employment' and the existing state of the law.(64)

As it had been apparent by the new year in 1877 that both in the Koyal Commission and in the Select Committee there was a large body of opinion that would support a special compensation bill for railwaymen, the Executive Committee, in January was partly persuaded to cut itself off from the main movement of the Trades Union Congress, and resolved,

> "...at present it is expedient to have a measure conceding compensation to Railway Servants introduced into Parliament. At the same time the Council pledges itself to support any general measure on the subject which may be brought." (65)

We have already described the general campaign which was launched in the first half of 1877 after the publication of the Royal Commission's report. This had put the question of Compensation for railwaymen before the public. Hardly had the discussion died down when the Select Committee's report was about to appear, giving the A.S.R.S. another occasion for campaigning. Now the rift with the rest of the Trade Union movement was slowly becoming apparent.

Shortly before the publication of the Select Committee's report in June that year, Evans threw out the suggestion, for the first time to the membership at large, for a sectional bill, declaring

> "that many members of Parliament [supported] a measure of compensation in favour of railway servants who [were]

opposed to a more general one."(66)

It is possible that he had been persuaded by his parliamentary allies to detach himself publicly from Alexander Macdonald.

The Select Committee's report was not unanimous, but the minority report provided the basis on which Evans launched his campaign. The minority report was the work of Sir Robert Lowe.(67)

The crucial definition of the range of persons who should not count as 'fellow servants' in any future pleas of 'common employment' was in clause 15. There "the negligence of any person exercising authority mediately or immediately derived from the owners" was described as the owners' negligence, although this was not to "extend to persons, who, though exercising authority, are bonafide employed in actual labour..."(68)

Armed with this report Evans organised a second series of meetings in the summer of 1877, beginning with another one at Exeter Hall, London, at which Thomas Brassey, the Liberal M.P., presided.(69) There were some protests within the ranks of the A.S.R.S. at this rift between their union and the others. At the Delegate Meeting of October 1877 the delegate from Northampton - a centre of the Boot and Shoe Union - proposed that the A.S.R.S. should stick to a general compensation bill, and share expenses with other Societies. The motion was lost after Evans said that if they wanted their bill to succeed, they would do well to keep the sympathies of a great many employers of labour who were not railway directors.(70)

Macdonald and Bass reintroduced the bill of 1876 in January

1873 - the last time they were to sponsor a bill jointly.(71) A few weeks before its second reading, which took place in April, a deputation of the A.S.R.S. had been introduced by Thomas Brassey to the Home Secretary,(72)who promised a bill on behalf of the government.(73) During the second reading of Macdonald's bill it was again evident that even those who supported it for the sake of discussion, gave it a qualified approval.(74) Brassey's speech was entirely about accidents to railwaymen.(75) The Attorney-General promised a bill, but soon after this the Eastern Question over-shadowed all other issues.(76)

III

By October 1873 Evans had organised petitions on a large-scale(77) and had a bill drafted which went a little further than the minority report, but fell far short of Macdonald's bill.(78) Evans claimed to follow Lowe's report, but his lawyer added words so as to include the negligence of Drivers, Firemen, Signalmen, and Platelayers within the scope of Employers' liability.(79) The main aim of this exercise was to protect railwaymen while keeping the sympathies of Liberal employers. Success in getting that sympathy was shown in the long list of M.Ps. who had promised him support.(80) At the A.G.M. Evans publicly criticised Macdonald's extremism. Macliver followed him to exhort the delegates, amidst applause, to trust their middle-class allies.(81)

Most of the M.Ps. mentioned by Evans were Liberals, but it was useful to have, in Earl de la Warr, an ally inside the Conservative

Party. He had pestered the Government three times about the bill in 1878.(82) When the Government could not promise, in December, that a bill would be introduced,(83)he introduced the bill drafted by the A.S.R.S. in the House of Lords early in 1879.(84) Simultaneously, Bass, Brassey, Samuel Morley, and A.M. Sullivan introduced it in the Commons.(85) Alexander Macdonald, bereft of a lot of support, brought in his bill once again.(86) The Government's bill, brought in about the same time, was unsatisfactory, as it extended liability to include only superintendents and managers "and no other person."(87)

A massive petition campaign was organised by Evans,(88)and branches were prodded to write to their M.Ps.(89) Already, by the middle of 1878 the campaign had cost £415,(90)and the new campaign added to the bill. Relations with the T.U.C. became embittered when Broadhurst tried to dissuade Brassey from supporting Evans's bill. Evans countered that by eliciting from Brassey an assurance that he would not support Macdonald's bill.(91) The A.S.R.S. Executive administered a rebuke to the T.U.C.(92) In a public debate on 28th April on the various bills,presided over by Brassey, John Graham - organising secretary of the A.S.R.S. - ranged himself against Macdonald.(93) Evans was doubtless further encouraged in keeping aloof from the Miners' leader by the fact that recently an up-and-coming Radical politician - Joseph Chamberlain - had refused to support Macdonald's bill.(94)

None of the bills were fortunate this year. A powerful lobby of Employers had waited on Lord Beaconsfield on 9th May.(95)

Whenever the bill of the Earl de la Warr had come up for a second reading, he had been persuaded by the Lord Chancellor to postpone it.(96) Eventually, the bills in the Commons could not be debated at all, and the Lord Chancellor persuaded a vexed Earl de la Warr to drop his bill as well.(97)

Partly as a result of employers' pressure, and partly as a result of Lord Beaconsfield's preoccupations with the Eastern question, neither Macdonald nor Evans had been successful by the autumn of 1879. But instead of making Evans re-appraise the policy of isolation, this situation made him all the more determined to enlist as much support as possible from middle-class M.Ps. - especially Liberals. At the Trades Union Congress in September 1879 he advertised his differences with Macdonald in a little scene in which these two people argued about the merits of this bill, about how many M.Ps. either of them could muster in support, and about the ethics of a sectional campaign. Evans was criticised by such distinguished figures as John Burnett, Robert Knight, and George Shipton.(98)

But he returned to the attack at the A.G.M. of the A.S.R.S. in the following month, declaring,

> "The tendency ... of Mr. Macdonald's bill is to delay legislation, by making opponents of those who would be prepared to support a measure based on an equitable regard for the rights of both employer and employed."(99)

He stressed that while it was for the A.G.M. to decide whether to persist with a separate bill, a bill had to be passed quickly, and

the A.S.R.S. had already spent a lot on it. He reproduced the long list of M.Ps. who had promised support.(100) During the discussion, he said, with some effect, that Macdonald had not been able to answer his challenge to name twenty M.Ps. who would support his bill. The conference endorsed Evans's stand, without much opposition.(101)

At this A.G.M., in his opening address, Macliver had discreetly canvassed support for the Liberal Party by referring to the present Government's black record over this bill, and the way it had deceived one of its own members, the Earl de la Warr.(102) In course of the next eight months Evans used the electoral prospects of Liberal leaders to win more support for his bill, while continuing to have, in Earl de la Warr, an indefatigable aide among the Conservatives.

Next year the bill was introduced in both Houses once again.(103) Meanwhile, in anticipation of an election, the Executive Committee prepared a questionnaire early in February, and gave the branches instructions in canvassing.(104) From the middle of that month, the solicitude for the railway vote at the double-member constituency of Chester, by both the Liberals and the Conservatives, enabled Evans to wield some influence. Chester was then represented by one Conservative - Cecil Raikes - and one Liberal - J.G. Dodson. Raikes began to take a keen interest in railway servants' welfare about this time. He tabled a notice in parliament "to call attention" to the Compensation question,(105)gave £2.2.0 to the Orphan fund of the A.S.R.S.(106)and moved that the recommendations of the Royal

Commission of 1877 should be adopted quickly.(107) But Evans sought the support of the A.S.R.S. solidly behind Dodson,(108)who praised the bill of Morley and Brassey at a railwaymen's meeting in his constituency, which had been partly sponsored by the local A.S.R.S.(109)

With the dissolution of parliament on 8th March the A.S.R.S. mobilised its 200 branches for canvassing support for its bill. Each of them was advised to send the following questionnaire to their candidates; the answers were published in the Railway Service Gazette from the middle of March:

(i) Will the candidate vote for having a second reading of the A.S.R.S. bill?

(ii) Will he support that bill in preference to the government's bill?(110)

Special editions of the Gazette were published for a few constituencies. Among those who sent entirely favourable replies there were some who became members of Gladstone's government - J.G. Dodson, Sir William Harcourt, W.E. Forster, and Joseph Chamberlain. Chamberlain promised to support Brassey's bill declaring,

"I prefer [this] to any other I have yet seen."(111)

A special effort was made among G.W.R. men at Oxford in favour of Harcourt early in May.(112)

On 8th May Dodson wrote to Gladstone urging that in the current session, "the Employers' Liability bill should not be lost sight of."(113) Gladstone asked him to find out

"with precision ... the stage which the question [had] reached, and the prospect of accord upon it."(114) Within a week a committee of the Cabinet, including Dodson, Chamberlain, Forster, and Harcourt, decided that, having "considered the different bills," their "best course would be to adopt Brassey's bill and introduce it in the House of Commons." Dodson asked for and obtained the Prime Minister's permission "to communicate privately, before the meeting of the House, to Brassey & to Mr. S. Morley that the Government intended to appropriate their bill."(115)

On 2nd June - the day before Dodson introduced the second reading on behalf of the Government - lobbies of the A.S.R.S., Employers, and the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. saw the ministers.(116) In the end, although the bill was heavily mauled in Committee, the interests of railwaymen were safeguarded as a result of the close liaison maintained between Evans and S.Morley, through whom the A.S.R.S. proposed six amendments, three of which became part of the Act. The original preamble had vanished, at one of the sittings in committee. On 13th August Morley moved an amendment in which the employer was made liable even if the negligent 'superior' person was in a different department. Its unsatisfactory wording made it look like Macdonald's bill, but Morley accepted the Attorney-General's suggestion of "adapting his amendment to the case of railway servants"; as a result Clause (1) of the Act had the following vital sub-section (S-S.V):

> "or by reason of the negligence of any persons in the service of the employer who has charge or control of any

signal, points, locomotive engine or train upon a railway."(117)

Two other small amendments made the protection of railwaymen more specific.

Historians of the parliamentary work of the Trade Union movement have mentioned the agitation behind the passage of the first Employers' Liability Act of 1880. But none of them have examined in detail the actual pressures behind this legislation, and consequently not noticed that the pressure from the labour movement was heterogeneous, and that the role of the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. became relatively unimportant. The Webbs gave a brief reference to the part played by the miners and the A.S.R.S.(118) Although they noted that the Act was limited in its scope and that Clause (1), sub-section V, was specifically designed to help the railwaymen,(119)they did not tackle the question of its origins. Mr.B.C. Roberts's brief narrative of the passage of this law in a recent work, based entirely on Broadhurst's annual report to the T.U.C., stresses the role of the Parliamentary Committee(12)and ignores the complex pattern of pressures. He has overlooked that the A.S.R.S.-sponsored bill was preferred by the Liberals to Macdonald's measure, and, as the preceding account has shown, Broadhurst had no chance of amending it in a more favourable direction. Indeed, he was sufficiently annoyed to issue a circular saying,

> "...the Railway Servants, as represented by their Secretary Evans, are endeavouring by deputation to

> weaken the hands of this committee on the Compensation question .... The principle of Macdonald's bill must be insisted on."(121)

Yet the amendments that the government accepted were specifically in the interests of railwaymen. The Parliamentary Committee did not succeed.

The A.S.R.S. was successful because it went unashamedly for a middle course that could yield quick results. While it had not been part of the movement to reform the labour laws - between 1867 and 1875 - it had, from the beginning, been patronised by philanthropic Liberal M.Ps., most of whom could feel more collectivist about the railways than about any other branch of the economy. By accepting their suggestion, by isolating itself from extremist influences, and by a skilful use of the railway vote in some constituencies that mattered, the A.S.R.S. scored its first legislative victory.

It soon became evident that success purchased at this price did not amount to a great deal, and in some respects even less than what the A.S.R.S. had bargained for. Within a few months contracting-out of this law in lieu of insurance facilities became common on some railways;(122) by 1886 it was almost a condition of service on the L. & N.W., where the A.S.R.S. was not very strong, especially at Crewe.(123) Evans joined hands with the T.U.C. to abolish contracting-out, but private members' bills brought in every year failed to achieve anything.(124)

The real blow to his efforts of 1880 came in the judicial

decision of Gibbs v. the Great Western Railway,(125)which appeared to narrowed the definition of a 'person in charge' almost to the same limits as in the bills of the Conservative government before the election of 1880. This case partly tested Clause (1), S-S.V. The accident had involved the negligence of a labourer in leaving the Signal-box in a dangerous condition. The Company had successfully upset in the Court of Queen's Bench the decision of the County Court in giving compensation. The A.S.R.S. got alarmed because the judge had said that even a Signalman would not have been considered a person "in charge or control" of signals and points, but only someone in a superior grade. As a point of principle was involved, the Union appealed,(126)but the Court of Appeal upheld the ruling of the judge, although the Clause was not explicitly narrowed down.(127) Realising that Evans's efforts had been almost entirely wasted, the A.S.R.S. henceforth became pledged to abolish the doctrine of 'common employment.'(128)

IV

Just as the attitude of the A.S.R.S. on this question changed in course of the Eighteen-Eighties, the composition of its parliamentary friends also changed. With the exception of Earl de la Warr they were still either Liberals or Radicals. But there was greater co-operation with the Lib-lab M.Ps., and with the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. Harford was elected to that august body in due course. At the congress of 1884 he started making a bid for a seat on the Parliamentary Committee and got 24 votes as against the 40 votes of the runner-up. In subsequent

years his popularity rose steadily. In 1887 he was not only elected, but only Crawford, Birtwistle, and Mawdsley were ahead of him. From then onwards he remained on the Committee till 1892, returning to it again in 1894 for another spell of three years. The Socialist wing of the T.U.C. at first thought of him as an ally. Keir Hardie had proposed his name for the presidency of the Labour Electoral Association in October 1888;(129) in 1890 Champion listed him among the middle-of-the-road leaders who would be a better successor to Broadhurst than Charles Fenwick.(130)

Mass died in 1884, and Samuel Morley in 1886. Macliver lost his seat at Plymouth in 1885. Although Macliver began to look for a constituency with a great many railwaymen in it, for the present links with parliament were maintained only because, by a stroke of luck, the new Radical member for East Northamptonshire, F.A.Channing, who was returned in 1885, had developed an interest in railwaymen's conditions in course of his campaign. With his introduction of the Railway Regulation Bill of 1886, Channing began specialising in this sphere.(131) Members from constituencies which were big railway centres also spoke in favour. One of them was W.S.B.McLaren, the Radical who won Crewe, after the extension of the franchise had made it less of a "pocket borough" of the L. & N.W. railway Company.(132) Macliver's quest for a seat in a railway centre was successful when the Doncaster Liberal caucus adopted him between March and April 1889. It was generally agreed by both parties that his presidency of the A.S.R.S. could be an asset to him and to the revivified Doncaster Liberals.(133) In this division the A.S.R.S. had 130 members in Doncaster and 107 in Mexborough at the

end of 1888, and Harford thought this augured well for the future of the candidate and the interests of the union.(134) Macliver had to give up his candidature in April 1890 through ill-health,(135) but the links established between the Liberals and the local A.S.R.S. were going to be an asset to the Liberals in the general election of 1892.(136)

In the Eighteen-eighties three legislative efforts provide the landmark of the parliamentary work of the A.S.R.S. Joseph Chamberlain, as President of the Board of Trade, brought in a Railway Regulation Acts Amendment Bill in 1884,(137)but did not get even the time to have a second reading.(138) Channing introduced a comprehensive bill in 1886.(139) In 1889, when Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was the Conservative President of the Board of Trade, the Railway Regulation Act (52 & 53 Vic.c.LVII) was passed, embodying some of the principles the A.S.R.S. had agitated for. Between them these bills dealt with better brakes, the block-system, safe couplings for carriages and wagons, and the problem of overwork.

In spite of the prominence given to overwork among railwaymen in Bass's campaign of the eighteen-seventies, the union did little and achieved little on this question in that period. Although in October 1875 Evans had tried to make a long speech in favour of the regulation of railwaymen's hours by the State,(140)the Union Executive firmly opposed the idea when, two years later, the Duke of St. Albans suggested it in Parliament.(141) This change of tune was possibly due to the predominance of Locomen and Guards in the membership of the union, most of whom had, by that time, obtained

overtime payment. After the failure of the hours movements during the short-lived boom of 1880-83, Harford suggested, in October 1883, that the Board of Trade should be empowered to order the Companies to send regular reports of long hours worked. An unanimous resolution at the A.G.M. established this as the union's policy.(142) This emphasis that the aim was simply to give publicity to dangerous overwork was maintained until such publicity was actually secured. As we have seen, by the time this campaign was successful, the hours agitation got linked up with the agitation for a legal eight-hour day. But until that happened, safety, rather than the exploitation of labour, was the line of attack.

V

The promptness of the Liberal Government in 1880 in passing the Employers' Liability Act made Evans think that it would show equal alacrity over the other recommendations of the Commission on safety devices. When interviewed by a deputation from the A.S.R.S. in December 1880 Joseph Chamberlain promised to take a firm attitude with the Companies if they were slow in introducing these.(143) Evans was sceptical of the Board of Trade translating its threats into action, and decided to campaign.(144) In 1882, with the help of Earl de la Warr, he had a bill on the compulsory adoption of continuous brakes on all trains introduced in the House of Lords. Although it had a second reading, it was withdrawn as the A.S.R.S. was not prepared to waive its insistence on the automatic character of brakes.(145) Safe couplings had hardly been discussed by the

Royal Commission - though it was a matter of life and death for Shunters. At the request of Evans, Sir E.J. Reed, the Liberal M.P. for Cardiff, got the Board of Trade to obtain a return of coupling appliances, but the response of the Companies was poor.(146) Frustrated in these efforts, Evans organised an exhibition of devices designed for safe railway working at Darlington in October 1882, at the time of the A.G.M. The N.E.R. gave facilities to hold it, and the A.G.M. was sufficiently impressed by it to agree to bear its cost.(147)

Joseph Chamberlain was almost converted by the A.S.R.S. in 1884. In the previous year Earl de la Warr had shown, from the return of continuous brakes published by the Board of Trade, how only six Companies fulfilled the requirements of that department.(148) Perhaps influenced by this, Chamberlain told the Railway Companies' Association on 7th February next year that he would introduce legislation on Continuous brakes, the interlocking of points and signals, and the block-system.(149) A week later he was willing to receive, semi-officially, a deputation from the A.S.R.S., which had a very satisfactory interview.(150) Under their influence perhaps, the Clause on brakes in his draft Railway Regulation Bill required the compulsory adoption of continuous brakes on all kinds of trains - Goods and Mineral, as well as Passenger. This universal application was strongly opposed by the Railway Companies' Association at a subsequent interview.(151) As a result the entire Clause was dropped. A Clause requiring compulsory returns of overtime was the one point in favour of the A.S.R.S. which survived in the printed text.(152)

As the bill did not eventually have a second reading, the net achievement in this year was a modest dose of publicity.

As shunting accidents took place in marshalling yards outside the public view, unlike train accidents, "coupling" devices aroused far less public interest than continuous brakes and the block-system. In 1884 the Board of Trade had put the onus of showing the existence of safe railway couplings on the A.S.R.S. in reply to its agitation.(153) On Harford's advice the A.G.M. of 1885 decided to hold an exhibition of coupling devices and sanctioned £300 for prizes and expenses.(154) Thirty-four entries were selected from three hundred; and these were submitted to practical trials at Nine Elms station in London for three days from 29th March 1886, to be judged by three railway engineers and the A.S.R.S. Executive. The results were published in an illustrated twenty-six page pamphlet called Railway Coupling Competition, which was sent to all the Companies.(155) In the same year Harford published another pamphlet called Suggestions for Safe Railway Working, which listed twenty-three practical suggestions.(156)

These demonstrations and publications were meant to assist the passage of Channing's Bill, which had been introduced early in 1886, embodying all the principles of the A.S.R.S.(157) A.J.Mundella was President of the Board of Trade; in his constituency the A.S.R.S. had maintained close ties with him, dating back to the days when Harford was district Secretary in Sheffield.(158) Mundella allowed the bill to have a second reading and then be referred to a committee,(159)but pressures from the other side overwhelmed him.

Not only had the Companies' Association planned to organise a powerful lobby against this bill,(160)but the railway lobby was also on the war-path against him over his Railways and Canal Traffic Bill, dealing with rates and fares. It has been convincingly argued elsewhere that part of the explanation of the downfall of this Liberal Government could be found in the defection to Chamberlain's camp of a number of railway directors, who had been mainly incensed at this bill.(161) The bill sponsored by the A.S.R.S. was thus unlucky in being introduced when the Board of Trade was least anxious to add to its troubles with the railway companies, and when a major political controversy was disrupting traditional loyalties.

After the Conservative Government of Lord Salisbury had taken office, efforts of the A.S.R.S. seemed to reach a dead end. The President of the Board of Trade since February 1888, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, was a railway director, and the 'Railway Interest' was heavily represented in the Conservative party. (TableII)

Table II

Railway Interest in the House of Commons.

(Source: Dod's Parliamentary Companion, 1890;
Bradshaws Railway Manual, 1890.)

	Total Number	Major British Railways	Minor British Railways	Foreign Railways.
	85	35	34	15
Liberals	21	8	8	5
Conservatives & Unionists	63	27	26	10
Irish Nat.	1	1		

In spite of this in course of 1888 and 1889 the persistence of Channing and the Earl de la Warr contributed a little to the Clauses of the Act of 1889. In 1887 the Earl de la Warr demanded successfully that a special return of overtime worked by Locomen, Guards, and Signalmen for July 1886 and January 1887 should be made to him.(162) When this was published in March 1888, it showed many instances of overwork.(163) The publicity occasioned by this blue-book was utilised by Channing a month later when on 8th May he moved a resolution in the House of Commons on safe railway work. Although the House was barely attended, he was supported by Mundella, and Hicks-Beach promised to introduce a bill at some future date.(164)

The Companies had planned to resist any Clause on the compulsory adoption of safe couplings when the bill was about to be introduced in July 1889.(165) In its first version, published on 15 July there was a Clause giving the Board of Trade powers to specify a definite type of coupling.(166) On 23rd July, after Hicks-Beach had heard of "very large and persistent opposition" to that Clause he wished to withdraw it in committee.(167) That evening the A.S.R.S. got a large number of Lib-lab and Radical M.Ps. to press the Minister for its retention, and it seemed that some general point on safe coupling work would be retained.(168) Two days later the Companies finally persuaded Hicks-Beach to abandon the idea altogether, and also not to insist on having continuous brakes for mixed goods and passenger trains.(169) The second version of the bill, brought in on the 30th, consequently insisted only on the compulsory return of overtime, and the compulsory adoption of continuous brakes on passenger trains, the block-system,

and the inter-locking of points and signals.(170) In the committee stage Channing tried in vain to have at least one Clause stating that the coupling devices should be such as would not make the Shunter have to go between vehicles.(171) So the Act as finally passed fell far short of the union's demands.

The limitations of this Act underlined the central weakness of the recent efforts of the union. The safety of the travelling public could hold the attention of parliament, and so in the early 'seventies the union's agitation had received some publicity. As that danger receded, as most passenger trains became fitted with continuous brakes,(172)and as not many train accidents could be attributed to overwork,(173)it became less and less easy to press effectively for brakes on goods trains, and for better couplings.

The A.S.R.S. had all along insisted,

> "...experience has shown us that a recommendation without powers to enforce it is not likely to receive much attention."(174)

But the Board of Trade was unwilling to undertake any powers of compulsion. Its permanent Secretary until 1892 was Sir C.Calcraft, who considered that compulsory powers would lead to divided responsibility, whereas the moral pressure of the Department was adequate.(175) The departmental officials were accustomed to regular consultation with the Companies' Association,(176)while the A.S.R.S. seemed just a small society of busybodies. One official is alleged to have said, ironically,(177)

> "Oh I know Mr. Harford, he wants the government to take

control of the Railways."

The only occasions when the union had been near success had been when two Radicals - Chamberlain and Mundella - were Presidents of the Board of Trade. Until the union was more powerful numerically, such a state of affairs was bound to continue. Before pursuing the story of the parliamentary work of the A.S.R.S. further, we must therefore turn to examine what happened in the period of strife and growth during and after 1889.

Appendix. The preamble to the draft Employers' Liability Bill of the A.S.R.S.

The full preamble of the draft bill of the A.S.R.S. ran like this (the recurring phrase "in the service of the employer" has been abbreviated to I.T.S.E. for the sake of saving space):-

'Where after the passing of this Act personal injury is caused to a workman by reason of defective works, machinery, plant or stock used for the employer's business; or by reason of the negligence of any person of any superior grade I.T.S.E. (whether in the same or in any department of service); or by reason of the negligence of any person I.T.S.E., to whose orders the workman was bound to conform; or by reason of the act or omission of any person I.T.S.E., done or made in obedience to the employers' rules or bye-laws, or in obedience to instructions given by any person delegated with the authority of the employer in that behalf, -- the workman, his wife, ... shall have the same right of compensation and remedies against the employer as if he had not been a workman of ... the employer... Provided always that the workman injured did not materially contribute by his own negligence the cause of his injury.' (RSG. 17 Oct. 1879).

NOTES

(1) H.L. Smith. "The Board of Trade" (1928). Ch.VI passim.

(2) C.I. Savage, "An Economic History of Transport" (1959) p.65f.

(3) ibid. p.61.

(4) ibid. pp.67-70 for a discussion on this.

(5) See above. p 13

(6) Savage, op.cit. p.67.

(7) J.H. Clapham, Economic History of Modern Britain, II, (Cambridge 1932), p.191.

(8) See above. p 14

(9) Parl.Deb. 3rd.S. CCXVI, 831f.

(10) R.S.G. 10 Jan.1874, p.6.

(11) The Times, 16 Sep.1874, p.9.

(12) R.S.G. 21 Mar.1874, p.5.

(13) The Times, 25 Mar.1874, p.6.

(14) The Times, 28 Apr.1874, p.6.

(15) The Chief Inspector of Accidents, Captain Tyler, favoured the compulsory adoption of uniform safety devices. See The Times, 21 May 1874, p.9.

(16) Railway Accidents; R.Com.Report, p.4. (Parl.Pap.1877(c.1637), XLVIII)

(17) R.R. 19 May, 1899, p.10 for Evans's account.

(18) R.S.G. 22 Jan. 1875, p.4.

(19) R.S.G. 10 Dec.1875, p.11.

(20) Rly.Accidents; R.Com.Rep.Appendix G.

(21) ibid p 168 f.

(22) ibid. min.of ev. pp.1126-31.

(23) ibid. p. 7

(24) For a useful description of these devices see C.E.Stretton, Safe Railway Working (1st ed. 1887).

(25) A.S.R.S. "Report and Financial Statement for 1877" p.8.

(26) Parl.Deb.3rd S., CCXXXII, 254-57.

(27) 41 & 42 Vic. c. 20.

(28) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1879, p.2.

(29) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1880, p.9.

(30) J. Munkman, Employers' Liability at Common Law, (London 1955, 3rd.ed.) pp.6-8.

(31) ibid. p.11.

(32) H.Ellis, British Railway History, 1830-1876. (London 1954) p.308.

(33) R.R. 25 Feb.1881, p.5 for Evans's account.

(34) See the Western Times, 18 Nov.1873, p.3; 19 Nov.1873,p.2; 22 Nov.1873, p.4.

(35) ibid. 22 Nov.1873, p.2. The paper found it useful to reprint it in successive issues; see also ibid 8 Dec.1873,p.2.

(36) Bill reproduced in R.S.G. 28 May 1874, p.8.

(37) R.S.G. 7 May, 1874, p.5.

(38) Webb. T.U.Coll. Sect.A.,XLI, p.14.

(39) R.S.G. 28 May 1874, p.9.

(40) Webb, T.U.Coll., op.cit.

(41) R.S.G. 15 Jan.1875, p.13.

(42) R.S.G. 22 Jan.1875, p.4.

(43) See above, p.22

(44) Trades Union Congress, Annual Report, January 1875, p.20f.

(45) Parl.Pap.,1875, I, 375.

(46) So many rules of service had to be broken under official's orders that contributory negligence was a serious handicap. (R.S.G. 4 June 1875, p.8.).

(47) Trades Union Congress, Annual Report, Oct.1875, p.5.

(48) R.R. 25 Feb.1881,p.5. for Evans's account. This was perhaps a reward for his assistance in the Exeter election campaign.

(49) R.S.G. 6 Aug.1875, p.11f.

(50) Trades Union Congress, Annual Report, Oct.1875, p.11.

(51) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Jan.1876, p.3.

(52) Parl.Pap.,1876, II, 353.

(53) Parl.Deb. 3rd.S., CCXXIX, 1162-64.

(54) ibid. 1178.

(55) ibid. 1181.

(56) Parl.Pap. 1876, IX, 669.

(57) B.C.Roberts, The Trades Union Congress, 1868-1921,(1958),p.88.

(58) Employers' Liability ...; Sel.Cttee; min.of ev.,pp.66-73. (Parl.Pap. 1876,(372), IX.)

(59) See above. p62

(60) cf. the comment of the Times on the controversy over faulty returns of accidents, The Times, 9 Oct.1874, p.7.

(61) Employers' Liability, Sel.Cttee. op.cit.

(62) ibid. Qq. 1037-39.

(63) Railway Accidents; R.Com.Report, p.27. (Parl.Pap.,1877, XLVIII, hereafter Accidents, 1877.).

(64) Employers' Liability; Sel.Cttee; Min.of ev. Qq.1372,1379, (Parl.Pap. 1877, X,551.).

(65) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Jan.1877, p.8.

(66) A.S.R.S. "Report and Financial Statement for 1876" p.6. (This was published in July 1877, but written in June, just before the Select Committee published its report).

(67) Employers' Liability, Sel.Cttee; Report, p.xiii, Parl.Pap. 1877, X, 551.

(68) ibid. p.x.

(69) A.S.R.S. Report and Financial Statement for 1877, p.8.

(70) R.S.G. 26 Oct.1877, p.5; A.S.R.S. Great Delegate Meeting... October 1877, p.4.

(71) Parl.Pap. 1878, II, 459.

(72) A.H.Loring (editor), Papers and Addresses of Lord Brassey, Political and Miscellaneous, 1861-94, (1895), p.119f.

(73) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1878, p.3.

(74) Parl.Deb. 3rd.S. CCXXXIX, 1042-71.

(75) Ibid. 1050f.

(76) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1878, p.3.

(77) ibid.

(78) ibid. p.4. See Appendix.

(79) cf. "any superior grade ... department" in the draft preamble.

(80) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1878, p.4f.

(81) R.S.G. 11 Oct.1878, p.4f.

(82) Parl.Deb. 3rd S, CCXXXIX, 1361f, 1713f.

(83) ibid. CCXLIII, 405.

(84) Parl.Pap. (H.L.) 1878-9, VI, 647.

(85) Parl.Pap. 1878-9, III, 117.

(86) ibid. 121.

(87) ibid. 113.

(88) R.S.G. 28 Mar.1879, p.1f.

(89) R.S.G. 4 Apr.1879, p.3.

(90) A.S.R.S. 'Report and Financial Statement, 1877', p.4.

(91) Trades Union Congress, Annual Report, 1879, p.14.

(92) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, April 1879, p.6.

(93) Sessional Proceedings, 1878-79, p.166 (held in the Howell Collection at Bishopsgate Institute, among Howell's collection on Employers' Liability.).

(94) Birmingham Trades Council report, in Webb T.U.Coll., Sect.A. III; letter from Chamberlain dated 29th April, 1879.

(95) The Times, 10 May 1879, p.14.

(96) See Hansard index for volumes CCXLIII to CCXLVIII.

(97) Parl.Deb. 3rd.S, CCXLVIII, 1695-98.

(98) Trades Union Congress, Annual Report, 1879, pp.14, 17-19.

(99) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1879, p.3.

(100) ibid. p.4.

(101) R.S.G. 17 Oct.1879, p.3.

(102) R.S.G. 10 Oct.1879, p.1.

(103) R.S.G. 13 Feb.1880, p.9; 20 Feb.1880, p.9; 8 Oct.1880,p.3.

(104) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1880, p.6.

(105) R.S.G. 13 Feb.1880, p.9.

(106) R.S.G. 5 Mar.1880, p.9.

(107) R.S.G. 12 Mar.1880, p.8.

(108) R.S.G. 13 Feb.1880, p.9; He described Raikes' to be insincere as he had hardly spoken on this be-fore.

(109) Chester Chronicle, 21 Feb.1880, p.5. This Liberal paper also devoted a leader to this, ibid. p.8. In a later issue it ridiculed Raikes's recent efforts.

(110) R.S.G. 8 Oct.1880, p.3.

(111) R.S.G. 27 Mar.1880, p.2.

(112) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, 5 May 1880, p.2;; see also an earlier campaign against the Conservative candidate, R.S.G. 6 Feb. 1880, p.1.

(113) B.M. Add. MSS. 44252 f. 74.

(114) B.M. Add. MSS. 44544 F. 5.

(115) B.M. Add. MSS. 44252 f. 76; the names of the members of the Committee are in ibid. f.77.

(116) Full account in R.S.G. 8 Oct.1880, p.3, supplemented by Hansard.

(117) Parl.Deb. 3rd.S, CCLV, 1157f.

(118) S.& B.Webb, History of Trade Unionism (1920 ed.) p.365.

(119) S.& B.Webb, Industrial Democracy (1920 ed.) p.370.

(120) B.C.Roberts, The Trades Union Congress, 1868-1921.(1958),p.97f.

(121) R.S.G. 8 Oct.1880, p.3, where Evans quotes it. At Congress House the earliest records date from 1888, apart from Annual Reports.

(122) Railway News,11 Dec.1880, p.761; R.R. 7 Oct.1881, p.2f.

(123) Parl.Pap. 1886, VIII.

(124) Trades Union Congress, Annual Report, 1881.p.2; Parl.Pap. 1882, II,327; ibid. 1883, VI, 27.

(125) 11 Q.B.D.,22; 12 Q.B.D. 208.

(126) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May 1883, p.4.

(127) R.R. 10 Oct.1884, p.3.

(128) R.R. 5 Oct.1888, p.475.

(129) Report of the Labour Electoral Congress October 1888. p.7.

(130) Labour Elector, 1st March,1890,p.136.

(131) F.A.Channing, Memories of Midland Politics,1885-1910.(1918). pp.15f,37,42,53f.

(132) For Mclaren's election see W.H.Chaloner, The Social and Economic Development of Crewe, 1780-1923. (Manchester 1950),p.159.

(133) Doncaster Reporter 20 Mar.1889, p.8; ibid. 3 Apr.1889,p.8; Doncaster Gazette 22 Mar.1889, p.6.

(134) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May 1889, p.1f.

(135) R.R. 18 Apr.1890, p.181.

(136) See below p. 156.

(137) Parl.Pap.1884, VI, 333.

(138) J.L.Garvin, Life of Joseph Chamberlain, I.(1932),p.429.

(139) Channing, Memories (1918) p.53f.

(140) Trades Union Congress, Annual Report, Oct.1875, p.26.

(141) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, July 1877, p.11; Parl.Deb. 3rd.S. CCXXXIV, 11.

(142) R.R. 5 Oct.1883, pp.11,13f; he had already got Lord Forbes to ask the Board of Trade in July 1883 for a return of overtime work. Lord Sudeley, replying on behalf of the Board of Trade, had said that such a return would be voluminous and useless. Parl.Deb. 3rd.S, CCLXXXI, 585f.

(143) R.S.G. 10 Dec.1880, p.6.

(144) R.R. 7 Jan.1881,p.9. He wrote that the Board of Trade "only threaters - it never acts. It has cried, 'wolf, wolf' so often that directors neither heed ... nor care..."

(145) R.R. 6 Oct.1882, p.3f.

(146) Parl.Deb. 3rd.S, CCLXXII, 2043f.

(147) R.R. 6 Oct.1882, p.3f; R.R. 13 Oct.1882, p.7; N.E.Railway, "Locomotive Committee Minute Book", vol.14, par.23066.

(148) Speech on moving a resolution, Parl.Deb. 3rd.S, CCLXXX,1260ff.

(149) Railway Companies' Association, Minutes No.240, p.3f. (7 Feb.1884).

(150) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, 13-16 Feb.1884, pp.1,3.

(151) Railway Companies' Association, Minute No.245. (28 Mar.1884) p.3f.

(152) Parl.Pap.1884, VI, 333.

(153) R.R. 16 Oct.1884, p.4.

(154) R.R. 9 Oct.1885, p.7.

(155) A.S.R.S. Annual Report,1886, p.4f.; a copy of the pamphlet is at Unity House.

(156) ibid. p.3; a copy of the pamphlet, which does not bear the date of publication, is in the British Library of Political and Economic Science.

(157) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1886, p.2.

(158) For Harford's early connexions see report of E.C.meeting, R.S.G. 17 Jan.1874,p.10; also see W.D.Dacey's account in R.R. 8 July 1898, p.5. (Dacey wote as 'Judex').

(159) Parl.Deb. 3rd.S, CCCV, 1440-65; A.S.R.S. Annual Report,1886, p.6f; Channing, op.cit. p.53f.

(160) Railway Companies' Association, Minute No.270.(13th May 1886) p.3f.

(161) W.H.G.Armytage, A.J.Mundella (1951), pp.246-56.

(162) R.R. 7 Oct.1887, p.5.

(163) Parl.Pap. 1888, LXXXIX, 437.

(164) Parl.Deb. 3rd.S., CCCXXV, 1667-1707.

(165) Railway Companies' Association, Minute No.311, p.6. (17 July 1889).

(166) Parl.Pap. 1889, VII, Bill No.333.

(167) Parl.Deb. 3rd.S, CCCXXXVIII, 1174f.

(168) R.R. 26 July 1889, p.352.

(169) Railway Companies' Association, Minute No.312, p.2ff.(25th July, 1889).

(170) Parl.Pap.1889, VII, Bill No.360.

(171) Parl.Deb. 3rd.S. CCCXXXIX, 422.

(172) Speech of Hicks-Beach giving figures, Parl.Deb. 3rd.S.CCCXXV, 1686f.

(173) Railway Servants (Hours of Labour); Sel.Cttee.Report, p.iv.f. (Parl.Pap. 1892,XVI.)

(174) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1885, p.3.

(175) Railway Servants (Hours of Labour); Sel.Cttee; Min.of ev. Q.4196. (Parl.Pap. 1892, XVI, 123).

(176) The Minutes of the Railway Companies' Association bear this out.

(177) Harford said this to the A.G.M. of 1886. R.R. Oct.1886,p.5.

Chapter IV. Strife and Growth, 1889-1893.

Neither Harford nor Foreman had foreseen the upsurge of trade unionism that would occur among all classes of workmen when, in course of 1888, they had streamlined the machinery for strikes, and given their blessings to the N.E.R. movement in its efforts to get a better share of the Company's increased prosperity. This up-surge - known as the New Unionism - was possible mainly because of full employment conditions between 1888 and 1891.(1) As money wages rose faster than prices in the same period,(2)an impetus was given to the growth of self-confidence and militancy among masses of unskilled workers, who were being organised for the first time. The affiliated membership of the Trades Union Congress increased from 816,944 in 1888 to 1,302,855 in 1891.(3) As in 1872 the tendency of organisation was to cut across craft and occupational distinctions, and to try to establish a closed shop among all workmen over as wide an area as possible.(4) The growth was, however, transitory. With the onset of depression in 1893, the affiliation figures of the T.U.C. had fallen to 900,000(5)and the 'general' unions ceased to be general, and survived by maintaining footholds in certain regions and certain industries.(6) Though this was the ultimate outcome, the dramatic impact of the London Dock Strike in the summer of 1889 certainly quickened the pace of trade union activity.(7)

As we have seen, the A.S.R.S. had already, by October 1888, braced itself for an organisational break-through, and for carrying

out movements already started. From now on two problems continued to be with the union in all its industrial struggles. The proportion of full-time officials to the membership had been adequate so far. As the membership increased, this was going to become smaller, with the consequent remoteness of the leadership from the rank-and-file, unless more officials were appointed and their duties specified. In the second place, while a uniform all-grades programme was necessary to maintain a united front, it was not easy to draft one which could not be made to look unattractive to some grades by astute railway officials, who were prepared to offer sectional concessions. Finally, recognition of union officials was necessary not only to prevent the victimisation of active spokesmen of the men, but also to achieve a peaceful settlement. After having encouraged voluntary local efforts all these years the union had to inculcate this habit of obedience to the leaders. Without this it was difficult to present the value of recognition to the employers.

Though these problems remained with the union throughout its history, they were particularly acute in this period of rapidly growing membership. The situation was complicated as a result of the rapid growth of trade unionism among Dock labourers and other forms of transport workers, many of whom were employed by railway Companies. In these five years policies had to be worked out on demarcation, sympathetic strikes, joint movements and federations. In October 1888 not all of these problems had been fully grasped; some of them, like the situation after the dock strike showing the

possibilities of organisation among lower grades, could not be foreseen a year ahead. So the history of the next five years, written around disputes from one end of the kingdom to another, was the history of empirical adjustments to these problems.

II

Articles urging railwaymen to organise and obtain a large slice of the profits of the railway Companies continued to be published in the Railway Review.(8) But until the adoption of the national programme in October 1889, the movement was almost entirely confined to the N.E.R. This movement followed a pattern similar to the earlier movement of William Foreman. In December 1888 the Company had not only refused the programme, stressing that each grade should interview the respective heads of departments, but also pointed to the large number of applicants who would gladly take a job at existing rates.(9) Intensive efforts by Walter Hudson and others built up the organisation on Tyneside and Tees-side by the middle of the year, although it did not easily extend into the Passenger department.(10) As in 1883, the men decided, at a mammoth rally in Darlington on 1st September this year, to put in the forefront the demand for an "all-grades" interview with the directors, and hinted at strike ballots.(11) The Company began to alter its attitude, and within a fortnight offered to arrange an interview.(12) This was the high-water mark of the united North-Eastern movement.

Meanwhile local movements had sprung up elsewhere. The Guards

of the G.W.R. and the L.& Y. had sent memorials to their Directors, which were refused. Signalmen were trying to find a means of organising themselves on a national scale, for both higher wages and shorter hours. Though it was officially sanctioned and styled as a national movement, its centre of activity was limited between Leeds and Birmingham. Railwaymen of the G.N.R. started a movement for higher wages, although their hours were longer than those prevalent on the N.E.R. Harford thought that these dissimilarities were harmful to the success of either of the movements.(13)

These diverse movements had made many members suggest starting a national hours movement. In May 1889 Harford felt that while it was a good idea, the state of organisation was so weak on a national scale that it did not seem worthwhile.(14) Since the poll on the legal eight hour day, as asked for by the T.U.C., was being taken just at that time,(15)the Executive Committee decided to defer its decision on whether to achieve shorter hours by an industrial movement, until the result of the ballot was known.(16) The result of the poll confirmed William Foreman's view that the membership, which was 13,489 by the middle of 1889, was on the whole uninterested in this particular question. To the first question asking whether an eight-hour day was favoured, 3,344 men gave affirmative and 350 negative replies. But to the second question asking whether supporters of an eight-hour day wished to achieve it by an Act of Parliament, only 2,190 gave an affirmative answer. It seemed to William Foreman to indicate that only a hard core of one-sixth of the membership were in favour of the idea, while the

rest would presumably favour demands like those of the 'Darlington Programme.'(17)

As soon as these results were in their hands, the Executive Committee decided, in July 1889, that the poll had given no indication of how popular a campaign for a legal eight-hour day would be with railwaymen, and the A.G.M. was instead recommended to adopt the 'Darlington Programme' as the National Programme.(18) In his Annual Report Harford argued that economic prosperity justified a vigorous effort on a national scale on behalf of all grades.(19) At the A.G.M. the programme was adopted amidst tremendous enthusiasm - the delegate from Brighton enviously declaring that it was easy to organise railwaymen in the North-East, but difficult in his area! For the sake of unanimity and all-grade harmony, the Signalmen were asked to drop the wages clauses from their programme which the Executive had only recently approved.(20) To assist the task of organisation in the Lancashire district Alfred Mear - a victim of the Midland Strike of 1887 - was appointed an organising Secretary.(21)

The National Hours programme was essentially a disguised wage demand. By stressing clauses on the Guaranteed Week's Pay and overtime at a daily rate, the A.S.R.S. was able to recruit grades for whom a wage increase was most important.(22) But its reluctance to have a straightforward wages clause was due to the same organisational difficulties which had arisen in October 1888 during the debate on the Darlington Programme.(23) Officially the A.S.R.S. argued that to aim at the universal ten hour day for everybody would help to raise the value of labour of all grades, especially those who, like

porters and passenger guards, had no standard hours of work at all.(24) Besides, wages concessions given to a few select grades could well hamper the growth of "all-grade" trade unionism.(25) These arguments were sound enough. It remained to be seen how well the union would be organised to achieve such an ambitious programme while the prosperity lasted.

The preceding account of the origins of the programme shows that it was not the child of the new unionism, still less of the G.R.W.U., which did not even exist when the programme was formally adopted.(26) The principal events of 1889 doubtless had an indirect influence in making all delegates - irrespective of the area they came from - adopt the programme so enthusiastically, and also in stiffening the resolve of railwaymen already active on the N.E.R. Between May and August the Gasworkers of London had been organised, and from August onward the strike of the London Dockers had been in the centre of Labour's struggles.(27) Walter Hudson said, at one of the mass meetings at Darlington that summer, that the movement on the N.E.R. would have achieved their aims long ago, if, from the beginning, they had been as well-organised as the London dockers.(28) The delegates at the A.G.M. of 1889 applauded Harford when he said that he had given £100 to the fund of the Dock Strike on behalf of the A.S.R.S.(29)

The effect of New Unionism on the A.S.R.S. was not to alter the union's policy on strikes or to make it issue a national programme. The rules on strikes had been sharpened a year earlier, and the idea of a national standard rate had been put forward by

Harford after the Midland strike two years earlier.(30) The effect of the general upsurge in 1889 was rather to assist the leaders in the correct timing of the national programme. On the N.E.R., the railwaymen's movement preceded both in its inception and in its organisation the Tyneside Labourers' Union - whose first delegate meeting was held only in September 1889(31) - and the sailors' and firemens' union. As we have seen, the latter union owed a major debt to William Foreman.(32) Foreman was the living proof of the fact that an aggressive trade policy was not co-extensive with the agitation for a legal eight hour day.

The history of the A.S.R.S. strengthens the view that trade unionism before 1889 was not moribund, nor were the 'New Unions' alone responsibde for the "spiritual rebirth of organisations which were showing signs of decrepitude."(33) Only in London, as we shall see, did the 'New Unionism' shake a large number of A.S.R.S. members out of apathy.

On three points the "all-grade" A.S.R.S. continued to differ from the new unions that had sprung up. Trade Unionism could not be carried on too cheaply. Harford's memories of the need for more money in the late 'seventies, the fiasco of the nine hours' movement, with its poor response to the call for a day's pay, the impression that with many non-unionists the remark "can't afford it" was a cover for saying "won't afford it" - all these made him disinclined to lower weekly dues. With an entry fee of 1/- and dues of 5d. per week they were not very high. The weekly dues of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers were 1/- per week, and the minimum entrance fee

was 10/-, rising up to £3.10.0., according to the age of the member.(34) Harford was also against cutting across all lines of demarcation, especially if it gave the impression that the A.S.R.S. was undermining the efforts of the craft unions to maintain their standard rate. William Foreman vehemently opposed, on this ground, a proposal at the Conference of Irish delegates in April 1890 that the union should enrol carpenters and plumbers employed by railway companies. Harford added that the aim should be to encourage them to join the proper craft union.(35) Finally, Harford took the rather narrow, if practical, view that the general unions could not retain the "army of labourers and casual staff",(36)and so enrolling them at a very cheap scale of dues would only increase liabilities without augmenting the union's strategic strength, which lay in the permanent staff employed in all railway grades.

But even among the permanent staff porters and platelayers were too poorly paid to be able to afford fivepence a week. At the A.G.M. of October, 1889, there was a proposal, from a delegate from the N.E.R., to have a lower scale of dues, in case it helped to bring in more members of those grades. But, after a short debate, a motion to proceed to the next business was carried by 28 votes to 25, although a delegate from London had warned that rival Societies would spring up if the resolution was not carried.(37) This was the main cause for the birth of the General Railway Workers' Union.

The G.R.W.U. originated in the south bank of the Thames in London, among the depots of some railways where the influence of

the A.S.R.S. was weak. Unlike the N.E.R., railway trade unionism had been so sluggish in London that the A.S.R.S. had set up a London Council in September 1889 to make a special effort.(38) Already, however, the local branches of the National Gasworkers and General Labourers' Union in Battersea and its neighbourhood were enrolling unorganised railwaymen on the Southern railways.(39) When the Socialist leader H.H. Champion noticed this in October he dissuaded the Gasworkers from doing so and tried to get the A.S.R.S. to organise them. In a long editorial in his journal he wrote,

> "[The A.S.R.S.] has as General, Organising, and Assistant Secretaries, men who, though we differ with them on plenty of matters, have <u>proved</u> their devotion to Trade Union principles .... Knowing something of Messrs. Harford, Foreman, Watson, and others, we believe they <u>cannot</u> have been asked, and asked in vain, to aid any class of railwaymen who are willing to fight to improve their conditions."(40)

Champion was correct in making these remarks, but at an interview with Harford afterwards, he found that not only was Harford against recruiting casual staff and labourers, but he had also approved the fact that the A.G.M. had recently ignored the proposal for a lower scale of dues.(41) The interview was possibly also not very cordial, as Harford disliked middle-class Socialists like Champion, not least because of their rudeness to Broadhurst.(42)

As a result Champion and the Fabian Socialist W.S. de Mattos helped to start the G.R.W.U., at first to enrol only grades like porters and platelayers, who could not afford to join the A.S.R.S.(43)

Within a week - possibly under the influence of John Burns - they decided to recruit all grades, as if in revenge against Harford's rebuff, and Burns started a bitter attack on the alleged lack of vigour in the A.S.R.S., calling it a 'sick and burial club.'(44) This of course was hardly correct. When de Mattos said in April 1891 that the A.S.R.S. should be thankful to the G.R.W.U. for giving renewed vigour and strength to it(45)he was generalising a phenomenon which was really true only of London.

The following table, showing the geographical distribution of the membership of 10,827, which the G.R.W.U. had acquired by December 1889, illustrates that the main impact of this union was in London. (Table III).

Table III

G.R.W.U.Membership: Geographical distribution.

(Source: Labour Elector 11th Jan. 1890, p.27.)

Total Membership.	10,827	100.0	Percentages % Total Membership.
London & Middx.	5,639	52.1	"
Kent	235)		"
Surrey	117)	6.0	"
Sussex	176)		"
Hertfordshire	118)		"
Lancashire	1,760	16.3	"
Cheshire	625	5.8	"
Yorkshire	61	0.6	"
Durham	-	-	"
Northumberland	-	-	"

Reports of various meetings published both in the Railway Review and the Labour Elector show that it was only in London that the spokesmen of the A.S.R.S. were on the defensive in answering charges of alleged lack of vigour. On the other hand, as the emissaries of the G.R.W.U. went northward, they realised more and more that the A.S.R.S. was already known there and was the nucleus of trade union growth. They toned down their hostile criticism of the older union, and instead were at pains to stress that there was room for both unions, and that those who could afford to pay fivepence should join the A.S.R.S.(46)

But the damage to good relations between the two unions had already been done by the speeches made by Campion Watson, Secretary of the G.R.W.U., at various meetings in London. So the overtures of Watson were rejected by the A.S.R.S. Executive, at the instance of its London members, early in 1890.(47) The A.S.R.S. went ahead to press the national programme in the areas where it had already made some progress, and other areas, like Ireland, which it was soon going to organise.

III

In the twelve months that followed the A.S.R.S. fought aggressive movements in South Wales, Ireland, and the N.E.R., as well as having a hand in the Scottish railway strike. Though each had plenty of dramatic interest, their significance for the internal history of the A.S.R.S. varied.

In South Wales trade unionism had been fostered by Richard Bell,

a Goods Guard of the G.W.R. employed at Swansea.(48) Since the autumn of 1889, railwaymen working on the prosperous mineral railways of the Taff Vale, Rhymney, and the newly built Barry Companies had been pressing for better conditions.(49) Bell organised a big rally in Cardiff in December 1889 to help the movement forward,(50) and by the middle of 1890 the men were very well-organised. The problems were to co-ordinate the efforts on all railways, obtain benefits for all grades, and persuade the rank-and-file to accept the settlement negotiated by the union leaders. At the end of May partial concessions to a section of the Taff Vale employees made the local committee decide to foster inter-grade unity in an attempt to obtain the full national programme for all grades on the T.V.R., as well as for the men of the Rhymney and the Barry.(51) At the end of June Harford planned to take a ballot to see if Taff Vale men would press forward with the movement.(52) At the beginning of next month, to his surprise and delight, the manager of the Rhymney saw him in reply to his threat of a strike, and he managed to win some concessions.(53) As these were less than what the Taff Vale employees had already got, and as the ballot on the latter railway had shown strong support for continuing the fight, the men rejected the terms on 20th July. Being impressed by their determination, Harford sanctioned issuing strike notices for all these railways on 25th July, to expire on 7th August.(54)

In yielding to pressure from below Harford at first weakened his chances of recognition. The Companies formed a joint committee on the 26th to stand by the terms already given.(55) They were

joined by Sir William T. Lewis, the manager of the Bute Docks, who was most anxious for a firm stand lest any concessions to railwaymen weakened his position in fighting the wages demands and demands for a closed shop made by the Dockers and Seamen.(56) Ben Tillett had just arrived at Cardiff, declaring,

> "...the dockers of Cardiff were going to have a go in if the railwaymen went in."(57)

Recognition of the union entered into the picture when on 5th August, in a last minute bid to avert the strike, the men's deputation was seen by the joint committee of the Companies, while Harford was kept out, because the Companies had no confidence in his ability to control his followers.(58)

The strike began on 7th August, lasting a week.(59) The sympathy of local newspapers of both political parties, of local Liberal M.Ps. like D.A. Thomas and Sir E.J. Reed, and of all local trade unions - old and new - was on the side of Harford. The Western Mail and D.A. Thomas contrasted him with Ben Tillett, and supported recognition of the A.S.R.S.(60) Organisation was so good that a stranglehold was imposed on the economy of South Wales. As a result, while the spectacle of distressed miners persuaded railwaymen to give full powers to Harford to negotiate and settle the dispute,(61) the moderates inside the joint committee got the upper hand. With their assistance, James Inskip, the Chairman of the Taff Vale Railway Company, negotiated a settlement.(62) A Guaranteed Week's pay was conceded as long as mineral traffic was not unduly interrupted by recessions or trade disputes.(63)

Outstanding grievances of Signalmen were settled soon afterwards,(64)and Inskip maintained contacts with Harford over other points of interpretation during the remaining one year while he was Chairman.(65) The clause making the guaranteed week's pay dependent on the absence of strikes made Welsh railwaymen anxious to discourage militant movements in the docks and elsewhere.(66) While Inskip hoped that recognising the union would help "towards establishing an altered mode of settling difficulties between employers and employed"(67)other railway managers thought differently. Sir George Findlay, of the L. & N.W., said a year later, referring to Harford's initial difficulty, that trade unionism would only undermine discipline without bringing industrial peace.(68)

IV

The contribution of Ireland to the growth of the A.S.R.S. in the era of new unionism has been a neglected subject. Yet it was here that the A.S.R.S. made very rapid strides in the months immediately after the dock strike of London, and the A.G.M. of 1890 was held, appropriately enough, in Belfast. In that city the first Irish branch had been started in 1885, with H. Scammell, a local Fireman, acting as Secretary.(69) There were three branches with a total of 163 members at the beginning of 1889, when Tom Watson toured the South Coast trying to open branches.(70) While these did not survive,(71)just after the Dock Strike in London a great surge of members occurred. Harford estimated in February 1890 that the extraordinary influx of members in recent months contained about

4,000 Irishmen.(72)

In Ireland, the union faced, in addition to the usual problems of controlling a rapidly growing membership, problems arising from nationalist sentiment. A spontaneous railway strike had occurred in December 1889 at Cork, among the employees of the Great Southern and Western (G.S. & W.), and resulted in shorter hours and higher wages.(73) The local railwaymen founded a purely Irish Society, making the Railway Review deplore this turn of events and suggest that Michael Davitt, the Irish labour leader, was sure to support international solidarity.(74) Davitt, who was a keen advocate of co-operation with the British labour movement and who had just laid the basis of an Irish Democratic Lebour Federation at Cork,(75) made a speech giving unqualified support for co-operation with English trade unions.(76) This limited the influence of the Irish Society to Cork, and the Dublin employees of the G.S. & W. changed their minds and joined the A.S.R.S.(77) On the advice of Harford, the A.S.R.S. Executive agreed to convene a conference in Dublin to hear the views of Irish members on the best way of linking them with the A.S.R.S., while giving them autonomy in the management of purely Irish affairs.(78)

Before this took place in May, 1890, the union leadership won a few important victories by taking intelligent decisions at short notice. Tom Watson had found that wherever new recruits joined in large numbers, they wished to force the issue by a strike without waiting for the thirteen weeks which entitled them to strike pay, if they were fully paid up.(79) At the end of February the A.S.R.S.

was in such a good strategic position on the G.N.R. (Ireland) that Harford sent word saying that a strike had been sanctioned and strike pay promised to all members, in benefit or otherwise. The threat was sufficient to make the Directors retreat from their previous position of ignoring outsiders, meet Tom Watson, and grant important concessions.(80) William Foreman had meanwhile been sent by the Executive to help organise in Ireland.(81) Within a fortnight of his arrival, the Midland Great Western had surrendered too, and conceded recognition. In return Foreman ably managed to prevent "one-man" strikes, and solved questions of victimisation as well as pecuniary concessions round the conference table.(82)

On the G.S. & W. the position was less encouraging. The strike that began on 25th April was the cumulative effect of a number of different grievances, over none of which did the A.S.R.S. have any control. On the eve of the strike, the refusal of the Company to meet either Foreman or a committee of the railwaymen themselves led to the men coming out precipitately without proper notice in some cases.(83) During the strike Davitt and other public figures tried to mediate, and Davitt publicly defended Foreman from the attacks made by nationalist newspapers describing him as an English agent sent to ruin Irish trade by fomenting strikes.(84) But as he had found Foreman's insistence on recognition before the strike ended to be an unwise policy,(85)he was relieved when Harford arrived to distribute strike pay and end the dispute as honourably as possible, in view of the public distress and paralysis of trade.(86) Some concessions were obtained as a result of the

mediation of two public figures,(87)but the A.S.R.S. remained not recognised by the General Manager, who was very bitter about this strike.(88)

Harford presided over the conference of Irish delegates in May, and ably managed discussions on Irish autonomy, arbitration as a policy of the union, and a lower scale of dues. Led by Isaac Bowley of Cork, some delegates proposed the creation of a Council for Ireland.(89) In the long and somewhat heated debate that followed, the heat was generated by the vehement opposition of all delegates from Ulster (except one from Londonderry). Their hostility to "separation" was construed correctly by a Dublin delegate to be prompted by political reasons.(90) Harford made a plea to drop the word 'separation',(91)and put the proposal for a Council to the vote at the right psychological moment when Bowley had changed his mind, in the interests of unity; as a result the motion was lost.(92) The creation of a post called Permanent Secretary for Ireland helped in converting the Southerners.(93) Afterwards the A.G.M. in October approved the idea, and William Foreman was unanimously elected to that post.(94)

Harford was able to persuade the delegates to be circumspect in their industrial strategy. Although Foreman would have liked to see the conference adopt a series of proposals from Belfast deleting arbitration from the union's rules, so that the union was not obliged to refer disputes to arbitration.(95) Harford's persuasion resulted in only three votes being cast in their favour, out of twenty delegates present. With an obvious reference to the difficulties of

winning all railway strikes, he said,

"It was better to seek it (sc. arbitration) first than to fight and seek it afterwards."(96)

The A.G.M. subsequently endorsed the view that a railway strike could best be used as a strategic weapon, when it defeated the proposal of P. Burns of Dublin to delete "failing arbitration" from the rule book.(97)

The discussion on a lower scale of dues was inconclusive because, while Harford was aware of the strong desire among Irish men for a threepenny scale, he strongly argued that not many benefits could be given from threepence and two scales might create two classes of members.(98) But at the A.G.M. of October 1890, a lower scale of dues at threepence per week, giving legal assistance, donation and protection benefits only, was adopted by 30 votes to 15. Irish delegates, who spoke about the cost of maintaining large families, were joined by London delegates who referred to high rents, and by N.E.R. delegates who said that if it had been adopted at the previous A.G.M., the G.R.W.U. would not have spread to their area.(99)

V

While the dues had remained at fivepence, organisation of the lower grades of the N.E.R. connected with the Goods Warehouses at Newcastle and Hull had been undertaken by the Tyneside Labour Union.(100) Overlapping membership of the two unions brought them together. When a strike seemed inevitable over a dispute between

the Labour Union and the N.E.R. just before Christmas 1889,(101) the Newcastle branch of the A.S.R.S. used its influence to send the matter to the arbitration of Dr. R.Spence Watson.(102) This was a significant step for a railway Company to take, and the tactics of prudence employed by the A.S.R.S. - which had to persuade the Labour Union to accept arbitration(103) - was also significant.

The main movement of Walter Hudson ran into difficulties not foreseen in October 1888 when the wages clauses had been deleted from the Darlington programme. The promised interview between an all-grades deputation and the Directors(104)was held at Newcastle on 17th October, and was a success. Not only was one director, David Dale, a noted conciliator in the iron trade, very sympathetic, but there was no attempt to split them into grade groups, and the reply was promised to be sent to Walter Hudson, as Secretary to the men's committee.(105)

While the officials of the company carefully made a list of possible concessions,(106)the delay of four weeks in their publication and the refusal of the main demand of a ten-hour day with overtime at a daily rate,(107)made the men threaten a strike unless another interview with the Directors was granted.(108) At this further interview on 4th January, 1890, the complete refusal of the men to waive the demand for a universal ten-hour day and overtime at a daily rate led to a deadlock, alienating even David Dale to some extent.(109) Without a wages clause in their programme the men naturally stuck to this.(110) The company decided to grant concessions in their own way, reducing Goods Guards' hours from 66 to

60 per week, granting Sunday Pay to Passenger Guards and Passenger Porters, and benefitting other grades as well.(111)

Throughout the subsequent months of 1890 activists like Walter Hudson were anxious to force the pace by a strike, while Harford advised caution, as organisation was limited to Durham and Northumberland.(112) After an offer of arbitration from the A.S.R.S. Executive(113)was rejected,(114)Harford privately took a strike ballot, which showed that recent concessions had weakened the militancy of many grades.(115) Local activists got the services of Alfred Mear, organising Secretary, for a special recruitment drive, which brought in more and more lower grades, especially Platelayers.(116) But even after that, a strike ballot, taken all over the system in November, was a fiasco.(117)

In Newcastle itself the local trades council helped to unify the A.S.R.S., the G.R.W.U., and the Labourers' Union, and sustain their militancy. Those grades at Newcastle who had not benefited at all, threatened a strike before Christmas, and Goods Warehousemen at Hull did the same.(118) When Harford heard about it he wired to the men on 15th December asking them to stand firm and insist on his being recognised.(119) Being anxious not to alienate the public by provoking a Christmas stoppage, the Company came to terms.(120) On 17th December the Directors decided to meet a committee of the men "either alone, or associated with any advisers whom they may select", although they still maintained their general policy of not recognising union officials, "in common with Directors of other Railway Companies."(121) Without quibbling about this phraseology

Harford and the Secretaries of the two other unions negotiated a settlement and averted a strike.(122) The Company held a strong card in its plan to evict railwaymen occupying its cottages if the negotiations failed.(123) So the settlement did not quite satisfy the Labourers' union, although the grades of the A.S.R.S. involved - from Passenger Guards to Platelayers - got important concessions.(124)

The course of the N.E.R. movement since October 1889 illustrated the complications of a local all-grades movement within the framework of a national hours programme. While the national programme prevented Hudson from fostering collective bargaining in the winter of 1889-90, the refusal of the Companies to meet union officials until the eleventh hour kept labour relations troubled. Only a union official could exercise his discretion over items of the men's programme. Part-time activists, who had built up organisation by stressing all-grade unity, viewed with suspicion the argument of the Company that different types of work ruled out a uniform programme. But except for negotiating with Harford a few points of interpretation concerning this agreement in 1891,(125)the N.E.R. refused to recognise the A.S.R.S. until another crisis occurred, six years later, originating, once again, at Newcastle.(126)

Harford showed, in course of this movement, that he was against hasty strikes, but he learnt that the fear of a Christmas stoppage could be used to win some kind of recognition - a technique he tried to apply later. A Christmas stoppage did occur just then on the Scottish railways, whose only result was to spell the doom of the Scottish A.S.R.S.

By the middle of June 1890 the Scottish Society had a membership of 6,092,(127)while the A.S.R.S. members in Scotland - concentrated in Edinburgh and Glasgow - numbered only 221.(128) Proposals for amalgamating the two Societies had been made in July 1888, but had failed because the Scottish Society was reluctant to increase their dues, which were only 2½d. per week. A proposal for a working agreement which involved the extension of the authority of the Scottish Society to the Scottish branches of the A.S.R.S. came to nothing, because of the opposition of the leading Scottish members of the A.S.R.S. - who were mainly drivers.(129)

But all societies were united when, on 22nd December 1890, the men came out, against the advice of the Executive of the Scottish Society, because their long hours of work seemed interminable, and the strategy of the leadership over the hours movement had not borne any fruit. The strike was prolonged and bitter, accompanied by the eviction of men at Motherwell in the dead of winter, and the success of the Companies in impounding the funds of the Society by a decree of the Court. The Companies did not get any of these funds, for, in the meantime, the Society had paid out most of them in advances of strike pay. But neither the Society's wealth, nor donations from the A.S.R.S. and the public could help the men to win. In spite of a great deal of public sympathy, the intransigence of the Company and the availability of blacklegs doomed the strike. The Scottish Society emerged from the struggle almost bankrupt, and with only a rump of its membership.(130)

VI

Against the background of strife in 1890 and 1891, attempts were made for a federation of railway unions for joint action in trade disputes. An agreement drafted at Leeds on 24th November 1890 between the General Secretaries of the four unions - A.S.R.S., A.S.L.E.F., G.R.W.U., and the A.S.R.S. of Scotland - pledged mutual assistance in impending strikes, and also recommended to the Executive Committees the idea of a permanent federation.(131) With the support of his Executive Harford approached the others again in order to draw up a draft scheme,(132)but only Henry Tait of the Scottish Society would help him in this work. T.G. Sunter of the A.S.L.E.F. was dissuaded by his Executive from attending, and J. Bedford, the President of the G.R.W.U. was reluctant to have a direct hand in drawing up a scheme, perhaps because his position was being assailed inside his own union.(133)

Harford's scheme, though still-born, is significant, as it bore the imprint of his desire to prevent hasty strikes on what seemed to him minor issues, and concentrate on a united front over important questions(134):-

(1) If a dispute started on any railway the union most directly concerned in it should, through its general secretary, summon a conference of all the four secretaries.

(2) No strikes were to be decided upon without the consent of at least three secretaries. But once decided upon, to be fought earnestly.

(3) A Contingency Fund for joint action should be formed.

Each society should put down £1,000 as its basic payment, and then every year should pay 4/- per member.

(4) The weekly strike pay should be paid out of the funds of each individual society according to its rules; general expenses were to be paid out of the Contingency Fund.

(5) Four trustees should be appointed to look after the fund -- one from each society.

By October the absence of constructive alternatives from the A.S.L.E.F. made Harford doubt its willingness for an alliance.(135) The delays of the G.R.W.U. in replying to Harford's letter of 6th July confirmed him in his opinion that this society - despite its militant talk - was going downhill.(136) Indeed, personal rivalries between Watson and Bedford - which culminated in the resignation of both at the A.G.M. of the G.R.W.U. in November, 1891(137) - probably accounted for Watson's inability to take decisions until a full meeting of his Executive in October. This meeting appealed to the A.G.M. of the A.S.R.S. for a fresh conference to discuss the clause on the annual contribution.(138) But even delegates who were very keen to co-operate with the G.R.W.U. - like the N.E. Engine-driver William Keel - were persuaded by Harford not to alter the scheme as it stood, because the sinews of war were important.(139)

The same A.G.M. decided to amalgamate with the Scottish Society, which was only too glad to be taken over.(140) Amalgamation with the G.R.W.U. was seriously attempted next year. The A.G.M. of the latter put forward, in November 1891, at the suggestion of John Burns, a proposal for the merger of all railway unions.(141) But

the avuncular attitude of Harford, and his connivance at the secession of a few G.R.W.U. branches to the A.S.R.S.,(142)did not help in overcoming the understandable reluctance of a new leadership in the G.R.W.U. to lose their identity altogether.(143) In some shipping centres, many casuals had joined on the twopenny scale; the reluctance of the A.S.R.S. to recruit non-permanent staff to avoid a drain on its donation benefit was considered by some G.R.W.U. stalwarts to be a source of weakness.(144)

Nevertheless, a sub-committee of the A.S.R.S. was instructed to meet the G.R.W.U. to draft a scheme of amalgamation, as long as the funds of the A.S.R.S. were not liable for those members of the G.R.W.U. who would come over.(145) The provisional scheme drawn up unanimously by sub-committees of the two unions proposed that while the present members of the G.R.W.U. would go on paying twopence per week, all new members must pay at least the threepence per week required by the lower scale of the A.S.R.S.; until former members of the G.R.W.U. became eligible for the benefits of the A.S.R.S., the funds of the G.R.W.U. should provide them; the two present officers of the G.R.W.U. would be employed by the A.S.R.S. at their present salaries; secessions of branches pending agreement would be prevented; and finally, after merger, the Society would be called the National Railwaymen's Union.(146)

Shortly after the draft was produced the G.R.W.U. Executive became anxious to alter it, but the A.S.R.S. Executive would not agree.(147) The scheme might well have stunted the growth of the G.R.W.U. in areas where the twopenny members were in a majority.

Articles in the Railway Review reinforced the members' suspicion that this was a take-over bid.(148) At the A.G.M. of 1892 Harford appealed to the other union not to interpret amalgamation as absorption.(149) But even he must have been unprepared to find that the vast majority of the delegates thought he had gone too far. Confident in their own strength of 30,000 members, the delegates deleted clauses on changing the name of the Society, and the employment of officers.(150) Twenty-one years were to pass before a National Union of Railwaymen was founded.

VII

The attempt to organise a Federation in 1891 was a development confined to a few grades of one industry primarily concerned to settle inter-union disputes, and present a common point of view to employers, rather like the successful effort of Robert Knight in establishing the "Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades of the United Kingdom" in 1890.(151) In this period, however, attempts to form a general federation of labour unions for offensive and defensive purposes were made once again, as had been done in 1872 and 1873.(152) They aimed to secure help in the form of sympathetic strikes or funds or both, in the interests of Dockers and Seamen who were struggling to organise, and who shared a common employer with railway servants in many places. The failure of the Scottish railway strike was used as a powerful argument to railwaymen for enlisting their support.(153) We have already seen how, in August 1890, Ben Tillett had tried in vain to take advantage of

the railwaymen's strike.(154)

A federation of cognate trades - such as Seamen, Dockers, and railwaymen - could use only the weapon of the sympathetic strike,(155) but could not provide an adequate financial reserve, because each strike involved a drain on the funds of all constituent unions.(156) Only a general federation could do that. The policy of the A.S.R.S. on the sympathetic strike and the formation of a general federation was shaped in course of three experiences between 1891 and 1893.

Early in February 1891 the Tippers of the Bute Docks railway at Cardiff struck in sympathy with Havelock Wilson's efforts to enforce a 'closed shop' on the ships coming to Cardiff, because an organised attempt was being made by the shipowners to introduce 'free labour'.(157) Sir William T.Lewis fought the strike with tremendous vigour,(158)and so Tom Mann tried to persuade the local A.S.R.S. branch to strike as well.(159) Mann also took the matter to the A.S.R.S. Executive, which decided to ballot the local members before a final decision.(160) The local railwaymen were aware of the anti-strike clause in the concession over a guaranteed week's pay given the previous year,(161)and this probably explains their critical attitude to the strike, and their decision to open negotiations with Sir William, and also to take the opinion of the Miners' leader 'Mabon'.(162) In the end, while negotiations proved to be a failure, a ballot among railwaymen showed them to be against a strike.(163) Harford had shown himself to be against this particular strike, as it had been called by Wilson without adequate preparation and he asked the Welsh railwaymen to join a federation of cognate trades in that

locality to pull their weight in favour of circumspect policies.(164) Such a federation was mooted the following month, but as it looked like being a fighting federation the miners under 'Mabon's' leadership hesitated.(165) Their eventual decision not to join nipped the federation in the bud.(166) The railwaymen also ignored it;(167) speeches of Welsh railwaymen at the A.G.M. of 1892 showed that they were afraid of sympathetic strikes.(168)

In Hull, on the contrary, local A.S.R.S. branches favoured sympathetic action with the Dockers. Their spontaneous decision not to act as blacklegs in a strike of the Coal-porters employed by the Hull and Barnsley railway was afterwards supported by Harford. By intervening in the dispute and mediating between Tillett, who had called the strike, and the dock superintendent, he was able to safeguard railwaymen's interests.(169) As a result he became anxious to support local federations of cognate trades as long as the component unions could vote in proportion to their strength and avoid risky ventures; by a majority vote the A.G.M. of 1892 approved this.(170) During the Hull dock strike of April 1893, which "was the beginning of an offensive by the employers against the waterside unions,"(171) the limits of the sympathetic action contemplated by the A.S.R.S. were revealed. The union gave the protection fund to those who refused to fill the places of the strikers,(172)and gave £1,000 to the strike fund,(173)but it could not give a pledge to instruct its members not to transport goods of those shipowners who were in dispute with the dockers.(174) The A.S.R.S. shrank from the far-reaching consequences of the application of the doctrine of

"tainted" goods in railway transport.

Harford referred, in a patronising vein, to the 'new unions' for having scoffed at the bank balance of the A.S.R.S. a couple of years ago, and said that the lesson of the Hull dock strike pointed the moral that funds were essential.(175) But next year the A.S.R.S. Executive refused to put to the T.U.C. a proposal from the London District Council for establishing a central strike fund under the control of the Parliamentary Committee.(176) It was evident that Harford wished to build up the A.S.R.S. first before venturing in other direction. The days of the 'Triple Alliance' lay far ahead.(177)

VIII

In 1891 and 1892 the A.S.R.S. did not sanction any more strikes, but augmented the Protection Fund by a levy of 20% on the branch funds in 1892.(178) Although the adoption of the national programme in 1889 had been fired by a desire to extend the fight of the N.E. men on a national scale, the actual struggles that were successful had been sharp swift local victories such as had been contemplated by the alteration of rules in 1888.(179) The lack of success in other strikes made two branches suggest postponing strike action until it could be successfully organised on all railways simultaneously.(180) While a resolution on these lines was rejected because it gave the Executive Committees no room for manoeuvre,(181)the future policy of Harford came to be guided by the idea of a national struggle when the time was ripe. In the meantime, as it had become evident that rigid adherence to an hours programme was not in the

best interests of some grades, the A.G.M. allowed different grades to stress wages or the six-day week in their programme.(182)

Recognition on the Taff Vale could not be maintained after Inskip retired and a new Board of Directors was installed to promote a policy aimed at cutting working expense.(183) The Board appointed a new General Manager, Ammon Beasley, who had until then served on the G.W.R. and established a reputation as "a rigid disciplinarian."(184) Complaints over the interpretations of the agreement of 1890 arose soon afterwards, but a show of organised strength by Harford early in 1892 made Beasley come to a settlement with the men's committee,(185) without recognising Harford.

On the other hand, by successful industrial "brinkmanship" William Foreman was able to obtain recognition on the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway in 1892. Being afraid of a strike the Board of Directors held a special meeting and settled the demands concerning shorter hours by straight negotiations with Foreman in the middle of May.(186) But Foreman's premature death in December 1892, at the early age of thirty-six,(187)meant that his successor had to rebuild the personal influence he had established with some railway managers. His death removed from the A.S.R.S. a colourful and able personality, who would have been a worthy successor to Harford.

To cope with the increased membership in England and Wales (Appendix A.) two additional organising Secretaries - John Dobson and Richard Bell - were appointed in 1890 and 1893.(188) Patrick Tevenan - an Irishman working at Hull - succeeded to the vacancy

created by Foreman early in 1893.(189) A Scottish Secretaryship was created in view of the merger with the Scottish Society.(190) All organising Secretaries were declared to be under the General Secretary's control,(191)and the Executive reminded Foreman, during the B. & N.C. dispute, not to start another movement over wages and push it to the stage of a strike without Harford's sanction.(192)

For a partially organised and unrecognised national union this central control was necessary. While Harford still relied on voluntary help to build up the Society, with the £50 of the Protection Benefit giving a sense of security to activists, he prevented the growth of bureaucratic intermediaries between the head office and the branches. To encourage branches to expand, District Councils were allowed to be set up by the A.G.M. of 1890, financed out of branch funds.(193) But the Executive Committee decided to state clearly that they needed its approval for all plans, and applications for such approval had to come through a branch;(194) the Councils, in other words, could not easily be used by a small faction.

One change in personnel symbolised that, in the era of the New Unionism, a new age had also begun for the A.S.R.S., although the transition to militancy had happened earlier. After Macliver's death in 1891 a majority of the delegates at the A.G.M. of 1891 preferred to change the Presidency to a part-time post to be filled by a union member. So Walter Hudson was elected President, although Harford and George Green had been suggesting the election of a public figure like F.A. Channing, to enhance the prestige of the society.(195)

Channing wrote a fair-minded letter approving Hudson's election and promising to remain the union's "most persistent friend in the House."(196) From 1891 on he showed his sympathy by a vigorous and successful support to the altered aims of the A.S.R.S. over state regulation of hours. It is convenient, therefore, to resume the narrative of the parliamentary work of the A.S.R.S., which we left with the passage of the Regulation of Railways Act of 1889.

Appendix A.

Growth of Membership: 1887, 1890 & 1893.

(Source: Report and Financial Statements for relevant years: Handbook of Stations.)

	1887	1890	1893
United Kingdom	10,848	25,568	32,994
Scotland	196	221	1,315
Ireland	143	3,659	3,313
England & Wales	10,509	21,688	28,266
Bedfordshire	37	30	66
Berkshire	10	41	49
Buckinghamshire	-	-	36
Cambridgeshire	85	95	113
Cheshire	315	577	605
Cornwall	-	-	-
Cumberland	80	194	175
Derbyshire	256	287	506
Devonshire	30	44	37
Dorsetshire	16	16	13
Durham	885	1,917	2,797
Gloucestershire	172	349	393
Hampshire	117	255	240
Herefordshire	11	11	34
Hertfordshire	75	93	152
Huntingdonshire	-	-	24
Kent	15	218	636
Lancashire	1,694	3,143	4,052
Leicestershire	219	227	417
Lincolnshire	93	374	304
London & Middx.	1,336	2,406	3,464
Norfolk	113	243	258
Northamptonshire	305	364	470
Northumberland	392	894	1,356
Nottinghamshire	353	537	629
Oxfordshire	13	11	7
Rutland	-	-	-
Shropshire	106	179	268
Somerset	144	144	177
Staffordshire	345	590	705
Suffolk	53	44	42
Surrey	14	45	133
Sussex	155	454	402
Warwickshire	330	596	481
Westmorland	-	79	89
Wiltshire	120	146	178
Worcestershire	156	97	108

Appendix A. (Cont'd)

	1887	1890	1893
Yorkshire, E. Riding	203	663	797
" N. Riding	138	400	737
" W. Riding	1,233	2,565	3,842
York City	91	119	220
South Wales & Mon:	841	3,075	3,089
North Wales	10	56	188

NOTES

(1) W.H.Beveridge, Full Employment in a Free Society (London 1944), pp.281, 312f; Table XXII.

(2) E.H.Phelps Brown & S.Hopkins, 'The Course of Wage-rates in Five Countries, 1860-1939', Oxford Economic Papers, June 1950, p.276.

(3) B.C.Roberts. The Trades Union Congress, 1868-1921. (London 1958) p.379.

(4) E.J.Hobsbawm, 'General Labour Unions in Britain, 1889-1914', Economic History Review, 2nds, I, (1949), for a very good discussion of this development.

(5) Roberts, op.cit. p.379.

(6) Hobsbawm, op.cit. p.131.

(7) S.& B.Webb, History of Trade Unionism, (1920 ed.) p.402ff.

(8) See R.R. 25 Jan.1889, p.37; "Unity Neglected" in R.R, 8 Feb. 1889, p.61; "Unequal Sharing" in R.R. 1 Mar.1889, p.97; "Broken Promises" in R.R. 22 Mar.1889, p.133.

(9) Railway Servants (Hours of Labour); Sel.Cttee; min.of ev.and Appendix p.581. (Parl.Pap.,1890-91,XVI.)

(10) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1889, p.11; R.R. 31 May 1889, pp.257,277; R.R. 14 June 1889, p.280; R.R. 5 July 1889, supplement.

(11) R.R. 6 Sep.1889, supplement, plf.

(12) N.E.Railway, 'Board Minute Book, vol.11' par.9719.

(13) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1889, p.8f; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May 1889, pp.4,15; ibid July 1889, p.14. The Signalmen's movement had been sanctioned in July (ibid. p.2.). For the wages demands of the G.N.R. see R.R. 13 Sep.1889, p.439.

(14) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May 1889, p.4.

(15) Roberts, Trades Union Congress, p.119 for how Keir Hardie persuaded the T.U.C. of 1888 to take this poll.

(16) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May 1889, p.15.

(17) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, July 1889, pp.2,6; R.R.13 Sep.1889,p.433.

(18) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, July 1889, p.15.

(19) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1889, p.8f.

(20) R.R. 11 Oct. 1889, p.482f.

(21) R.R. 4 Oct. 1889, p.476f.

(22) See Harford's speech to the Irish delegates in 1890 in A.S.R.S., Conference of the Delegates of the Irish branches ... Dublin ...1890 ... p.25f; also the editorial on the Signalmen's programme, R.R. 16 Aug.1889, p.385.

(23) See above. p 40

(24) R.R. 18 Oct. 1889, p.498.

(25) R.R. 8 Nov.1889, p.529.

(26) Professor Cole, therefore, is inaccurate in saying, "In 1890 the A.S.R.S., stimulated by the formation of a rival Union, awoke from its slumber, and launched a new programme" (G.D.H.Cole, Short History of the British Working-class Movement (London 1948) p.257.

(27) Webb, History of Trade Unionism (1920 ed.).

(28) R.R. 6 Oct. 1889, suppl. p.1.

(29) Railway Herald 12 Oct. 1889, p.3.

(30) See above. p 39.

(31) Labour Elector, 14 Sep.1889, p.165.

(32) See above. p 37.

(33) Webb, History of Trade Unionism (1920 ed.) p.420.

(34) Amalgamated Society of Engineers, Rules (1885), pp.53f,62.

(35) A.S.R.S. Conference of the Delegates of the Irish branches ... 1890 ..p.26.

(36) He used this phrase at the AGM of 1890, R.R. 10 Oct.1890,p.484.

(37) R.R. 4 Oct. 1889, p.476; Railway Herald, 12 Oct.1889,p.2.

(38) R.R. 27 Sep.1889, p.465.

(39) Labour Elector, 20 Aug.1889, p.91.

(40) ibid. 19th. Oct. 1889, p.242. (his italics).

(41) This is based on Harford's report in R.R. 10 Oct.1890,p.484; Labour Elector 26 Oct.1889, p.260; ibid. 23 Nov.1889,p.324f. For Harford's personal opposition to a lower scale of dues see his speech to the Irish delegates next year, even after the G.R.W.U. had been formed; (A.S.R.S., Conference of the Delegates of the Irish branches ...1890..p.16f.)

(42) He had written a letter to the Echo, 31 Aug. 1889, p.4., saying that Champion 'posed' as a workman's representative. (also referred to in Labour Elector 7 Sep.1889, p.154).

(43) Labour Elector 26 Oct. 1889, p.260.

(44) At the first meeting Champion had been very tactful in his remarks about the A.S.R.S., unlike John Burns, who also spoke. Although the name of the union and its all-embracing scope was not decided on, the Organising Secretary of the A.S.R.S. - Tom Watson - was not given a fair hearing. (Labour Elector 26 Oct.1889, p.260; R.R. 25 Oct.1889,p.512). For the decision to recruit all grades see Labour Elector 2nd Nov. 1889, p.277.

(45) Railway Express 2 Apr.1891, p.3.

(46) See Kelly's speech in Manchester. R.R. 22 Nov.1889, p.555. Also see Labour Elector 15 Feb.1890, p.103; ibid. 22 Feb. 1890, p.126f.

(47) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1890, p.12f.

(48) R.R. 11 Jan.1889, pp.14, 18f., for Bell's efforts.

(49) R.R. 13 Sep.1889, p.438; R.R. 18 Oct. 1889, p.493.

(50) R.R. 13 Dec.1889, p.590f.

(51) R.R. 30 May,1890, pp.256,258.

(52) R.R. 4 July,1890, p.314.

(53) Rhymney Railway, Directors' Minutes, VI, 39; R.R. 11 July, 1890, pp.326,330; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, July 1890, pp.2,15.

(54) R.R. 25 July 1890, p.350.

(55) Western Mail 28 July 1890, p.5.

(56) Bute Docks Railway, Minute Book, I, pp.370-2. See also Harford's remark that Lewis was responsible for the refusal of his offer of arbitration on 3rd Aug. (R.R. 8 Aug.1890, p.374f.).

(57) Speech on 27 July, R.R. 1st Aug. 1890, p.362.

(58) Western Mail 6th Aug. 1890, p.5; ibid. 9 Aug.1890, p.5.

(59) The main sources are Western Mail, South Wales Daily News, R.R.

(60) Western Mail 4 Aug.1890, p.4; ibid. 12 Aug.1890, p.5.

(61) Reports of the week-end of 10th and 11th August in R.R. 15 Aug.1890, supplement.

(62) R.R. 22 Aug.1890 supplement. Although minutes of the Joint Committee of the Companies have not survived, brief references in the following provide a clue to the shift in the balance of power: Barry Railway, Director's Minutes, II, 49, par.1933; R.R. 6 Nov.1891, p.5, speech of James Inskip.

(63) Railway News 16 Aug.1890, p.303.

(64) R.R. 5 Sep.1890, p.424f.

(65) Herpath's Railway Journal. 29 Nov.1890, p.1359; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1891, pp.2,22.

(66) See below. p 125 f

(67) Speech at the evening meeting on 14th Aug, R.R. 22 Aug.1890, supplement.

(68) Railway Servants (Hours of Labour). Sel.Cttee.; min.of ev. Q.5654. (Parl.Pap. 1890-91, XVI.)

(69) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1885, p.2; Alcock, op.cit.p.

(70) R.R. 18 Jan.1889, p.31.

(71) R.R. 4 Oct.1889, p.473.,where Harford reported that the members of the Waterford branch had mistaken ideas about how much benefits were possible under dues of fivepence a week.

(72) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1890, p.1.

(73) R.C. on Labour. min.of ev.Q.26,207. (Parl.Pap., 1893-4, (C.6894-Viii), XXXIII.)

(74) R.R. 17 Jan.1890, pp.25,28.

(75) T.W.Moody, 'Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement', 1882-1906' Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th.Ser. III, 68.

(76) R.R. 31 Jan.1890, p.53.

(77) R.R. 24 Jan.1890, p.41.

(78) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1890, pp.1,15.

(79) R.R. 10 Jan.1890, p.19.

(80) R.R. 7 Mar.1890, p.111; also see R.R. 21 Feb.1890,p.89.

(81) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1890, p.15.

(82) R.R. 21 Mar.1890, p.135; R.R. 28 Mar.1890, p.147.

(83) The Source for this strike is the R.R.for the relevant weeks. Also see R.C. on Lab. min.of ev. Q.26207-8 (Parl.Pap.,1893-4 (C.6894-viii); XXXIII.)

(84) R.R. 2 May 1890 supplement p.5.

(85) See speeches of both at Tuesday evening meetings in R.R. 2 May 1890, p.212; ibid. supplement p.8.

(86) R.R. 9 May 1890, p.220.

(87) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May, 1890, p.2.f.

(88) R.C. on Lab. min.of ev. Q.26,225. (Parl.Pap. 1893-4 (c.6894-viii) XXXIII.)

(89) A.S.R.S. Conference of the Delegates of the Irish branches ... 1890 ... pp.5-9.

(90) ibid. p.7f, speech of P.Burns.

(91) ibid. p.7.

(92) ibid. p.9.

(93) ibid. p.17f.

(94) R.R. 17 Oct.1890, p.494.

(95) A.S.R.S. Conference of the Delegates of the Irish branches... 1890 ...p.11.

(96) ibid. p.12.

(97) R.R. 17 Oct.1890, p.493.

(98) A.S.R.S. Conference of Irish Delegates ...1890 ..pp.4,16f.

(99) R.R. 10 Oct.1890, p.484.

(100) N.E.Railway Company, 'Arbitration Dec.1889' (Mss.collection of notes and letters, hereafter N.E.R. 'Arbitration'1889). p.119 for the evidence of a 'Leader' who was a member of the A.S.R.S. but said that few warehousemen were in that society.

(101) John James to Donald Fraser, 2nd Dec.1889; Donald Fraser to John James, 5th Dec.1889; (kept in N.E.R. Arbitration 1889).

(102) Robert Pauling to Spence Watson, 10th Dec.1889, "For the purpose of a settlement of these ... your name as arbitrator has been mentioned by members of the amalgamated society" ; also see J.J. Hornby to Spence Watson, 10th Dec. 1889. (Hornby was the Secretary of the Newcastle Central branch). - All kept in N.E.R.'Arbitration, 1889'.

(103) See R.R. 17 Jan.1890,p.30. (Editorial).

(104) See above. p101.

(105) N.E.R. 'Board Minute Book', vol.11. par.9732; R.R. 25 Oct. 1889, p.506.

(106) N.E.R. op.cit. par.9741.

(107) R.R. 29 Nov.1889, pp.566-71, for reports of mass meetings all over the N.E.R.

(108) R.R. 13 Dec.1889, p.589; N.E.R. op.cit. par.9754.

(109) R.R. 10 Jan. 1890, p.16f.

(110) Earlier, at the AGM of 1889, Hudson had said that on these two points he would be adamant, and would not admit of arbitration, R.R. 11 Oct. 1889, p.482.

(111) Railway Servants. (Hours of Labour). Sel.Cttee. Min.of Ev. and Appendix, p.582. (Parl.Pap. 1890-91, XVI.)

(112) Contrast Hudson's speech at Darlington and Harford's speech at Newcastle on 16th Feb.1890. (R.R. 21st Feb.1890,p.86f).

(113) This was decided in the last week of February, (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.25 - 1st.Mar.1890, pp.2,15.)

(114) N.E.Railway, 'Board Minute Book, vol.11', par.9807.

(115) The results leaked out in the press and were reproduced by the N.E.R. in its evidence to the Select Committee on Railway Servants' hours of labour, loc.cit. p.584.

(116) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May 1890, pp.10,12; ibid. July 1890, p.1. R.R. for the last half of 1890.

(117) R.R. 5 Dec.1890, p.577f.

(118) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1891, p.2f; R.R. Newcastle Daily Chronicle, and the Railway News.

(119) Newcastle Daily Chronicle, 18 Dec.1890, p.5.

(120) Speech of the N.E.R.Chairman, Railway News, 7 Feb.1891,p.249. The Newcastle Daily Chronicle compared Harford with Thomas Burt, and supported recognition. (Newcastle Daily Chronicle 20 Dec.1890, p.4.)

(121) N.E.Railway, 'Board Minute Book', Vol.11 par.9913.

(122) R.R. 26 Dec.1890, including special supplement. The Hull goods staff strick for a while, but were eventually satisfied: R.R. 2 Jan.1891, p.1f.

(123) N.E.Railway, op.cit. par.9917.

(124) R.R. 26 Dec.1890, supplement p.5f for the attitude of the Secretary of the Labourers' union; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1891, p.3 for the concessions.

(125) Harford to Tennant, 26 June 1891, kept in Manuscript Letter Book, Feb.1891 - Aug.1895, p.61f. (Unity House Strong Room); also see A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Aug.1891, p.19.

(126) See below. p 203ff

(127) A.S.R.S. for Scotland, Financial Report for half-year ending June 1890 (Glasgow 1890) p.35.

(128) Based on Report and Financial Statement for 1890.

(129) R.R. 27 July 1888, p.353 for the agreement; R.R. 5 Oct. 1888, p.476 for its rejection by the A.G.M.

(130) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1891, p.4f; also see R.R. of Dec. 1890 and Jan.1891.

(131) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1891, p.1f.

(132) ibid. p.22.

(133) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May 1891, p.2f; for Bedford's troubles with his Secretary Campion Watson, see Railway Express 15 Oct. 1891, p.4; ibid. 22 Oct.1891, p.4f; ibid. 29 Oct.1891,p.2f. These deal with allegations of sweated labour in Bedford's tailoring establishment that had been going round for some time.

(134) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May 1891, p.2f.

(135) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Aug.1891, p.12.

(136) ibid. also see speech at the A.G.M. R.R. 16 Oct.1891, p.4.

(137) Railway Express, 22 Nov.1891, p.2.

(138) ibid. 22 Oct.1891, p.8, where the E.C. decision is reprinted.

(139) R.R. 16 Oct.1891, p.4.

(140) R.R. 9 Oct.1891, p.6.

(141) Railway Express, 10 Dec.1891, p.7.

(142) Railway Express, 24 Dec.1891, p.2f.

(143) ibid. p.4f, for an editorial which said that after a year of trial and error, with new men at the helm, the G.R.W.U. had come to stay.

(144) Railway Express, 8 Jan.1892, p.6f. (letter of "Game Cock".)

(145) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1891, p.16f.

(146) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May 1891,p.1f.

(147) ibid. p.14f.

(148) R.R. 27 May 1892, p.4; an editorial which patronisingly suggested that the A.S.R.S. had known all along that a mania for cheapness could not succeed, and that only the A.S.R.S. was wealthy enough to serve all railway men.

(149) R.R. 7 Oct.1892, p.5.

(150) R.R. 14 Oct.1892, p.4. Carried 45-7. (The membership figure is derived from Report and Financial Statement for 1892).

(151) S. & B.Webb, Industrial Democracy (1920 ed.). p.132.

(152) See above, p.20

(153) See circular letter of James Robertson (Newcastle-on-Tyne 1891). (Webb T.U. Coll. E-B.,XVI, item 2.)

(154) See above. p111

(155) C.Edwards, "Labour Federation", Economic Journal, III (1893), p.209. Edwards, who was Secretary of the Shipping and Carrying Industrial Federation, approved of this strategy as the only possible one.

(156) P.J. King and R. Blatchford, Trades Federation (1898-revised ed.) p.31f. In this pamphlet (Clarion pamphlet No.17) King and Blatchford criticised the federation of cognate trades on this ground, and advocated a general federation instead.

(157) J.Saville, 'Trade Unions and Free Labour: the background to the Taff Vale Decision.' in A.Briggs & J.Saville. (editors), Essays in Labour History (London 1960) p.327.

(158) Bute Docks Railway, Minute Book, II, pp.44,50f.

(159) R.R. 20 Feb.1891, supplement, p.2.

(160) R.R. 27 Feb.1891, p.98; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1891,p.22.

(161) See above p.111f

(162) R.R. 6 Mar.1891, p.110; ibid. supplement, p.4.

(163) R.R. 20 Mar.1891, supplement, p.1.

(164) ibid. for Harford's speech. Also see R.R. 13 Mar.1891, p.127 'General Notes' for opinion on this dispute.

(165) Report of Conference on Proposed Federation (Cardiff,1891), passim. (Webb, T.U. Coll. E-B, XV).

(166) E.Edwards, "Labour Federation", Economic Journal, III, p.424.

(167) R.R. 10 July 1891, p.1.

(168) R.R. 14 Oct.1892, p.5.

(169) ibid; also see R.R. 24 Apr.1892, p.1, and A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May 1892, p.2.

(170) R.R. 14 Oct.1892, p.5.

(171) J.Saville, op.cit. p.329; also see ibid. p.328ff. for a description of this strike.

(172) R.R. 14 Apr. 1893, p.1.

(173) R.R. 21 Apr.1893, p.1.

(174) R.R. 14 Apr.1893, pp.1,4.

(175) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1893, p.2.

(176) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June,1894, pp.2,20; also see R.R. 6 Apr.1894, p.6; R.R.1st June, 1894, p.3.

(177) During the unrest in Wales, in August 1890, F.W.Evans, in a speech at Merthyr, had visualised an alliance of the dockers,

the miners, and the railwaymen. (R.R. 8.Aug.1890, p.374f.)

(178) A.S.R.S. Report and Financial Statement for 1892; p.12; also see R.R.16 Oct.1891, p.5, where the A.G.M. sanctioned this levy.

(179) See above. p41

(180) A.S.R.S. Supplementary Agenda ... A.G.M. 1891, p.3.

(181) R.R.16 Oct.1891, p.5.

(182) R.R. 7 Oct.1892, p.6. Already, in 1890, the N.E.men had to add a demand of a 2/- advance for Platelayers. (A.S.R.S. E.C. Minutes, Feb.1891, p.2f.)

(183) R.R. 21 Aug.1891, p.1.

(184) G.W.Railway Magazine, IV (1891), p.18.

(185) R.R. of March 1892, especially R.R.18 Mar.1892, p.4; R.R. Apr. 1st.1892, p.1.

(186) R.C. on Labour. Min.of Ev. Q.26,225. (Parl.Pap. 1893-4 (C.6894-viii), XXXIII); also see A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May,1892, p.4.

(187) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1893, p.3.

(188) R.R. 17 Oct.1890, p.494; R.R. 13 Oct.1893, p.5.

(189) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1893, p.30.

(190) R.R. 9 Oct.1891, p.5.

(191) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Aug.1892, p.30f.

(192) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May,1892, p.23.

(193) R.R. 17 Oct.1890, p.493.

(194) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Aug.1891, p.20.

(195) R.R. 9 Oct.1891, p.5f; for Harford's views see A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May,1891, p.1f.

(196) R.R. 16 Oct.1891, p.4.

Chapter V. State Regulation of Hours, 1890-96.

State regulation of hours came to be advocated at the A.G.M. from 1890 onward. By October 1890 only some of the movements had been successful.(1) This explains a resolution in favour of legal eight hours from Newcastle, also supported by George Thaxton, a former member of the Executive Committee. Thaxton had said that it behoved Harford, as the newly elected chairman of the parliamentary committee, to get his own union to support the recent resolution of the T.U.C. But the motion was lost after Harford had solemnly said that an eight hour bill would have to have so many exceptions as to be quite inoperative.(2)

Nevertheless further experience of industrial strife in the next few months made state regulation of hours a burning question for the A.S.R.S., and its parliamentary work was shaped accordingly. When in November the second general strike ballot on the N.E.R. was again discouraging(3),the alternative possibility of achieving the Hours clauses of the National programme through legislation was suggested by Fred Maddison, the new sub-editor of the Railway Review. He also mentioned that Channing had given notice of a motion in the House of Commons which demanded greater powers to the Board of Trade to prevent overwork on railways.(4)

By 23rd January 1891, when this motion was debated, public attention had become focussed on railwaymen's hours because the Scottish railway strike had lasted throughout the busy period of Christmas and New Year. This strike had failed, but its one good result was to secure a very large attendance at the debate on

Channing's motion,(5)which contrasted favourably with the very poor attendance at another debate on railwaymen's conditions, initiated by Channing nearly three years earlier.(6)

Channing's motion described railwaymen's hours as scandalous and asked that the Board of Trade should at once obtain statutory powers to order Companies to limit overtime work and to increase their staff if that was necessary for doing so. Channing's speech, which was buttressed with figures derived from the returns obtained under the Act of 1889, mentioned at length the efforts of the A.S.R.S. to obtain shorter hours and the refusal of the Companies to recognise trade unions. To some extent the debate cut across party lines. A Scottish Unionist member, who was concerned about his constituents,(7) spoke in its favour, and so did three Conservative M.Ps. holding unorthodox views.(8) Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who was aware of the strong views on both sides, had earlier in the day asked the General Manager of the L. & N.W. whether a committee of inquiry would not be the best reply to Channing. He was told that the Railway Companies' Association would accept a committee of inquiry as the lesser of two evils and as the only alternative to immediate legislation. A few Directors hoped that some Liberal M.Ps. would speak against the motion.(9)

During the debate, however, few Liberal M.Ps. spoke against Channing; prominent railway directors in that party like M.Macinnes of the L. & N.W., Sir Joseph Pease of the N.E.R., and R.A. Ellison of the Midland were absent. From the Liberal front bench Sir William Harcourt intervened to criticise the attitude of the

Companies to trade unions, and urged Channing not to withdraw his motion.(10) Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was strongly against transferring any responsibility for railway management to the Board of Trade, - which in his opinion would lead to nationalisation and political corruption, - and proposed instead to set up a select committee of the House of Commons to inquire whether railwaymen's hours should be restricted by law, and, if so, in what way.(11) The Opposition pressed for a division on immediate legislation and found, to their delight, that Channing's motion was lost by only seventeen votes, 124 against 141. In favour of the motion there were not only all the Liberals and Irish Nationalists (including Parnell) but also two Scottish Unionists and three Conservatives.(12)

For the next two years the Union's agitation on this question of the state regulation of hours had two characteristics. There was an effective campaign to secure an Act of Parliament, but there were also conflicting and changing opinions on the scope of such an Act.

The campaign started immediately after the debate. Outside Parliament the Railway Review printed and circulated the debate in full, printing the division list as well.(13) This led many branches to write to their M.Ps. asking them to explain their position on Channing's motion.(14) Inside Parliament the Select Committee of twenty-six members, which was appointed by the beginning of March,(15) contained Channing, W.S.B. Mclaren, Ben Pickard, and John Wilson (Mid-Durham), thus enabling the A.S.R.S. to have a close liaison with the committee. The union was annoyed at the presence of seven railway

directors on it, considering it too many.(16)

Shortening of hours had two purposes, - to prevent accidents and/or to stop the exploitation of unorganised labour. That the members of the committee were going to differ in their emphasis on the latter aspect was evident even before the Committee began taking evidence. Channing, who seems to have wanted to make this committee inquire into as many aspects of railway labour as possible, tried on 12 February 1891, to make Hicks-Beach adopt, on behalf of the Board of Trade, a questionnaire to the Companies for use by the Select Committee which covered a wide range of grades. Hicks-Beach refused to accept it because it included railwaymen "whose employment (sc.had) nothing whatever to do with the safety of the public".(17) The majority report of the Committee, when it was published a year and a half later, began by stressing public safety as its main term of reference.(18) But this emphasis on safety made it lay down norms of a fair day's work only for trainmen, signalmen, and shunters, but not for porters or platelayers.(19)

The National Programme as adopted in 1889 was, as we have seen, both in its intention and in its effect designed to raise the value of railwaymen's labour and increase earnings in a period of prosperity. By refusing unanimously to support the legal eight hours agitation in May 1891 and by explicitly adhering to the National Programme the A.S.R.S. Executive showed that it was still hopeful, in a period of increasing membership and prosperity, of obtaining the terms of that programme and safeguard existing wage-rates.(20) But in a committee concerned and inspired mainly by the question of

safety and memories of the dislocation caused by the Scottish strike, the wage-raising aspects of the programme, - when revealed under close interrogation, - provided ammunition to the Directors. The majority report stressed this element of 'fraud' in discreet language.(21)

When the secretary of an A.S.R.S. branch admitted willingly that he regarded the National Programme as a tactical manouvre to earn unlimited overtime,(22)Harford was placed in an embarrassing position. The questions put by the Labour and Radical group to such people(23)helped Harford to save his face to some extent, and he acknowledged their help gratefully at the A.G.M. of October 1891.(24)

The same A.G.M. declared unanimously in favour of a universal ten hour day by law, after a speech by William Longstaff of Newcastle, a Signalman of the N.E.R. Harford, who had no vote, said that he would have preferred a different procedure, - he had already described it to the Select Committee, - by which the Board of Trade would have powers to reduce hours if complaints came from the men; a universal limit was not practical.(25)

This change of opinion was possibly due to frustration at not having achieved the National Programme yet for most grades. Longstaff, who was himself a supporter of the legal eight hours agitation,(26)might well have been influenced by the Newcastle Trades Union Congress in the previous month, which had seen an intense controversy on this question.(27) The Signalmen of the N.E.R. had received few concessions yet except Sunday pay.(28) On the other hand the General Manager of the L. & N.W. had already admitted

categorically, in answering a question of Channing in the Select Committee, that it was possible to regulate by law the hours of Signalmen, unlike those of other classes of railwaymen.(29) These events doubtless influenced the opinion of Signalmen, and it was possible for one of them, for once, to carry everybody to support a resolution for a statutory limit at the A.G.M.

William Foreman's altered opinions, as expressed to the Select Committee, might have been another factor. With considerable misgivings about how to prevent wage reductions if a legal day was introduced, he had, nevertheless, suggested a bill that embodied the hours clauses of the National Programme, and a legal right to overtime in cases of emergencies.(30) The failure of the Scottish strike and one of the Irish strikes to get hours reduced, and the unpopularity of these incidents, had inclined Foreman towards a bill of this sort, but he was very much aware that wages could be safeguarded only if trade unionism developed further.(31) He had thus come round to the view expressed by Champion two years ago in the Railway Review, that state regulation should be supplementary to collective bargaining.(32)

This resolution of the A.G.M. of 1891 led to the inclusion of a demand for a legal ten-hour day and a six-day week in the A.S.R.S's questionnaire for candidates at the 1892 General Election, which was prepared early next year.(33) The campaign during the General Election of 1892 was assisted by the renewed public interest in railwaymen's conditions, as a result of the victimisation of stationmaster Hood and the publication of the reports of the Select Committee just

before the election. Otherwise, with the Scottish strike a fading memory, the campaign might have been less effective.

Harford had told the Select Committee about the dismissal of stationmaster Hood by the Cambrian Railway for giving evidence about the long hours of the men employed there. The Committee inquired into the case, for it would be a breach of privilege of Parliament if it were true, and submitted a special report on 24 March 1892.(34) As opinion differed sharply on how far the directors were to blame for dismissing Hood, the committee passed, by Hicks-Beach's casting vote, a non-committal resolution. This recognised, nevertheless, that there had been a breach of privilege, since Hood's evidence had been the main cause of his dismissal.(35)

The breach of privilege was debated on 5 April 1892 in an all day sitting.(36) The Directors and Managers, appearing at the bar of the house, stressed their duties to the shareholders and apologised for any unintentional breach of privilege which their action inspired by this duty may have caused.(37) This lame apology was followed by a speech of Hicks-Beach, who seemed almost to exculpate the company, treat the matter solely as a question of parliamentary privilege, and suggest that in view of the ample apology expressed by the offenders an 'admonition' by the Speaker was enough.(38) This raised a storm among Radical and Labour M.Ps. In spite of Gladstone's argument that their demand for a 'reprimand' and for compensation to Hood by the Company were misplaced,(39)the back-benchers continued the argument, enlarged on the Labour question, - possibly with an eye on the election, - and pressed for a division demanding compensation.

Though they lost by 159 votes to 274,(40)this episode, and the speeches made on this occasion, were used freely during the election.

During this debate, T. Milvain (Cons, Durham City) had, in course of a vicious attack on Hood, said that the Select Committee, of which he was a member, contained two sides one of which was "day by day consulting with the secretaries and servants of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants".(41) The two sides were revealed in the emergence of two reports, one prepared by Hicks-Beach and the other, three times longer, by Channing.(42) The former was preferred to the latter by a majority of twelve to six; the only two Liberals to vote for the majority report were railway directors, Sir Joseph Pease (N.E.R.) and M. Macinnes (L. & N.W.).(43)

Both reports agreed on three points: the difficulty of laying down by law one maximum standard for all grades in view of the varied character of railway work; the danger that any legally prescribed maximum was likely to level up the hours of those who at present worked less than that;(44) and the undesirability of making men work in alternating stretches of long and short periods within a fixed week.(45) The crucial differences between the two reports lay in their assessment of the extent and nature of overwork, of the standard for a fair day's work and of the roles of the state and of trade unions.

The majority report denied that excessive hours were universal or systematic, while admitting that such conditions had existed and still prevailed among many railways. Its recommended standards of hours were, for trainmen, a maximum of sixty-six hours in any week

and twelve in any day; for signalmen and shunters in busy boxes and yards eight per day; for these two grades, elsewhere, ten hours exclusive of meals, although longer hours were not harmful in branch lines.(46) On state regulation the report revealed a patched-up rift between the directors and others on the committee.

Three months before the report was published, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who was aware that opinion was turning in favour of at least some form of governmental control, had asked the Companies' Association for their opinion on what form of control was most acceptable. Being unwilling officially to commit themselves to any degree of control on labour matters, the Association had declined to make any suggestions.(47) In deference to this strong feeling no doubt, the key sentence on this topic in Hicks-Beach's report was,(48)

> "... the object to be arrived at is to compel any railway company overworking its servants to abstain from doing so, while leaving to the company full responsibility for the management of its lines and for the maintenance of discipline."

The assumption behind this report was that the large and well-managed companies would voluntarily continue to reduce hours, and that those which still worked their men too long, for either lack of capital or other reasons, could be amenable to the force of public opinion if the Board of Trade continued to get returns of overtime (according to the Act of 1889) and published its correspondence with those whose returns revealed gross overwork. The nearest the report came in giving the Board of Trade some powers of compulsion was to

suggest that if a company persisted in refusing to reduce hours, in spite of publicity to its conduct, the Board could demand a proper and revised work-schedule within a given time limit. Failure to prepare such a schedule, approved by the Board of Trade, or to put it into practice, would justify the Board in bringing the matter to the Railway and Canal Commission, which, acting in its capacity as a judicial tribunal, could give a final verdict on whether the schedule was a reasonable one.(49)

The majority also overruled any reference to trade unions in their report.(50) This point was given pride of place in Channing's draft report.

Channing's draft report stressed that overwork on British railways was widespread and, in general, systematic.(51) It followed Harford in setting a ten hour limit for all grades, with the exceptions of nine hours for platelayers and eight hours for signalmen and shunters in busy boxes and yards.(52) On state regulation its main suggestion was that the Board of Trade should investigate complaints sent by railwaymen, and then order the Companies to reduce hours if the complaints were justified. In so doing the Board should give "administrative recognition" to the complaints sent <u>on behalf of</u> a group of railwaymen by trade union officials, especially as the Committee had found that many men, through fear of victimisation, had chosen to give evidence through the officers of the A.S.R.S., G.R.W.U. etc. As a last resort the Board should be able to compel a recalcitrant company to reduce hours, with the Railway and Canal Commission acting as a Court of appeal.(53)

Appreciative remarks about railway trade unions occurred throughout the report, non-recognition was described as "plain declaration of administrative despotism"(54),and there was an attempt to refute the charge that the National Programme was a disguised wage demand.(55) Channing hoped that once the Board of Trade gave "administrative recognition" to trade unions the Companies might eventually recognise them too.(56) In this way Channing stretched the terms of reference of the Committee as far as possible, and clinched it by saying, in one of his concluding remarks,

> "Railways are state-granted monopolies, and the state has the right and the duty to insist on safe working and <u>just conditions of labour</u>, including shorter hours."(57)

This lengthy document had been prepared by Channing also with an eye on the hustings, and he intended to publish it as soon as the majority report was out. He had, by the end of May, - even before the reports were debated by the Select Committee, - sent a copy of his draft to Gladstone confidentially, justifying the irregular practice with a reference to the election, and declaring(58),

> "The Railwaymen are a splendid class... I am quite sure that a broad and generous and a sympathetic attitude of the Liberal Party towards them will not be thrown away politically."

Many Radicals treated railwaymen's conditions as an important part of their programme and pressure from the A.S.R.S. made it electorally almost crucial in some constituencies.

The A.S.R.S. took this election very seriously, and used the weekly issues of the <u>Railway Review</u> as its main channel of propaganda.

Pressure on parliamentary candidates was put, wisely, at the constituency level, by mobilising the branch secretaries to write out the questionnaire prepared by the head office and send it to the candidates. Their replies, which began to trickle from the middle of April, shortly after the debate on Hood's case, were published in full in the Review every week until 15 July. A total of 185 candidates replied, - of which 22 had done so in May and the rest in June and July, - and most of them answered each point of the questionnaire; the answers of a great many were full and showed that the A.S.R.S. circular was considered sufficiently important not to be consigned to the waste paper basket at once (see below for tables).

Early in June the division list of Channing's motion of 23rd January 1891 was reprinted(59)and, three weeks later, about the time that parliament was dissolved, Channing's minority report was serialised and also issued as a pamphlet.(60) An eve-of-poll editorial, entitled "To the ballot box", urged all railwaymen, irrespective of political views, to vote for those who had pledged themselves to support Channing on the question of a ten hour day etc.(61) The following two tables (Tables IV and V) have been prepared from the published replies of candidates' in the Railway Review about a ten hour day and a six day week, enforced by the Board of Trade. One shows the attitudes of all the candidates and the other, in one sense more important, shows a break-up of the expressed views of those who were eventually elected.

Table IV. Candidates' replies

(Source: RR 15 Apr. 1892 to 15 July 1892; Dod's Parliamentary Companion 1892 part ii; Bradshaw's Railway Manual 1892)

	Total in favour	Liberals	Conservatives	Railway Directors
(i) 10 hour day & 6-day week by law	88	68	20	3
(ii) Channing's report	43	31	12	4
(iii) Majority report	24	4	20	2
(iv) Opposed to legislation of any kind but for trade union effort	11	4	7	
(v) Openly hostile or evasive	19	1	18	5

Table V. Members' attitudes. (Source: as before)

	Total in favour	Liberals	Conservatives
(i) Ten hours & six days by law	36	32	4
(ii) Channing's report	29	20	9
(iii) Majority report	15	3	12
(iv) Uncertain	8	5	3
(v) Openly hostile & opposed to legislation	7		7
(vi) Reserved judgment on Burkeian principles	7		7

How far had this campaign really affected the fortunes of candidates at the election itself? In Durham city the sitting

Conservative member T. Milvain saw his majority of 274 transformed into a Liberal majority of 75. In the election campaign his speech during the debate on stationmaster Hood's case,(62)and his general attitude while serving on the Select Committee, were used to win effective support for the Liberals from the local railwaymen, assisted by an eve-of-poll railwaymen's rally addressed by Edward Garrity, the assistant secretary of the A.S.R.S. Both Liberal and Conservative papers attributed the Liberal victory largely to what the Conservatives called "the trumped-up railway grievance, and the audacious untruths of Mr Channing.." which had, in their opinion, made railwaymen act "as the serfs of Harford, the secretary and monarch of their union.."(63)

In the Doncaster division of Yorkshire C.J. Fleming, Macliver's successor as the Liberal candidate, had nursed the steadily growing A.S.R.S. branch by supporting organising rallies in 1890 in favour of the National Programme,(64)and his replies to the election questionnaire were full and favourable, while that of the sitting Conservative M.P., W.H. Fitzwilliam, was evasive and unsympathetic.(65) In course of the campaign both sides realised that the miners and railwaymen were more important than the Irish question, and Fitzwilliam began to canvass, belatedly and in vain, for support among the railwaymen, using the majority report as a testimony of Conservative goodwill.(66) The A.S.R.S. branch was unique among all the other interest groups in the constituency in ignoring Fitzwilliam's canvassing efforts and actively campaigning for Fleming, who, in a higher total poll, transformed his opponent's majority of 213 into a majority of 279 in

his favour.(67)

In the metropolitan constituency of West Islington, which stretched around King's Cross station, Harford and the G.R.W.U. officials campaigned on behalf of the Liberal candidate T. Lough, who won the seat from the Conservatives and, afterwards, continued to remain an honorary member of King's Cross branch for many years.(68) In Conservative Lancashire the Liberals gained Accrington, in a campaign in which the Irish question featured prominently in speeches. But active support came from many trade unions, including the well-established and flourishing Accrington branch of the A.S.R.S., whose secretary Jesse Holman (successor to Edward Garrity) was a nominator of the Liberal candidate, along with D.J. Shackleton, the president of the Weavers Association. Shackleton's speeches about the poor record of the Conservative M.P. as regards Garrity's efforts to persuade him to support amendments to the Employers' Liability Bill, and the contrasting replies of the two candidates to the A.S.R.S. questionnaire might have been factors behind the Liberal victory.(69) In other constituencies like the metropolitan railway and dock centre of Deptford,(70)or the N.E. Railway centre of York,(71) the campaigns show that the A.S.R.S. was a factor, though probably not as important as in Doncaster, Durham, and West Islington. Channing himself at East Northamptonshire and W.S.B. Mclaren at Crewe increased their majorities substantially.(72)

The preceding survey of some constituencies in different parts of the country is not intended either to be an exhaustive survey of the general election of 1892, or even of the relative importance of

the labour question and the Irish question in it. Its aim has been to study the operation during election time of one important section of the working class who were being organised rapidly and in increasing numbers in the previous years, who had an interest in seeing that the minority report was the basis of legislation, and who constituted, in some constituencies, an important section of the electorate. Despite its limitations the survey lends support to Channing's comments about this election in his memoirs. He wrote that a collectivist Radicalism was an important factor in deciding the issue although in 1891 his suggestions to Schnadhorst for the adoption of such a programme officially had been ignored in favour of the Newcastle programme of 1891.(73)

Some Conservative M.Ps. also realised the importance of the railwaymen's vote. Sir Albert Rollitt, Conservative M.P. for South Islington and a signatory to the majority report of the Select Committee,(74)had seen his neighbouring constituency won by the Liberal T. Lough with the help of the A.S.R.S.,(75)and this probably made him address the A.G.M. of 1892 and declare that a law should be passed if the report did not lead to a voluntary reduction of hours.(76) Next year he was a co-sponsor of Channing's private bill.

The new Parliament, with fewer railway directors (Table VI), a Liberal Cabinet, and a fair number of M.Ps. committed to the legal reduction of hours (Table V), seemed to promise well for an Act, but it still required a campaign to get something approaching a reasonable law passed.

Table VI

(Source: Dod's Parliamentary Companion, 1893; Bradshaw's Railway Manual 1893)

	Total No.	Major British Railways	Minor British Railways	Foreign Railways
	68	27	29	12
Liberals	23	7	12	4
Cons. & Unionist	45	20	17	8

This final stage of the campaign saw a clearer emphasis on state regulation by the A.S.R.S., which had Harford's support.

The A.G.M. of October 1892 effectively silenced the legal eight hour brigade by a massive vote of 30 to 12 with a reference to the National Programme, but, afterwards, unanimously voted that legislation should follow Channing's draft bill, which was read out at the conference.(77) To Harford and his colleagues, the merits of this bill lay in giving union officials the right to complain to the Board of Trade, fixing a time limit for the reduction of hours by Companies, and specifying penalties for non-compliance. The bill defined over-work in such a manner as to include inadequate Sunday relief and absence of proper intervals of rest between shifts, but, with an eye to securing a smooth passage, did not lay down standards of hours for different grades. This last omission was objected to by Harford, who said that the "least" the union could accept as a "final settlement" of their demands were the standards of the National Programme.(78)

Channing, Sir Albert Rollitt, John Wilson (mid-Durham), W.S.B. Mclaren, and a few others introduced this bill on 1st February 1893,

with an additional special clause on the hours of Signalmen, among whom, as we have seen, there was a growing opinion in favour of a legal limit. Under this clause the Board of Trade had to order all companies within a given period to abolish twelve-hour boxes, introduce a revised schedule with classes of ten- and eight- hour shifts only, and keep the Board informed about proportions of reliefmen to full signalmen. The Board was also given the right to order periodic revisions of this schedule.(79)

Meanwhile the Board of Trade officials had worked at a Bill along different lines. Gladstone had a bill in mind on the hours of railway servants among the proposed labour legislation, and its drafting was left to the Board of Trade.(80) The departmental officials followed Hicks-Beach's majority report, and their bill simply gave the Board powers to order revised schedules, without any definition of reasonable hours, and leaving the use of this power entirely to the discretion of the department.(81)

Fortunately for the A.S.R.S., Mundella had been persuaded not to hustle this Bill through, when he wanted to have a second reading on 20th February, at the instance of an irate Conservative back-bencher.(82) Assembling as usual for its quarterly sitting next day, the union's Executive decided to lobby for a special clause on Signalmen's hours, a reference to the right of trade union's to send complaints, and the specifying of standards of hours in the bill itself.(83) Consultation between Mundella and Harford, who was accompanied by Channing, Michael Davitt and Charles Fenwick, enabled the A.S.R.S. to persuade the minister to bring the Bill nearer the

minority report by accepting these points in a modified form: Sunday relief, intervals of rest, an inquiry into the actual time as well as the booked time, and, above all, the legal right of railwaymen to send complaints by themselves or through union officials to the Board of Trade and have these investigated. Channing failed, however, in the standing committee, to make this reference to union officials explicit instead of letting it remain cloaked in the phrase, "on behalf of the servants or any class of servants".(84)

Definition of standards of hours and the special clause for Signalmen had been rejected in the standing committee,(85)but during the report stage efforts were made, on behalf of Signalmen, in the lobby and on the floor of the House. With Harford's help the North-Eastern signalmen's representatives secured an interview with Mundella on 24th April to persuade him to abolish twelve hour boxes in this bill, but the minister asked them to wait and see how this law, the first of its kind in regulating adult labour, actually worked before more drastic measures were taken.(86) Next day, when Sir Albert Rollitt tried to press the amendment about a signalmen's special clause, Mundella refused to accept it, saying that in the opinion of Major Marindin, the chief inspector of Accidents, this would involve state management of all the signal-boxes of the country.(87) The subsequent history of the bill was uneventful. It passed the House of Lords safely and received royal assent on 27th July.(88)

This final stage of the campaign showed that since the A.S.R.S. had not yet become one of the groups whom the Board of Trade

normally consulted prior to legislation, once a minister had committed himself to a Bill it was difficult to change it radically; the useful alterations that were secured were possible because of Mundella's sympathies. The right of trade union representation to the Board of Trade under this Act not only helped the railwaymen to get shorter hours, but also opened a period of frequent consultations with the A.S.R.S. This relationship with the Board of Trade - probably a unique case of close departmental-trade union understanding in this period - survived some strains and stresses and was a main factor behind future legislation.

"If you get a good law," said Channing to a railwaymen's rally next year, "unless you keep the officials up to it, the law will be of no use to you."(89) The use made of this Act and the co-operation of the Board of Trade was such as to make George Wardle write, five years after the passage of the Act,

"... the Board has manipulated the Act in a way far beyond the most sanguine expectations..."(90)

Preventing victimisation had been behind the insistence on getting the validity of complaints sent by trade unions written into the Act. The Board honoured the understanding by politely refusing, during the preliminary stages of making this law operative, a request from the Companies' Association for having the names of complainants sent to them so that the companies might settle the grievances and spare the Board unnecessary work!(91) The annual reports of the operation of this Act, prepared by F.J.S. Hopwood, Assistant Secretary to the Railway department, and the indexes and registers

of the letters (held at the Public Record Office) reveal a great deal of the process of indirect negotiations that went on between the union and the Companies via the Board of Trade. Most of the representations made to the Companies were the consequence of complaints sent by the union, with the exception of a steadily diminishing number of cases where overwork had actually caused an accident and which were reported by the Board's own inspectors. Harford, who remembered miserable years spent in the eighteen-eighties in fruitless efforts to get the Board to give serious attention to his suggestion, was amazed and pleased at the 'great change' that had occurred in the officials' attitudes, and praised Hopwood in particular.(92)

The union's efforts to include as many grades as possible within the scope of this Act were on the whole successful, except in the cases of warehousemen, carters, goods porters, and station-masters; some Companies objected to the application of the Act to these grades as such complaints were sent in, and their points were conceded.(93) Table VII shows the total number of complaints for the first four years with a break-up into different grades. As almost all these complaints referred not to one individual but to one or more grade or grades on one or more section or sections of a line, the total number whose grievances were considered was larger than the total number of complaints.(94)

Table VII

(Source: Parl.Pap. 1899 LXXXVI, pt i,'Hours Act Report ... July 1899' p.14. The percentage of Signalmen is calculated from the figures given.)

Year --	1894	1895	1896	1897
Total complaints	72	156	97	76
Signalmen	24	60	33	31
Percentage of Signalmen to total	33.3%	38.5%	34%	40.8%
Drivers & Firemen	14	22	12	2
Station staff	14	13	20	20
Guards & Brakesmen	7	25	14	10
Shunters	6	12	9	10
Wagon Examiners	1	2	5	1
Gatekeepers	4	2	3	1
Platelayers	1	-	1	-
Other grades	1	3	-	1

Without recourse to the judicial tribunal of the Railway and Canal Commission - which Sir Courtenay Boyle, the Permanent Secretary, was very unwilling to recommend(95) - the Board managed to negotiate over each complaint with each Company. If the first revised schedule did not satisfy the A.S.R.S., further pressure by Hopwood - whose talents at mediation were considerable(96) - sometimes narrowed the gap between the union's demands and the Company's position. This acceptance of a compromise, in place of an appeal to the Railway Commission,was strongly recommended by the department.(97)

By July 1895 Hopwood wrote that the Act had killed the extra-ordinary hours of work which had been common on many lines before

1893, and the twelve hour booked day was now the maximum for all grades everywhere in the kingdom. The question was whether the Act should be allowed to fall into disuse, or whether efforts at further reductions should be made, since the ten hour maximum was the aim of the A.S.R.S.(98) The Companies had been co-operative in all cases concerning public safety. In those cases where the question of safety was a minor element, the Board had been able at best to secure a compromise after pressure, and at worst to have a blank refusal. Hopwood was willing in July 1895 to continue to press on with the administration of the Act, but wrote that the future work would be to decide "the more delicate and difficult questions" like the further reduction of a ten-hour signalbox to eight hours, or similar reductions from twelve hours to lower hours.(99) Appendix A (on which part of the argument in this and the following paragraphs are based) shows that the second type of complaints, which Companies were unwilling to redress, mainly concerned signalmen's further efforts at reclassification.

Signalmen, who had been baulked of a special clause in their favour, were using this Act more than any other grade (Table VII). Soon after the Act came into effect the Board had issued, in all cases of complaints from signalmen, a very precise set of questions to each company about the nature of signal-work on the section from where the complaint had come,(100)and had established certain principles. When the G.N.R. attempted in 1894 to raise eight hour boxes to ten hours in order to offset reductions to ten hours elsewhere the alacrity of Harford in reporting the matter and Hopwood's

firm but persuasive approach prevented it.(101) Another principle was to try to abolish twelve-hour boxes everywhere, except on small branch lines.(102)

The committee of the Signalmen's national movement(103)decided in July 1895 to try hard to make the abolition of twelve-hour boxes a fact instead of a mere principle.(104) Apprehensions that under the new Conservative government the use of the Act would be discouraged(105)were allayed when C.T. Ritchie, the new President of the Board of Trade, agreed, after initial reluctance(106)to receive, on 14th February 1896, a deputation from the Signalmen's national committee.(107) They were introduced to him by four members of the Opposition - Channing, C.E. Schwann, and two Irish nationalists.(108) The men realised from this interview that while the Board was keen to abolish twelve-hour boxes, the present law did not give them the right to do so by decree, and Parliament was unlikely to amend it in a more collectivist direction so soon after its enactment. The only way of overcoming the resistance of the Companies to the further reclassification of boxes was by an appeal to the Railway and Canal commission, but that required legally admissible evidence; particular cases of overwork had to supplement the general returns of overtime and the reports of inspectors. In other words the identity of individual complainants could no longer be kept secret once a case went before the tribunal.(109)

Appendix A shows that in the two years since July 1895 this new type of complaints from Signalmen had, as a result of the Board's efforts, a slightly better chance of success than in the twelve

months before, but the proportion of cases unsolved continued to be bigger than those solved, contrary to the general ratio. Despite Harford's exhortations in public to his men that the Companies would not dare victimise witnesses before the Railway Commission(110)and the willingness of some signalmen and shunters to give evidence early in 1896,(111)no case, as all subsequent reports indicate, was ever brought before the Commission. Uneven spread of unionism and the wages question bedevilled this as much as the fear of victimisation.

The uneven spread of unionism, which had been a powerful argument of the leadership against a legal limit in the eighteen-eighties, had continued to act as a brake on using this Act up to the appeal stage. Just as nearly all successful complaints from the G.W.R. came from South Wales - where unionism was strong - so an A.S.R.S. complaint from an area with weak union-membership would occasionally be met by a counter-petition sent by the Company from the same grade, as in the case of the Signalmen of the London, Chatham and Dover in 1895.(112) This opposition was specially marked in the case of footplatemen, who, [redacted], already had the sixty-hour week and overtime at a higher rate on a weekly basis. The desire of non-unionists to earn eight or nine days' pay in one week without violating the twelve-hour booked day - which was encouraged, Harford alleged with some truth, by the A.S.L.E.F.(113) - accounted not only for the small number of complaints from that grade (Table VII), but also for instances of counter-petitions.(114) For a similar reason, Guards, who could earn in some Companies extra overtime pay on a weekly basis at an ordinary rate, and whose hours

varied between 60 and 72 per week, were less willing than signalmen to send complaints if this meant a decrease in earnings.(115) As long as the onus of complaint remained with the men, the Act could not be a substitute for trade unionism, but supplementary to it.

The wages question, as Hopwood pointed out in July 1896, had been avoided in all the complaints settled so far, but an appeal to the Railway Commission, followed by a judicial order in favour of the men, might easily induce the Companies to reduce wages proportionately.(116) This point must have been mentioned in private to the union after the Signalmen's interview in February, and it explained why no efforts were made to bring Companies before the tribunal. Instead, a new Bill, with a clause on wages, was now canvassed by the A.S.R.S. for a while. Its ancestry partly lay in the efforts of the legal eight hour group since the Act of 1893 had been passed.

Resolutions in deference to the vocal minority of legal eight hour men had been passed in 1893 but not acted on.(117) The A.G.M. of that year passed two contradictory resolutions: one, by 31 votes to 17, for a legal eight hour day, and another, by 33 votes to 17, for following the resolution of the Belfast Trades Union Congress of that year, which had urged that such an Act should be permissive and not imposed on areas where men did not want it.(118) As few laws on railwaymen's hours were likely to differentiate between Companies, the second resolution really indicated the continuance of the old division of opinion on this issue.

In the next two years the seed of this socialist gospel had found a fertile soil in some A.S.R.S. branches in the north of

England,(119)and Harford, in his speeches to railwaymen and in his election campaign, had found it useful to recall his support for Adam Weiler's resolution twelve years ago.(120) The A.G.M. of October 1895, endorsed unanimously that as a fair day's work eight hours were enough.(121)

In December that year, while efforts were going on to obtain the signalmen's interview with Ritchie, a suggestion was made to Channing for a legal eight hour Bill. But the question was shelved indefinitely by the Executive when he realistically pointed out the difficulty of persuading a Conservative government to pass such an Act.(123) After the Signalmen's interview and the realisation of the difficulties of an appeal to the Railway Commission, there was, for once, complete and genuine unanimity on an eight hour bill, as long as the wages question was safeguarded. In March 1896 the Executive drafted and issued to the branches a Railwaymen's Employment Bill. This demanded an eight hour day for all railwaymen (irrespective of whether their contract was written or oral, explicit or implicit) and also, for those whose contract excluded spare-time occupations, a guaranteed week's pay with, in cases of dismissal, a week's notice or wages in lieu of notice.(124)

It is significant that, in trying to find an answer to the misgivings about wages, the A.S.R.S. leadership recommended a guaranteed week's pay and not a 'minimum living wage'. It shows that though the leadership was collectivist to some extent, they were not socialists. They accepted the trade cycle, and the existence of wage differentials between grades as being part of the scheme of

things. Consequently what to their practical minds seemed to be the most they could aim at through legislation was to safeguard the eight-hour day by a guaranteed week's clause.

Overwhelming support in favour of the Bill came from the branches, which had held special meetings to discuss it.(125) The insistence of some branches on the Bill being passed in its entirety, without the curtailment of any clauses, indicated that the erstwhile opponents of a legal limit had been persuaded by the clauses on wages and notice.(126) At the suggestion of Harford, who was very pleased and relieved at this degree of support, the Executive decided to press for this Bill through the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C.(127); at the annual conference of the T.U.C. in September that year Walter Hudson moved and carried its adoption.(128)

Seven years after the National Programme had been launched, the A.S.R.S. had thus committed itself to a collectivist Bill on hours that satisfied all its members. Efforts at securing recognition and fostering collective bargaining - whose lack of success on most railways in 1890-92 had led to the original desire for a modified form of state control - had not however been abandoned in the meantime. While the Act of 1893 was being used and manipulated in the manner described, the union's history had also been characterised by a growth of membership, efforts at local level to safeguard and improve upon the concessions of 1890-92, and the achievement, by some upper grades, of a degree of nationwide organisation. The efforts of one of them - the Signalmen - to supplement their direct approach to the Companies by the use of the Act of 1893 have been discussed in

the preceding narrative. They too had realised - what the Guards and other grades knew already - that the Act could not solve other aims of trade unionism that were designed to protect or enhance the standard rates.

Given the unlikelihood of another Act being passed, only a comprehensive development of organisation could make the present Act fully effective, but also, in a sense, superfluous, for then an effort to establish collective bargaining within a Company could succeed, and could solve other grievances as well as hours. In September 1896, when the Railwaymen's Employment Bill was endorsed by the T.U.C., such organisational efforts, which had run parallel to the use made of the Act of 1893, were reaching a climax with more than one skilled and semi-skilled grade being organised on a national scale. These trends culminated in an important struggle in the following twelve months, and the Railwaymen's Employment Bill was shelved for the present. It is now desirable to step back three years and trace the history of the growth of membership and movements and study their efforts on the structure of the union.

Appendix A.

Operation of the Railway Regulation Act, 1893.
(Source: Hours Act Reports, 1894-1897)

Note: An investigation of the descriptive account of each complaint in the Hours Act Reports showed the basis on which Hopwood prepared his table of the annual number of complaints, with a break-up into grades (see above p. 164). On that basis the table in the next page has been drawn up, by re-counting the complaints, but classifying them both according to Companies, and grades, and seeing whether they were solved or unsolved.

Major English and Welsh railways and joint railways are studied separately because it was here that the A.S.R.S. was strong, and the 'non-safety' type of complaints was emerging by the middle of 1895. They include the four South Welsh railways, which, despite their small size, were important economically, and had large A.S.R.S. members.

The definition of solved and unsolved is biased in favour of the Companies. The Reports' descriptive paragraphs do not always indicate what precisely the exact solution was to a complaint. But they do say whether the reduction was satisfactory to the complainants, or partly so, or such as to leave the Board itself dissatisfied, or none at all. In cases of signal-boxes they often give the number of boxes reduced and the nature of that reduction.

I have defined 'solved' to include completely solved, partly solved, and in cases where a description of the nature of a signal-box reduction is available, a reduction of two boxes out of four, for instance, counts as solved. Unsolved is defined to include blank refusals, dissatisfaction of the Board of Trade, and instances

like the reduction of only one box out of a complaint that referred to a section of a line.

	1894	1895	1896	1897
Grand total Complaints	72	156	97	76
" " solved	60	96	69	54
" " unsolved	12	60	28	22
Solved-unsolved ratio (in percentage)	83:17	61:39	71:29	71:29
<u>Major Eng-Welsh Rlys.</u>				
Total complaints	50	101	59	45
Total complaints as % of grand total	69:4	64.7	60.8	59.2
Total solved	40	55	33	27
Total unsolved	10	46	26	18
(a) Solved-unsolved ratio, (in percentage)	80:20	54:46	56:44	60:40
Signalmen's total complaints	18	46	23	20
ditto as % of total	36	45.5	38.9	44.4
Signalmen's total solved	17	13	10	7
Signalmen's total unsolved	1	33	13	13
(b) Signalmen's solved-unsolved ratio	94:6	28:72	43:57	35:56

Compare (a) with (b).

NOTES

(1) See [illegible] above p 109 ff

(2) R.R. 17 Oct. 1890 p.495. Thaxton, although a Guard, probably supported this motion because on the Midland Railway no movement had yet been successful. He later described himself as an advanced Radical in politics (R.R. 9 Sep. 1898, p.9.)

(3) See [illegible] above. below p 118

(4) R.R. 5 Dec. 1890, main editorial 'A Legal Limit'.

(5) Parl.Deb. 3rd s CCCXLIX, 904-1007.

(6) Parl.Deb. 3rd s CCCXXV, 1667-1707.

(7) T.R. Buchanan, M.P. for Edinburgh West.

(8) Stafford Northcote (Exeter), E.H. Llewellyn (Somerset N.), and A.A. Baumann (Camberwell). Also see Baumann's letters to The Times in reply to a Conservative colleague, The Times 26 Jan. 1891 p.13 c5; ibid 28 Jan. 1891 p.13, c6.

(9) Railway Companies' Association, Minute No.319 (23 Jan. 1891) p.2f. (Brit. Transp.Com. - RCA1/2).

(10) Parl.Deb. 3rd s, CCCXLIX, 999 f.

(11) Parl.Deb. op.cit. 993-6.

(12) The Times 26 Jan. 1891 p.13 c5; Dod's Parliamentary Companion, 1891.

(13) R.R. 30 Jan. 1891, supplement.

(14) See February issues of R.R. 1891; branch reports are in p.2 ff of each issue.

(15) Parl.Deb. 3rd s, CCCL, 1504-10, 1948.

(16) A.S.R.S., E.C. Minutes, Feb. 1891 (UH); R.R. 27th Feb. 1891, p.97.

(17) Parl.Deb. 3rd s, CCCL, 576-78.

(18) Parl.Pap. 1892, XVI, 123, S.C. on Railway Servants (Hours of Labour), Report (hereafter Hours, 1892, Report) p.i.

(19) ibid p.v.

(20) A.S.R.S., E.C. Minutes, May 1891, p.23 (UH).

(21) Hours, 1892, Report, p.vi.

(22) Parl.Pap. 1890-91, XVI, min.of ev. par.7067-69, 7075-77.

(23) ibid p.345 f for John Wilson's questions to Collingwood.

(24) R.R. 9 Oct. 1891, p.5.

(25) ibid p.6; Parl.Pap. 1890-91, XVI, (hereafter Hours 1890-91) min. of ev. par.2671-2682; that Longstaff was a signalman is seen in a correspondence in R.R. 13 Feb. 1891, p.81.

(26) R.R. 18 Sep. 1891, p.6.

(27) Roberts, Trades Union Congress, p.136 f.

(28) N.E.Railway, Board Minutes, vol.11, par. 9913. (Brit.Transp. Com. York).

(29) Hours, 1890-91, min, of ev. par. 5727.

(30) ibid par. 5039-42. This legal right to overtime to avoid emergencies was suggested by Hyndman. See Webb & Cox, ~~op.cit. p.163 f.~~ The Eight Hour Day (1891). p163 f.

(31) R.R. 19 June, 1891 p.6.

(32) R.R. 1 Feb. 1889, p.57 f.

(33) A.S.R.S., E.C. Minutes, Feb. 1892, pp.3 f, 17 (UH).

(34) Parl.Pap. 1892, XVI,1; S.C. on Railway Servants (Hours of Labour Special Report. (hereafter Hours Special Report); for the essential evidence on both sides over Hood's case, see Hours Special Report, min. of ev. par.581 f, 586-822, 1192 ff, 1527-9, 1567 ff; appendix pp.156 f, 158-61.

(35) Hours Special Report, pp.vii-ix; for Hicks-Beach's views also see Parl.Deb. 4th s, III, 887 f; ibid, V, 1052 f.

(36) Parl.Deb. 4th s, III, 883-963; The Times 8 Apr. 1892, p.9 c 2 f.

(37) Parl.Deb. op.cit. 884 f.

(38) ibid, 885-90.

(39) ibid, 910-15.

(40) ibid, 961.

(41) ibid, 905; Channing retorted by saying he was proud of it, 919.

(42) Hicks-Beach's report was ten pages long, Channing's 31 pages long.

(43) Hours 1892 Report, p.li.

(44) ibid, pp.viii, xliv f, xlix.

(45) ibid, pp. vi, xliii.

(46) ibid, pp. iv-vi.

(47) Railway Companies' Association, Minutes No.331, (1 Mar.1892) p.12 f. (Brit.Transp.Com. R.C.A. 1/2).

(48) Hours 1892 Report, p. viii.

(49) ibid, pp. vii-ix.

(50) ibid, p. lvii.

(51) ibid, p. li.

(52) ibid, p. xli f.

(53) ibid, p. l f; (my italics).

(54) ibid, pp. xxxviii ff, xliv f.

(55) ibid, p. xliv.

(56) ibid, p. l.

(57) ibid, p. li; (my italics).

(58) Channing to Gladstone, 28 May 1892 (B.M. Add.Mss 44514 f 309).

(59) R.R. 3 June, 1892, p.3.

(60) R.R. 24 June, 1892, p.4.

(61) R.R. 1 July, 1892, p.5.

(62) See above. p150

(63) The above quotation is from Durham County Advertiser 8 July, 1892, p.5 c 1; also see ibid, p.6 c 1; Durham Chronicle 1st July, 1892, p.8 c 3; ibid 8 July, 1892, p.6 c 1.

(64) R.R. 15 Aug. 1890, p.386.

(65) R.R. 17 June, 1892, p.5, for replies of both candidates.

(66) Doncaster Chronicle 8 July, 1892, p.5 c 3 f, p.7 c 5; Doncaster Gazette 15 July, 1892, p.6 c 2. Also see earlier issues, a comparison with which shows the receding importance of the Irish question.

(67) Doncaster Chronicle 15 July, 1892, p.5 c 1; Dod's Parliamentary Companion 1892, pts. i & ii.

(68) For Lough's reply to the questionnaire, R.R. 10 June, 1892, p. 5; for the election campaign, Daily Chronicle 30 June, 1892, p.6 c 4; ibid 4 July 1892, p.6 c 1. Annual Reports and Financial Statements of the A.S.R.S., which gives the list of honorary members.

(69) For the two candidates' replies, R.R. 8 July, 1892, p.6; for Shackleton's speech, Accrington Observer and Times, 2 July 1892, p.8 c 2 ff; other points mentioned, ibid p.3 c 3, p4 c5 f; ibid 9 July, 1892, p.3 c 1.

(70) For the non-committal reply, R.R. 3 June 1892, p.3; for trade union and railwaymen's support during the campaign, Daily Chronicle, 4 July, 1892, p.5 c 7; ibid 5 July 1892, p.8 c 6.

(71) Yorkshire Herald 24 June 1892, p.5 c 2 f; 25 June, 1892, p.7 c 4. 28 June 1892, p.5 c 6; 29 June 1892, p.5 c 4; 2 July, 1892, p.5 c 4.

(72) Dod's Parliamentary Companion 1892, pt.i & ii.

(73) Channing, Memories (1918) pp.115, 117.

(74) Hours 1892 Report, p.ii.

(75) See above p.157

(76) R.R. 7 Oct. 1892, p.4 f.

(77) R.R. 7 Oct. 1892, p.5 f.

(78) ibid; also see A.S.R.S., Annual Report 1892, p.5 f.

(79) Parl.Pap. 1893-94, III (Bill No.53).

(80) B.M. Add Mss 44648 f. 36; undated notes of Gladstone in his cabinet papers. From the arrangement of papers and further references to this bill the date seems to be November 1892.

(81) Parl.Pap. 1893-4, VII, 295 (Bill No.165); (compare the majority report's recommendations in p.15 above).

(82) Parl.Deb. 4th s VIII, 1972 f.

(83) A.S.R.S., E.C.Minutes, 21st-25 Feb.1892, pp. 4 f, 25 (UH).

(84) Channing's letter to R.R. 24 Mar. 1893, p.5; Parl.Pap.1893-4, XV, Proceedings of the standing Committee on trade ... p.6 f; Parl.Pap. 1893-4, VII (Bill No.265); A.S.R.S., E.C.Minutes, 16-20 May 1893, p.3 (UH).

(85) Parl.Pap. 1893-94, XV, Proceedings of the standing Committee on trade ... p.9 f.

(86) R.R. 28 Apr. 1893, p.5; A.S.R.S. E.C. Minutes, 16-20 May, 1893, p.3 (UH).

(87) Parl.Deb. 4th s, XI, 1373-80.

(88) Parl.Deb. 4th s, XV, 597.

(89) R.R. 25 May, 1894, p.5.

(90) R.R. 7 Oct. 1898, p.1.

(91) Railway Companies' Association, Minute No.341 (8 Nov.1893), pp.3-5, where part of the correspondence is given. Also see Parl.Pap. 1894, LXXV, 803, 'Report by the Board of Trade ... under the Railway Regulation Act 1893 (hereafter Hours Act Report) ... during the year ended 27 July, 1894' p.14 f.

(92) A.S.R.S., Annual Report 1894, p.2; A.S.R.S., Annual Report 1895, p.2.

(93) Parl.Pap. 1895, LXXXVI, 888, Hours Act Report ... July 1895, pp.15, 17; Parl.Pap. 1897, LXXVII, 1061, ibid ...July 1897, pp.12, 16; Parl.Pap. 1898, LXXXII, 231; ibid ...July 1898, p.5 f.

(94) Hours Act Report ...July 1895, p.25.

(95) In July 1894 he admitted the possibility of a few prosecutions but the administration of the Act convinced him of the extreme undesirability of this action; see Hours Act Report...July 1894 p.2; ibid...July 1896 p.2 (Parl.Pap. 1896, LXXIV,177) and his prefaces to all subsequent reports.

(96) Dictionary of National Biography,1941-50 (1959) p.408 ff.

(97) An account of the way the department negotiated with the Companies is in Hours Act Report... July 1894 p.4 f; also see register of letters in P.R.O., where the entries about each letter and the action taken often give an idea of this even when the letters have been destroyed (M.T.7).

(98) Hours Act Report...July 1895, p.26; the A.S.R.S. reaffirmed that the booked day should not exceed ten hours in the following October's AGM, R.R. 11 Oct. 1895, p.2.

(99) Hours Act Report...July 1895, p.26.

(100) ibid... July 1894, p.16.

(101) ibid p.11; A.S.R.S. E.C. Minutes, Sep.1894, p.2.(UH): R.R. 25 May, 1894, p.5 (speech of Pimm).

(102) R.R. 21 Feb.1896, p.5, for the speech of C.T. Ritchie, the President of the Board of Trade.

(103) The Signalmen's national movement's origins, purpose, and organisation, is dealt with, along with other movements, in the next chapter.

(104) R.R. 12 July, 1895, p.5.

(105) R.R. 1 Nov. 1895, p.4, where the editorial refers to a slackness in railway officials' efforts to follow the Board's strictures since the General Election, and an impression among some railwaymen too that the Act would not be administered properly; the editorial urged men not to heed the officials' comments.

(106) In December 1895 the Executive regretted his refusal to concede an interview, A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1895, pp.2,16, (UH).

(107) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March 1896, p.10 f (UH).

(108) A.S.R.S. Signalmen's Hours of Duty; verbatim report of an interview... with the Right Honourable Charles T.Ritchie, p.1, (UH).

(109) ibid p.11 ff; R.R. 21 Feb.1896, p.5; also see Hours Act Report...July 1895, p.26, where Hopwood had already mentioned this point in connexion with the future work of the Act.

(110) A.S.R.S., Annual Report 1896, p.8 (UH).

(111) Hours Act Report...July 1896, p.23.

(112) ibid...July 1895.

(113) A.S.R.S. Annual Report 1895, p.2; Sunter, the General Secretary of the A.S.L.E.F., had written to the Railway Companies' Association at the time of the Select Committee's inquiry, opposing state regulation; see Railway Companies' Association, Minute No.330 (27 Nov.1891) p.3 f (Brit.Transp. Com.R.C.A. 1/2).

(114) Hours Act Report...July 1895, p.25; Hours Act Report... July 1896, p.23.

(115) ibid.

(116) Hours Act Report...July 1896, p.23.

(117) The Signalmen's National movement, at its first conference, passed a resolution on this, but its programme was the National Programme, with two classes of hours for signalmen, R.R. 4 Aug. 1893, p.5.

(118) R.R. 13 Oct. 1893, p.4 f.

(119) Sheffield branch joined the Eight Hour League, R.R. 29 June, 1894, p.3; Dewsbury branch passed a resolution in its favour, R.R. 20 Sep. 1895, p.3.

(120) R.R. 26 Apr. 1895, p.4, for speech at Wigan; Northampton Daily Reporter 6 May 1895, p.4, for Harford's election campaign. This is more fully treated in the Chapter on Parliamentary Representation. For Adam Weiler's resolution, Trades Union Congress, Annual Report, 1883. p47.

(121) R.R. 4 Oct. 1895, p.5.

(123) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1895, pp.2,16 (UH).

(124) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March 1896, p.2 f, 42 (UH).

(125) See R.R. from 8 May to 12 June 1896; branch reports appear in p.2 f of each number. Only three branches opposed it, Edinburgh (R.R.5 June p.2), Caerphilly (12 June p.2) Liverpool No.2 (22 May p.2 f).

(126) West Hartlepool branch report, R.R. 15 May 1896, p.3; Halifax branch report, R.R. 12 June 1896, p.2 f.

(127) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1896, p.7(UH); R.R. 19 June 1896, p.1.

(128) R.R. 18 Sep. 1896, p.5.

Chapter VI. Harford's Challenge, 1893-97.

About the same time as the passage of the Hours of Labour Act of 1893, the railway companies were crippled financially by the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1894 which made British railway rates highly inflexible.(1) As a result the companies became increasingly opposed to wages concessions from then on, especially as the shortening of hours between 1893 and 1896(2)did add to the wages bill.(3)

Yet the membership of the A.S.R.S. continued to grow between 1893 and 1896 - especially among Signalmen and Goods Guards. Like the rapid growth of the previous four years, the slower growth in this period was part of an aggressive forward movement to raise the standard of living, for the long-term fall in prices known as the 'Great Depression' did not end until 1896. The Goods Guards were anxious to regain what they had lost in the late eighteen-seventies. The Signalmen wanted to continue the effort to increase their basic rate of payment - an effort begun in the previous decade.

The National Programme continued to exist as a basis for most demands. But, following the decision of the A.G.M. of October 1892 - which had allowed a special movement for the Southern railways(4) - the union reverted to the policy of supporting movements of one or more grades in any well-organised area. Sometimes expenses were sanctioned for agitations of a very local character, like extra pay for tunnel Signalmen at West Brompton.(5)

From the middle of 1894 the Goods Guards showed a great deal

of activity in self-organisation and agitation on the G.W.R.(6), L. & N.W.(7), Midland(8) and the M.S. & L.(9). No company would concede their main demand for a sixty-hour week with overtime at a daily rate. The G.W.R. said that the guaranteed week's pay, which the men already enjoyed, took away any justification for a higher rate of overtime.(10) In spite of these rebuffs the staying power of this grade was considerable, and by the end of 1895 it became the best organised.(11) Almost half the members of the Executive Committee were in favour of a national Goods Guards movement in September 1895, in order to bring the local movements to a successful issue.(12)

This proposal was then lost perhaps because the course of a national movement among Signalmen, started in 1893, had belied its initial expectations. This had started just after the refusal of Mundella to abolish all twelve-hour boxes by law.(13) Then the Signalmen of all London terminal stations had urged the Executive to start a national movement.(14) The Executive had agreed,(15)and the Signalmen of the N.E.R. had merged their separate movement, recently sanctioned, with the new campaign.(16)

After just over one year from its inaugural conference in Derby in July 1893(17)this movement had succeeded in recruiting more than 2,000 new members, making the total number of Signalmen in the A.S.R.S. nearly 7,000.(18) In July 1895 at its second and last conference the Committee reported that members had been too easily satisfied with concessions smaller than the national programme which had aimed at a minimum wage of 25/- and a maximum of 40/-.(19) It had failed to abolish twelve-hour boxes, or be rated at a six-day week

basis everywhere.(20)

The difficulties of communication among Signalmen were greater than among Goods Guards.(21) Uniform programmes were difficult to maintain as a basis of recruitment, in view of the different types of signal-cabins. The preponderance of non-unionists among country-side cabins,(22)and the willingness of Porters to do a Signalman's work temporarily(23)were major problems of organisation.

Yet in areas with strong trade unionism, even lower grades were organised and among them movements were started by the end of 1895. A former Executive Committeeman who had left the railway service, W.D. Dacey, spread the A.S.R.S. among the Draymen of Sheffield in November 1895, trying to bring them up to the level of wages enjoyed in Manchester, where the G.R.W.U. had already achieved some success.(24) This became the starting point of a movement that spread, in course of the following year, throughout Yorkshire and the North Midlands.(25) In course of the same year the platelayers were organised in South Wales by Richard Bell,(26)and a parallel movement took place among platelayers of the West Riding.(27)

On the N.E.R. movements among Goods Guards, Signalmen, Shunters and Platelayers had started soon after the recession of 1893 was over.(28) In spite of their failure to achieve much in the first couple of years,(29)membership steadily increased. Dacey's agitation among the Draymen gave an impetus to the organisation of the Pulleymen of the N.E.R.(30) By the end of 1896, when Harford considered the Goods Guards to be capable of a national movement,(31) the railwaymen of the N.E.R. had programmes prepared on behalf of

five grades, reaching down to Platelayers and Rulleymen.(32)

II

We left the story of Irish railway trade unionism early in 1893, when, after Foreman's death, Patrick Tevenan had taken charge. Shortly after his arrival Tevenan decided to enrol a hitherto unorganised grade - clerks and stationmasters - on the G.N.R. (Ireland), which connected Dublin and Belfast.(33) They were poorly paid in comparison with the Great Southern and Western, and Tevenan's programme aimed at bringing them up to the standards of this other railway. By the end of the year they were so well-organised that Harford, after having come down to see for himself, authorised the movement to approach the company through Tevenan.(34) When the directors refused to recognise Tevenan,(35)he turned it into a movement embracing all grades except the Locomen, and put the demand for recognition in the forefront. So strongly had loyalty to the society developed on this railway that a strike over the question of recognition seemed quite popular in the middle of March, when the Directors were prepared to meet a deputation but would not see Tevenan.(36) Arriving at the scene himself Harford advised the men not to force a strike on the issue of recognition.(37) Doubtless thankful to have avoided a strike, the Directors were prepared to let the men's deputation consult Tevenan, who sat in a neighbouring room, in course of the negotiations, although they would not admit him to the actual discussions.(38) Concessions followed in April,(39) but Tevenan used the normal fund of disappointment, which generally

follows limited concessions, to agitate for alterations, perhaps mainly to test how far the recognition issue could be solved.(40) A strike was threatened once again; in the end it was avoided when the deputation was received and told that although Tevenan could not be admitted to negotiations, the grievances of the men could be sent through him.(41) While this point had remained unresolved, nearly £15,920 was added to the annual wages bill of the company, benefitting all the grades who took part in the movement in varying degrees.(42)

The success of this movement gave a great boost to the A.S.R.S. in Ireland. By the end of the year Tevenan increased the membership substantially in the Western and South-western provinces. (Table VIII):

Table VIII

Provincial variations of trade-unionism in relation to total labour force. 1892-1896.

(Source: Census of Ireland, 1901.

A.S.R.S."Reports and Financial Statements." Handbook of Stations and Depots.)

Year	1892		1894		1896	
	Member-ship	Proportion %	Member-ship	Proportion %	Member-ship	Proportion %
Province of						
Ulster	1004	28.1	1202	33.6	916	25.6
Leinster	1079	23.6	1609	35.1	1019	22.3
Munster	314	11.3	1111	40.1	619	22.3
Connaught	97	13.8	436	60.1	359	50.9

Labour as a whole had advanced a step that year in Ireland with the formation of the Irish Trades Union Congress.(43) Tevenan took

a hand in its foundation. A year later at its second conference he was elected to its Parliamentary Committee and became Chairman of the latter body. The success of the T.U.C. in establishing itself in the course of one year, and, as it appeared to Tevenan, avoiding religious and political quarrels while labour questions were discussed, encouraged him to believe that the growth of the A.S.R.S. would be assisted further.(44) It was important for him to emphasise the 'Labour platform' because, as we have seen, the band of railwaymen in Ulster did not always see eye to eye with the nationalist railwaymen of the South.(45) Soon after his arrival Tevenan had faced "political and religious influences" against his organizing work in Londonderry, and from then on he tried to emphasise the 'labour' platform.(46) On the other hand Irish trading interests continued to use the nationalist slogan against the militancy of the labour movement, and raised the bogey of English interference in Irish prosperity during the threatened strike on the G.N.R.(47) Even among Irish railwaymen who were not organised Tevenan came across that nationalist feeling, and found it helpful to stress that all the organising Secretaries of the union in the Celtic regions were natives of those areas - Bell in Wales, Muir in Scotland, and he himself in Ireland.(48)

The increase of membership in 1894 proved to be somewhat artificial. In course of two years it had declined a great deal. (Table VIII). In 1895 the Gt. S. & W. systematically campaigned to stop its clerks and stationmasters from joining the A.S.R.S., perhaps taking the movement in the north as a sign of danger.(49) By the end

of 1896 it was clear that while railway trade unionism was now more evenly spread over Ireland as a result of Tevenan's efforts than it had been before, the membership drive in the country districts - planned in 1895(50) - had not been successful.

III

Appendix 'A' shows that at the end of 1896 the union's membership had increased by 9668 (or 29.3%) over the level attained in 1893. In spite of serious losses of 420 men in Ireland and 148 in Kent, and smaller losses in Bedfordshire, Sussex, Suffolk, and Westmorland, a sustained growth elsewhere contributed to this. Approximately 4,500 members joined in the industrial areas of the West Riding, Lancashire and Cheshire, and the Midlands. Richard Bell increased the West of England contingent by 855 and the South Welsh by 900. In Scotland J.G. Muir continued to rebuild trade unionism fairly rapidly, recruiting 1527 members in three years. The area covered by the N.E.R. remained an area of growth.

This increased membership was doubtless composed mainly of the grades whose movements we have already referred to. The union resisted pressures to define the grades eligible precisely, whether to broaden it or to narrow it down. The A.G.M. of 1894 decisively quashed an appeal by a branch for permission to recruit blacksmiths, fitters and carpenters.(51) When the Holyhead branch was found to have recruited sailors, firemen, and boilermakers in the marine department of the L. & N.W., it was brought to book.(52)

To clarify the extent of the union's aims among the permanent

staff, the Executive Committee suggested that a list of them should be written into the rules in 1896. But perhaps because the delegates at the A.G.M. thought that even a definitive list would put out of benefit some existing members, this was lost by 39 votes to 9.(53) This list is worth quoting, for it shows that by that time the aim of Harford was to make the society's membership relate to the departmental structure of the railway service. Traffic, Goods and Cartage, Permanent-way, and Locomotive, Carriage and Wagon - these were the four departments aimed at. Within each department the system of gradual promotion continued to necessitate a vertical extension:-

> "Stationmasters, Inspectors, Locomotive Foremen, Clerks, (booking, goods, telegraph, clearing house), Engine-drivers, Firemen, Cleaners, Guards of all types, Brakesmen, Porters, Shunters, Signalmen, Pointsmen, Ticket-collectors, carriage and wagon examiners, greasers, lampmen, platelayers, men engaged in signal-fitting and in the telegraph department (who were not tradesmen), and horsemen (i.e. draymen), whether engaged by railway companies directly or by agents of the companies."(54)

In spite of this fairly wide range of membership, the persistent opposition to recruiting Shopmen and Labourers stood in the way of a merger with the G.R.W.U. In 1895 local joint committees of the two societies in some London and Manchester branches discussed a merger plan.(55) These efforts culminated in a proposal at the A.G.M. of the G.R.W.U. in May asking that this society should approach the A.S.R.S. By one vote the motion was lost.(56) Next year the same

proposal came up, after similar preliminary talks,(57)but the Chairman gave his casting vote against it when there was a tie.(58) The fact that the A.S.R.S. excluded some railwaymen from its membership had generated enough heat at both Conferences to defeat the plea of the pro-merger group that at least talks were useful.

Why was the A.S.R.S. so opposed to Shopmen and labourers? The A.S.R.S. was one of the few unions which had developed a limited but actuarially sound system of friendly benefits. Its Donation Benefit was adequate for the occasional unemployment suffered by the permanent staff, but it would have been unable to stand the calls made on it by the casuals.(59) On the question of Shopmen, Harford felt that only the engineering unions knew best what programmes to draw up for them.

Besides these problems of demarcation, an unreasonable opposition of the A.S.R.S. to taking over all the officers stood in the way of a merger. The union needed more full-time officials devoted to organising.(60) In spite of these failures the history of the Draymen's movement showed that the two societies co-operated and co-ordinated tactics whenever they touched the same grades.(61)

IV

A close scrutiny of the various local programmes published in the Railway Review in these years show that the special problems of their industry made the A.S.R.S. members in the middle grades agitate not only for wages and shorter hours, but for the guaranteed week, promotion by seniority, and a higher rate of pay when doing temporary duty in a higher grade. In this all-grade union, in an

industry with a system of promotion from one grade to another, these last two demands were important means of safeguarding the skilled grades, while trying to recruit the lower grades. The union maintained its traditional opposition to the 'trip' system of piece-work, which had been introduced on the L. & N.W. in January 1895, perhaps to split the movement then going on among the brakesmen.(62) While it accepted the principle of piece-work that lay behind the classification of signal-boxes, it wished to control it in the men's interests by simplifying classification and making promotion smoother.

As membership reached down to the lower grades how did it affect the attitude to 'differentials', and to what constituted a fair wage? As trade unionism grew on the N.E.R. differences that originally existed between Guards and Signalmen on the one hand, and permanent-way men on the other hand, gradually disappeared. Table IX shows the contrast between the wages and the expectations of different grades on that railway in 1894. It also shows that while platelayers started just above the agricultural labourers' wage,(63)the person in charge - the Ganger - could earn almost as much as some of the other grades. But in 1894 the other grades had been anxious to raise their maximum to a level much higher than that of the Ganger. While the plate-layers' leaders did not mind this they complained, in 1894, that even their modest programme was unfavourably revised by the others when they met the General Manager.(64)

Table IX. N.E.R.: Grades & Programmes

(Source: Men's programmes: A.S.R.S., E.C.Minutes, June 1894 pp.14-16. ; ibid Aug.1893, p.10.
Actual Wages: N.E.R., "Arbitration, 1897", pp. 387f, 469, 679, 879.

Grade	Goods Guards	Signalmen	Gangers	Platelayers
Demands	28/-..1/-..35/-	25/-..1/-..40/-	Normal 29/-	Normal 22/-..27/-
			New-castle 30/-	New-castle 22/-..28/-
			Country 28/-	Country 22/-..26/-
Actual Wages	26/-.....30/-	21/-.....28/-	19/-...28/6	17/-.....23/-

Two years later the position was different. So far as wages were concerned, Goods Guards wanted only a flat rate advance of 2/-,(65)and the Platelayers asked for a flat rate advance of 3/- to all men paid below 21/-, and an advance of 2/- to others in their department.(66) In these ways the tendency to narrow differentials - which had been a characteristic of the N.U.R. - developed in the areas where the A.S.R.S. had gained a foothold.

As a fair wage Signalmen felt that 25/- was the least they could accept for a decent standard of living. Although everywhere a majority of this grade earned below 25/- (Table X), the appeal of that figure as the minimum wage was so strong that the first conference of the Signalman's movement rejected making 21/- the starting wage.(67) It was a sign of the higher subjective standards set by this trained class of people on the value of their work.

Table X

SIGNALMEN'S WAGES, 1893.

(Source: Wages: General Report, Parl.Pap.1893-4, LXXXIII, part ii)

Proportion -	Under 20/-	20/-...25/-	Above 25/-
G.N.R. & G.E.R.	29.7%	56.3%	14%
N.E.R., L. & Y. M.S. & L.	12.3%	65.7%	22.0%
L. & N.W., Midland	9.4%	56.3%	34.3%

The primary aim of the Draymen's movement was to eliminate the small proportion earning below 20/-, establish uniformity of conditions in Lancashire and Yorkshire, and establish shorter hours of work.(68)

Table XI. DRAYMEN: Demands & Wages

(Source: Demands: A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1896, p.12f.
Actual Wages: Parl.Pap. 1893-4, LXXXIII, part ii.)

Demands	One horse man		21/-.....25/-
	Two horse man		23/-.....27/-
Actual Wages in N.E.R., L.& Y., M.S. & L., and Hull & Barnsley	Proportion below 20/-		8.6%
	" between	20/-...25/-	88.1%
	" above	25/-	3.3%

The more ambitious idea of a 'living wage' was evident from the contrast between platelayers' actual conditions in South Wales and the West Riding, and the demands put forward on their behalf. (Table XII). Even Edward Harford began to use that phrase, although it was easier for him to justify the wage demands on the ground that

the platelayer was a skilled artisan.(69)

Table XII

PLATELAYERS. Demands and Wages

(Source: Demands: R.R. 10 July 1896, p.3.
Actual Wages: Parl. Pap.,1893-4, LXXXIII, part ii.)

DEMANDS		Actual Wages on		
			G.W.R. & T.U.R.	N.E.R. & L. & Y.etc.
Ganger	30/-			
Sub-Ganger	27/-			
Plate-layer	22/-...25/-	Below 20/-	77%	66.8%
		20/-..25/-	20.9%	32%
		Above 25/-	2.1%	1.2%

V

As the movements multiplied and occasionally came perilously close to a strike,(70)the procedure for the initiation and control of movements had to be very clearly defined. Since the alterations made after the Midland strike of 1887 no general rules had been drawn up, although a large number of ad hoc decisions had been taken by successive Executive Committees. Not until June 1896 were any final steps taken in framing rules.(71) But the new rules had to take into account the interesting variety of ways in which the movements had developed in the past three years. The most striking feature of these ways was the initiative taken by ordinary members through their local organisations.(72)

Despite the attempt of the Executive Committee to 'clip the wings' of the local district councils(73)they were often the centre of plans and programmes, especially on the N.E.R.(74) Informal meetings called by prominent members or by a leading branch often started movements.(75) Programmes were usually drawn up by a delegate meeting of the members belonging to the grade concerned, covering all or only a few sections of a railway.(76) A committee, elected from the delegate conference, used to take charge of the agitation. The functions of such committees varied from mere administration of a programme to reformation of the programme, without recall of the delegate conference.(77)

The organising secretaries did not normally come to these conferences. They had to attend inquests, inspect branch accounts, and, in the remaining interval of time attend to areas that were weak.(78) There were not many of them either; only three officers in England and Wales catered for a membership that increased, between 1893 and 1896, from 28,366 to 37,927. Harford himself had not much time to attend to each movement that was sanctioned by the Executive Committee. Consequently it was not until the men contemplated a strike that he was called upon to come. He would continue to advise keeping powder dry until organisation was fool-proof, and then to use the threat of a strike as a strategic weapon.(79)

Harford's policy of enlisting rank-and-file members' help in building up the Society had thus led to a stage where their influence was felt at all levels of policy formulation, including Annual Conferences and Executive Committee meetings. Perhaps because the

tradition of economising management expenses still survived, no proposal was made to increase the number of organising secretaries. Instead, a rank-and-file movement for a federal structure of government was led by W.D. Dacey - organiser of the Draymen's movement - for one year.(80)

It proposed to divide the society into thirteen districts. By conferring on each district committee the executive power over all local movements and over an organising secretary when he was in its area, the scheme went a long way in undermining the General Secretary's authority. Fortunately for centralised discipline, veteran leaders like George Green killed it with ridicule. The A.G.M. of 1895 had asked the Executive Committee to draft a scheme, which cast the districts in an important role, and it was left to George Green to produce a plan. He produced one so cumbrous as to make it look ridiculous.(81) Although nothing came of Dacey's scheme, its temporary popularity with people like James Holmes(82)was an indication that many rank-and-file activists were chafing at Harford's Fabian strategy.

Meanwhile Harford had not been idle. Before the District scheme was formally buried at the A.G.M. of 1896, he had drafted, in the summer of 1896, a fresh set of rules governing movements.(83) These increased his powers of guidance and control over them, while taking into account institutions like the delegate meeting and the local grade Committees. It enabled him to have an ear close to the ground, and enabled local activists to make realistic assessments of their strength. While precautions were taken against hasty strikes,

strikes remained, as they had been since 1887, subject to the discretion of the centre, without the necessity of a ballot.

These rules brought some order into this sphere of the union's activities. But one basic problem could not be solved by rules. As long as the companies did not accept any form of collective bargaining, the leader of this national union was liable to be caught between two fires - the impatience of the rank-and-file of any district to wait until they were better organised and the arrogant refusal of a company to give concessions. The only power he had was the power to withhold the Protection Fund, but as branches continued to administer the suspension and benevolent funds, it gave them a feeling of independence. Nor could these rules cope with lightning strikes that were symptoms mainly of grievances against management and discipline.

VI

Meanwhile, from the beginning of 1896 Union leaders were feeling their way to the aim of getting a national standard rate for the Goods Guards who had become very well-organised and whom the companies could not easily replace. While the branches were being questioned on starting a national Goods Guards' movement,(84)the Railway Review gave the seal of official approval to the view that a national movement in the interests of a well-organised grade was not inconsistent with the all-grade character of the union. The aim of such a movement would be to standardise the principal demands so that companies could no longer confound a deputation by citing worse conditions elsewhere. Variations in details to suit each company could be allowed

within the basic framework of a minimum wage, a guaranteed week's pay, a ten-hour day, and a six-day week.(85)

In June the Executive Committee made plans to merge all Goods Guards' movements at a conference,(86)which took place on 17th November. Shunters were made part of this movement, as they constituted the grade from which Guards were drawn.(87) Rank-and-file pressure from the Draymen of the Northern Districts made the Executive grant a conference for them as well,(88)which took place on 1st November.(89) Harford was not sure how far they were ready for a strike, but he had high hopes of a successful outcome of a Goods Guards' strike.(90) The manifest calling the Goods Guards' national conference had contained, in the midst of arguments in favour of a national standard rate, this passage:

> "So far as your duties are concerned, it does not fall to the lot of every man to understand them .... it would not be so easy to fill your places as some people imagine."(91)

On the day after the Goods Guards' Conference, the Signalmen's national committee joined in with its three-year old programme, doubtless feeling more confident than before.(92) Harford sent circulars, on behalf of all these four grades, to the various companies, enclosing the names of the seven-member deputation who were to discuss them with their respective officials or directors, asking for a reply by 8th December.(93)

This was not the beginning of an all-grades movement. Harford felt that the Goods Guards were so well-organised that they should not wait for every other grade,(94)and the Executive Committee had

ignored requests for a national conference of platelayers.(95) But the Welsh organising secretary, Richard Bell, was very enthusiastic about an "all-grades" movement. He declared that this had "long been my ideal", and managed to persuade the Swansea branch and two other branches to place it before the Executive Committee.(96) In December the Committee declared it to be a good idea, in view of recent trends, but said that the time was not ripe.(97)

As Harford left no personal papers, it is difficult to say whether, in the summer of 1896, he had drawn up the rules on movements mainly with a view to conducting the Goods Guards and Shunters national movement, for which preparations had been going on throughout that year. The rules were, however, meant to apply to all movements on all occasions, and their primary aim was probably to introduce internal self-discipline.

It is doubtful whether recognition of the Union was thought of as the principal aim of the National Goods Guards' movement in November 1896. No mention of this in the Executive Committee minutes of September and December and our general knowledge of Harford's character suggests that he was too shrewd a warrior to thrust himself forward until the Companies got used to the idea of collective bargaining. In May 1895, during a bitter dispute on the Taff Vale Railway over the interpretation of the agreement of 1890, Harford had stood in the wings, letting the negotiations be conducted by the local Committee, and declaring that he would come into the picture only if there was a strike.(98) This was as clear a hint as possible to Ammon Beasley the Taff Vale Company General Manager that conceding

the men's claims or recognition would prevent unnecessary trouble.

The aim of the national grade movements can best be described as the fostering of collective bargaining, and recognition by the backdoor. If the companies agreed to meet an A.S.R.S.-sponsored deputation it would have begun to end the unorganised ways in which terms of service were issued by many companies. By raising the status of well-known union-members within a company it would have contributed towards an eventual recognition of the union itself.

The events of the critical thirteen months which followed showed that it was going to be a difficult task to co-ordinate the work of all grade committees, and make all of them understand the tactical or strategic changes introduced by Harford. A great deal depended on the guidance of Harford and Walter Hudson, since the thirteen Executive Committee members of 1897 contained eight people with no previous experience as a committee member, and six with no experience even as a delegate to the A.G.M.

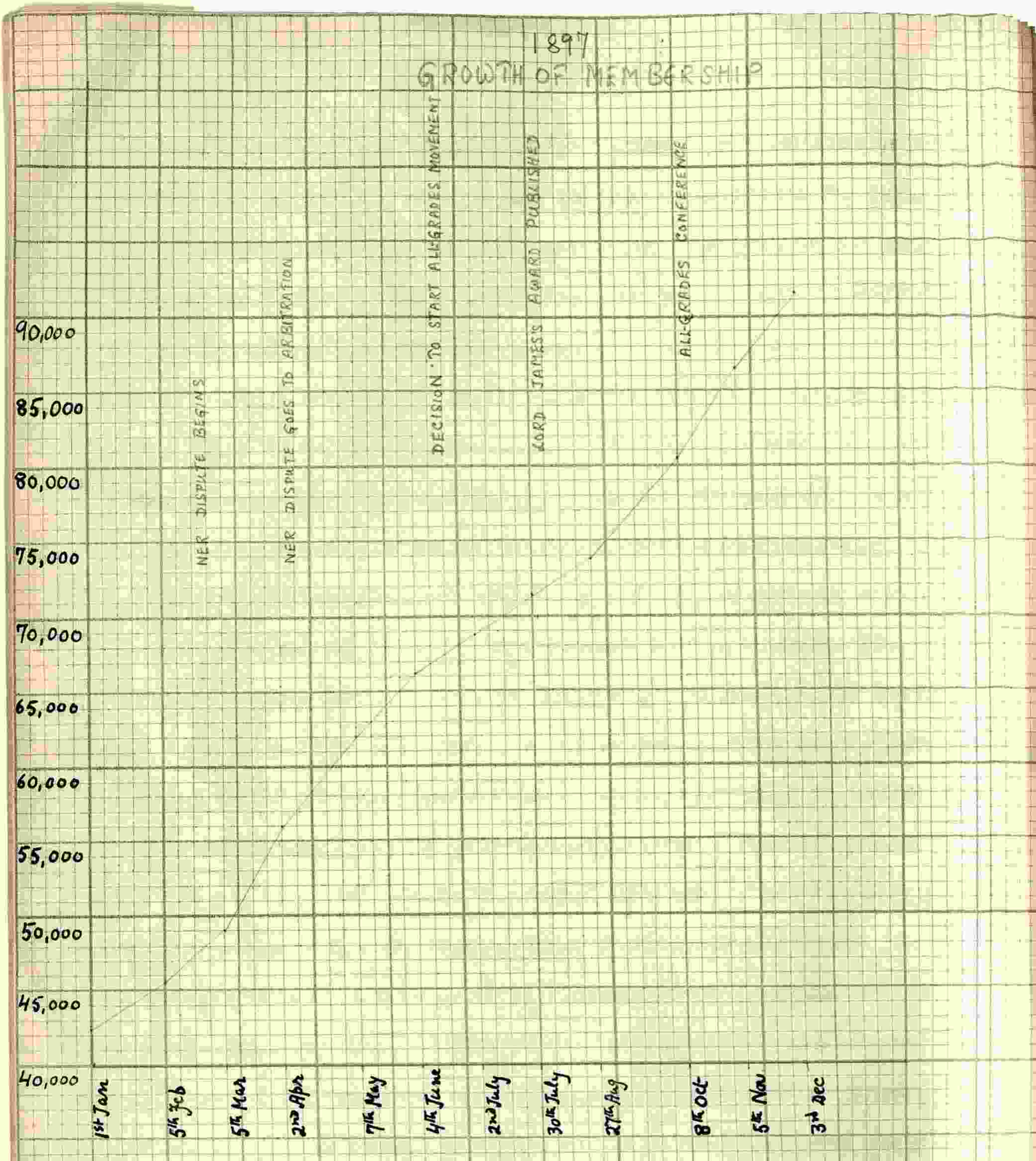
Meanwhile the Companies had become apprehensive about a Goods Guards' strike before Christmas.(99) At a meeting of the General Managers of the various companies on 2nd December 1896 Harford's circulars were discussed, and it was generally decided to ignore them. They were interpreted as a plea for recognition. Almost unanimous agreement was reached on the need to present "a bold front ... to the interference of the Society", and to deal directly with each company's own employees "without the intervention of any third parties". Only the manager of the North-Eastern railway was willing to meet any group of his men, even if their names had been sent by the A.S.R.S.(100)

On the same day as this meeting the L. & N.W. summarily dismissed the seven Goods Guards and Shunters named in Harford's circular. One of them had been sufficiently unwise to give an affirmative reply to his superintendent's inquiry whether, in the event of a strike, he would join the strikers.(101) His dismissal was followed by many more - the total number eventually was as high as 85.(102)

Electrified by the news, the A.S.R.S. Executive sent all organising Secretaries to the area to build up morale.(103) It enlisted the support of the Liberal press in its characterisation of the dismissals as an attack on labour's right to combine.(104) The threat of a sympathetic strike was kept very much in the air.(105) Possibly because the L. & N.W. was at that time trying, with difficulty, to keep its clause on contracting-out in the Conservative Government's Workmen's Compensation Bill, it was amenable to pressure.(106) C.T. Ritchie, President of the Board of Trade, privately urged the Company on 8th December that reinstatement of the men was "an imperative necessity."(107) Maddison succeeded, through A.J. Mundella, to make some Directors of the railway become critical of the General Manager's action.(108) In spite of the efforts of the Company to treat the matter without any reference to the A.S.R.S., Harford had to be brought into the picture. While the Company, in its public statement on the 10th December, was prepared only to listen individually to the dismissed men, at the Board of Trade if they so wished,(109)the General Manager was persuaded by Ritchie(110) to settle the matter speedily the very next day, incourse of separate

1897

GROWTH OF MEMBERSHIP



Membership at end of 1896 : 42,662

The exodus of many new recruits after the collapse of the threatened strike (p 232) and before the branches prepared their annual statement accounts for the discrepancy between the total membership as given in p 240 and the total indicates here

Source: Weekly reports in R.R.

Scale: Horizontal: 1" = 10 weeks.
Vertical 1" = 10,000 members

talks between Harford and Ritchie and Harford and Harrison.(111) The terms of settlement were the Company's willingness to reinstate the men, to receive the men's memorial and to discuss it with the deputation if they could not agree to it, and a guarantee by both sides not to take any hostile action pending negotiations over the men's demands.

This outcome of a week's dramatic events made the A.S.R.S. very popular in the eyes of unorganised railwaymen. Harford, who was warmly congratulated by branches,(112)noted with satisfaction the rapid rise in membership(113) - a growth maintained throughout next year.(114) Since the L. & N.W. had agreed, in the third clause of the terms of settlement, to consider the men's programme, and, if necessary, meet their representatives, the prospects of the immediate aims of the National movements seemed bright.

The anti-Trade Union journal of the Shipping Federation - Fairplay - declared peesimistically,

> "Anything more contemptible than the ignominious surrender of the London & North-Western Railway Company to Mr. Harford has not been witnessed in our generation ... The wealthiest company in England has collapsed like a house of cards at a blast from Mr. Harford's tin trumpet."

It ended on the gloomy note that in about twelve month's time Harford would probably have achieved recognition.(115)

With the L. & N.W., the A.S.R.S. did not succeed much further. The company did not meet the A.S.R.S.-sponsored deputation, to the annoyance of its members.(116) It told district superintendents to

tell members of the Draymen's deputation individually what concessions the Company was prepared to give.(117) On receiving Harford's complaint that the third clause of the settlement was not being observed, the Board of Trade sent Francis Hopwood to see the General Manager. The latter replied that the Company was considering individual applications - a point that satisfied that department.(118) The A.S.R.S. sent an angry resolution, calling this a subterfuge on the part of the Company.(119) In a memorandum for his superior, Hopwood enclosed this with a press cutting giving details of concessions given to its Draymen by the L. & N.W. and wrote,

> "It appears from this cutting that the L. & N.W. is making concessions in its own way and I suggest we should let matters rest."

This was endorsed by Sir Courtenay Boyle, and by C.T. Ritchie.(120) However helpful the Board might be to the A.S.R.S. in administering the Hours of Labour Act, it was not willing to assist the union in winning recognition, even of an indirect nature.

VII

In the same month as Hopwood wrote this minute, the outcome of an all-grades movement on the N.E.R., which had been part of the National movements but had gone beyond it, attained a far-reaching significance. At first, however, it only seemed to add to Harford's problems.

The reply of George Gibb, the General Manager of the N.E.R., had made clear, albeit courteously, that not only were the demands

extravagant, but they represented the wishes only of "those of our men who are members of your Society."(121) Although he met a deputation led by Walter Hudson, he postponed his reply until he had elicited the views of those not in the A.S.R.S.(122) During January, to the annoyance of the Railway Review, he was going "solemnly through the farce of meeting those deputations of non-unionists."(123)

The concessions coming at the end of the month were limited, apart from minor local wages concessions, to special payment for Sunday work for Goods Guards and Signalmen.(124) The A.S.R.S. members were so incensed that Walter Hudson threatened to take "practical measures."(125)

In the general state of unrest an entirely localised dispute affecting a small number of men became a focus of everybody's grievances. The goods warehousemen of Newcastle had received nothing in the recent concessions. As a result of rearrangements of work some of them became apprehensive of their hours being lengthened instead.(126) The dismissal of seven rulleymen because they disobeyed the call to come to work very early one Saturday morning was construed by the men in the Goods Department as a trick to lengthen hours generally, and, as a result, a sympathetic strike spread over the whole department at Newcastle on 20th February. Then the Company's officials realised that negotiations with Harford would perhaps solve the present crisis, but they did not state definitely whether these negotiations would cover terms of service. On the other hand J.R. Bell, a branch secretary at Newcastle, was persuaded to support the general demand to extend the strike and stay out until the

programmes were conceded.(127)

Harford was displeased that an unauthorised strike had put a spanner in the works of his national movements, and he sent two organising secretaries to the area, arriving himself on 24th February(128) In the meantime critical remarks about the strike given to a press reporter on the 22nd became known to the Northerners on the following day.(129) On the 23rd the Directors of the Company repeated their offer of reinstatement, but decided also to sue those who had broken their contract.(130) A letter sent by Gibb to J.R. Bell referred to the opposition of "responsible advocates of the Amalgamated Society" to "strikes without notice".(131) The effects of these measures, in the background of Harford's press statement,was to embitter the men and make them suspicious of Harford.

When Harford arrived at the scene he had the very difficult task of both allaying the Newcastle men's suspicion, and at the same time bringing the dispute speedily to an end, as he felt that with public opinion against them, it could only lead to "calamitous defeat."(132)

To Harford the Company was at once prepared to offer a full discussion of the grievances of the warehousemen, and the reinstatement of the seven rulleymen.(133) He was agreeable, but the local committee was not, considering it "a diplomatic move to get the men back to work", while they had no assurance of concessions relating to the main programme.(134) At a meeting on 26th February between Gibb and the local Committee led by Harford, Gibb went further in being willing to discuss any programme at a meeting with the Directors in a fortnight's time, in the presence of Harford. But the local committee

was too suspicious to see the diplomatic possibilities of winning recognition implicit in this offer. They wanted, firstly, a clear affirmation of recognition before a return to work, and secondly - an entirely new demand - the reinstatement of casuals who had struck in sympathy. Ignoring their opposition Harford signed a term of settlement which was essentially the same - except on the question of casuals - but more tactfully worded. While the men went back to work on 1st March, Harford planned to have strike notices ready, with the date left blank, in anticipation of the meeting with the Directors on the 12th.(135) As failing health made him return to London, he was unaware of the strong desire of the Newcastle men to make the reinstatement of casuals so important as to jeopardise the discussion of the all-grades programme. At all events, at the conference on the 12th he passed over the matter and went ahead to discuss the main programme, annoying some Newcastle militants.(136) His Executive approved his action and promised strike pay to the casuals.(137)

On the main programme the Chairman of the N.E.R., Sir Joseph Pease commented that it was "very large, probably larger than some of them thought". Asking for time to consider them in detail, he eventually fixed another meeting within a fortnight.(138) The fortnight gave the union a breathing space to reorganise the movement according to the Society's rules, i.e. offer arbitration at the next meeting, and, if rejected, summon a special Executive meeting.(139) Reports in the Railway Review show that rising membership, the work of local activists, and Richard Bell's organising work, kept the threat of a successful strike very much alive.

The Company became convinced of the need to avoid a strike. A few days before 26th March Pease announced to a special meeting of the Railway Companies' Association that even though the Shareholders might well support a firm stand, it was not worth the trouble. His Board had decided on arbitration. All the others present were against this, but failed to persuade Pease or Gibb even in course of informal talks after the meeting.(140)

At the next meeting of the Directors on the 29th, the N.E.R. confirmed the decision to go to arbitration, and next day explained their point of view to Harford's deputation.(141) Their statement offered arbitration as "the only solution" regarding wages and hours, because the Directors themselves could not agree to any more concessions, on the top of those given recently. The Locomen's demand for an eight-hour day was excluded from arbitration. Questions of management and discipline were also excluded.

While the A.S.R.S. had thus not been able to make their programme the basis of negotiations, the threat of a well-organised strike had made it push one of the leading companies to defy the wishes of the others and go to an outside arbitrator. The distinguished record of Sir Joseph Pease and David Dale in Conciliation and Arbitration in the iron and coal trade of the north, doubtless helped in the conversion of the Company. But the men's organisation was the main factor, for in 1890 a similar request had been turned down, despite David Dale's sympathies.(142)

Although on 30th March the meeting had adjourned to let the A.S.R.S. consider if they would accept the exclusion of the eight-

hour demand of Locomen, that day's proceedings had been a victory for Harford. Next day brought his downfall. He appeared at the Board Room under the influence of drink; after the first brief session he was unfit for any more work.(143) The men, excited and uncertain, could not agree to the Company's offer "on their own responsibility" after retiring twice for consultations.(144) Richard Bell persuaded them on the 5th April to accept the Company's suggestion. Lord James of Hereford was chosen as umpire.(145)

We have described the events in the North up to April in some detail, because they illustrated both the advantages as well as the drawbacks of the type of organisation which Harford had built up since the crisis of 1879-80. The policy of building up the Society with the help of part-time activity of local leaders had led, over the years, to a remarkable growth of trade unionism among the homogeneous working population of the highly industrialised area around the Tyne and the Tees. In Newcastle itself it had been also characterised by exceptional inter-grade solidarity. As this policy had not been accompanied by an increase in the number of full-time officials who could co-ordinate local tactics with national strategy, a hiatus could easily develop, and did develop, between the General Secretary's plans and the aspirations of the local railwaymen. Unity among all grades was essential to the A.S.R.S. for its industrial aims. Yet, on this occasion the sense of solidarity with the casuals had stood in the way of Harford's far-sighted aims. Both the leader and the rank-and-file had essentially the same end in view, but during the excitement and heat generated by a sudden

railway strike, this simple fact was obscured. Too much drink on one fateful day killed any chance Harford might have had of re-establishing his leadership in the area which he himself had first brought permanently within the fold of the A.S.R.S.(146) In simply reproducing the charges of the N.E. men against Harford, Alcock had done far less than justice to the veteran Secretary's conduct.

But immediately after 31st March nobody could look at him in perspective. His real aim - securing recognition on a permanent basis - was not yet certain. In all its minutes of interviews with Harford the Company had so far described him as representing the A.S.R.S. members among the N.E. Railwaymen only.(147) During the arbitration proceedings Gibb at first stressed this phraseology and questioned how many men Richard Bell represented.(148) Harford's inability to be a spokesman in the concluding stages of fixing the details undid some of the advantages gained earlier.

To the militants the lasting impression was one of victory through their own unaided efforts since the unofficial strike in February - a victory circumscribed at the last moment only by Harford. As a result the tradition of local initiative among N.E.R. members' committees were strengthened, especially at Newcastle.

VIII

The Arbitration proceedings began in May, and the award was published in August. Gibb did not persist in his initial attempt to question the representative character of the A.S.R.S. after Bell had produced figures.(149) Otherwise, the proceedings are remarkable

mainly for the light they shed on the demands of the A.S.R.S. - promotion by seniority, the guaranteed week's pay, higher rate for night duty, and overtime at a daily rate.

Gibb complained that in the A.S.R.S. locomen's demands they introduced the "entirely new principle" of making "increase of the wage .... dependent solely on the length of service" and not on the classification of the train.(150) While this egalitarian demand was affirmed by Bell, "classification" remained unchallenged throughout the union's subsequent history as the basis of wages settlements - either on the N.E.R. or elsewhere.

The N.E.R. did not have a guaranteed week's pay for any grade, although all railwaymen were prohibited from carrying on spare-time trades. The heavy fluctuation of mineral traffic was its main reason; the maintenance of discipline by giving no excuse to shirk work another. In spite of the willingness of the A.S.R.S. to suspend the guarantee during a bad depression - as was written into the Welsh agreement of 1890 - Lord James did not award this.(151)

For the first time a higher rate of night duty had appeared in A.S.R.S. programmes. As there was a tradition of this payment not only among all skilled workers in this region,(152)but among some railway goods staff since 1889,(153)the union pressed this point for two grades. But Lord James did not award it to anyone.

The controversial but important demand of "each day by itself" was now frankly acknowledged to be a dodge to earn more overtime.(154) In spite of the Company's opposition Lord James gave it to Locomen, Goods Guards, Permanent-way men, Porters, and Rulleymen.(155) For

some strange reason, men looking after passenger staff, overtime remained at the weekly rate.

The award as a whole benefited the Locomen, Good Guards, and - to a lesser extent - Signalmen. Twelve-hour boxes could not be abolished, although a great many were transferred into the ten-hour class. Other grades were not totally neglected. While higher rates of overtime and Sunday work were given, wage increases were rare. Nevertheless Lord James's award was a historic step in the evolution of railway labour relations.

Appendix "A"

Growth of Membership, 1893-1896.

(National totals with a selection of Counties.)

	1893	1896	Increase or Decrease
United Kingdom	32,994	42,662	+ 29.3%
Scotland	1,315	2,842	+116.1%
Ireland	3,313	2,893	- 12.6%
England & Wales	28,366	36,927	+ 30.1%
South Wales & Mon.	3,089	3,979	+ 28.8%
North Wales	188	219	
Cheshire	605	1,008	+ 66.6%
Cornwall	-	49	
Derbyshire	506	851	
Devonshire	37	212	
Dorsetshire	13	11	
Durham	2,797	2,878	+ 2.9%
Essex	46	75	
Kent	636	488	
Lancashire	4,052	4,854	+ 19.7%
Leicestershire	417	659	+ 58.2%
Lincolnshire	304	613	
London & Middlesex	3,464	3,868	+ 11.6%
Northamptonshire	470	769	+ 63.6%
Northumberland	1,356	1,512	+ 11.5%
Nottinghamshire	629	862	+ 37%
Staffordshire	705	859	
Suffolk	42	35	
Sussex	402	385	
Warwickshire	481	755	+ 63.1%
Westmorland	89	72	
Yorkshire, E.Riding	797	1,125	+ 41.1%
Yorkshire, N.Riding	737	997	
Yorkshire, W.Riding	3,842	5,949	+ 54.8%
YORK City	220	336	

NOTES

(1) C.I.Savage, An Economic History of Transport. (London, 1959), p.74.

(2) See above p.162ff

(3) Half-yearly reports in 1895 contained a chorus of complaints on this.

(4) R.R. 7 Oct., 1892, p.6.

(5) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1894, p.6.

(6) Reports begin to appear from R.R. 8 Feb. 1895, p.6.

(7) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1894, p.16.

(8) R.R. 19 Oct. 1894, p.5, and many subsequent issues.

(9) R.R. 18 Jan. 1895, p.5.

(10) G.W.Railway, Traffic Committee Minutes No.4, p.253.

(11) R.R. 29 Nov. 1895, p.4.

(12) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1895, p.30.

(13) See above p.161

(14) R.R. 12 May, 1893, p.5.

(15) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May 1893, p.19f.

(16) R.R. 2 June, 1893, p.5. The N.E. movement of Signalmen had been sanctioned in February. (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1893, p.32)

(17) R.R. 4 Aug. 1893, p.5f. for a report of the Conference.

(18) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1894, p.16f. ; A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1894, p4f.

(19) For the second conference see A.S.R.S., "Report of the ... National Conference of Signalmen ... Birmingham ... July 9th, 1895," p.2; R.R. 12 July, 1895, p.4f. For the original programme, see A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Aug.1893, p.10.

(20) An editorial in the R.R. suggested they should abandon the wages question and concentrate on these two items (R.R. 29 Mar. 1895, p.4).

(21) cf. Speech of W.K. Shaw, an organiser of N.E. Signalmen. R.R. 10 Aug. 1894, p.5.

(22) cf. Speech of Stratford delegate R.R. 4 Aug. 1893, p.5.; also see the splinter movement in Herefordshire R.R. 2nd Oct. 1896, pp.2,5.

(23) The agitation of the A.S.R.S. against the Signal-porter grade was a form of restrictive practice. On this see Dobson's reports, R.R. 28 Aug. 1896, p.3.; R.R. 19 Oct., 1894, p.3.

(24) R.R. 3 Nov. 1895, p.1., and subsequent issues. For the strength of the G.R.W.U. in Manchester see Andrew Clark's speech in R.R. 27 Dec. 1895, p.1.

(25) Successive issues of R.R. 1896 carry reports.

(26) R.R. 17 July 1896, p.3.; many subsequent issues, especially R.R. 20 Nov. 1896, p.5.

(27) R.R. 10 July, 1896, p.3.

(28) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March, 1894, pp.21,43.; Successive issues of R.R. 1894 from January

(29) Organising Secretary Alfred Mear reported inactivity. R.R. 29 Mar. 1895, p.3.

(30) R.R. 6 Nov. 1896, p.1.

(31) See below p.196f

(32) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1896, p.15f; R.R. 27 Nov. 1896, p.1.

(33) R.R. 9 June, 1893, p.5., and subsequent issue.

(34) R.R. 15 Dec. 1893, p.1.

(35) R.R. 9 Feb, 1894, p.5.

(36) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1894, p.12.

(37) R.R. 16 Mar. 1894, p.5.

(38) R.R. 23 Mar. 1894, p.5. ; R.R. 6 Apr. 1894, p.5.

(39) R.R. 20 Apr. 1894, p.5.

(40) See reports from R.R. 27 Apr. 1895 to 25 May 1895.

(41) R.R. 25 May, 1894, p.1.

(42) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1894, p.11f.

(43) W.P. Ryan, The Irish Labour Movement. (Dublin 1919) p.141.

(44) R.R. 14 June, 1895, p.1.

(45) See above. p115

(46) R.R. 12 May 1893, p.4.

(47) R.R. 25 May 1894, p.1. quotes from the Dublin Daily Express.

(48) Speech at Dundalk, R.R. 22 Feb. 1895, p.5.

(49) R.R. 15 Mar. 1895, p.3.; R.R. 31 May, 1895, p.5.

(50) R.R. 14 June, 1895, p.3.

(51) R.R. 12 Oct. 1894, p.4. The branch had appealed against a decision of the Executive.

(52) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1895, pp.4,32.

(53) R.R. 9 Oct. 1896, p.3.

(54) A.S.R.S. 'Proposed Alterations to Rules, 1896.'

(55) R.R. 22 Feb. 1895, p.3.; R.R. 15 Mar. 1895, p.3.; R.R. 19 Apr. 1895, p.5.

(56) R.R. 24 May, 1895, p.5.

(57) R.R. 7 Feb. 1896, p.4.; R.R. 21 Feb. 1896, p.1.

(58) R.R. 22 May, 1896, p.3.

(59) See letter of Charles Bradshaw, R.R. 10 July, 1896, p.6.; Also see letters in R.R. 28 Feb. 1896, p.3.; R.R. 6 Mar. 1896, p.1.

(60) See letter in R.R. 28th Feb. 1896, p.3.

(61) See R.R. 22 Nov. 1895, p.3.

(62) R.R. 25 Jan. 1895, p.4.

(63) N.E.R. - 'Arbitration, 1897'; minutes of evidence p.1214 ff.

(64) R.R. 25 May, 1894, p.7. letter from J.Smyth; also see ibid, p.2. Newcastle No.1 branch report.

(65) N.E.R. Arbitration 1897, p.466.

(66) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1896, p.14; R.R. 27 Nov. 1896, p.1. In the interests of Gangers paid below 26/- they let them ask for 3/- instead of 2/-.

(67) R.R. 4 Aug. 1893, p.5.

(68) The irregular hours of leaving work on Saturdays was a main grievance, as also the non-payment of stable duty on Sundays. (R.R. 15 Nov. 1895, p.1.)

(69) See the very revealing speech of Harford in R.R. 24 Jan.1896, p.5.

(70) A strike had seemed likely among the Draymen in Sheffield, in December 1895. R.R. 27 Dec. 1895, p.1.

(71) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1896, p.29. (U.H.)

(72) The following account is based on a close scrutiny of the reports in the R.R. between 1893 and 1896.

(73) See above. p129

(74) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March 1894, p.21. The N.E.R. programme came from the Northern District Councils.

(75) W.D. Dacey provides an example of a leading member's role. See also Brighton branch R.R. 19 Oct. 1894, p.5.

(76) See N.E.R. Signalmen's weakness in the Southern section. R.R. 14 Apr. 1893, p.6. R.R. 2 June, 1893, p.5.

(77) cf. Midland Goods Guards, R.R. 23 Aug. 1895, p.5.

(78) Organising Secretaries' reports were published every week in R.R. usually in p.3.

(79) See speeches in R.R. 9 Nov. 1894, p.5.; R.R. 17 May 1895, p.5., R.R. 27 Dec. 1895, p.1.; R.R. 10 Jan. 1896, p.1.

(80) For the text of the scheme, see R.R. 3 May, 1895, p.5;For a slightly revised version, R.R. 21st June 1895, p.3.

(81) On this see R.R. 11 Oct. 1895, p.2.; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1896, p.26; R.R. 12 June 1896, p.6. See also Dacey's account in R.R. 8 July 1898, p.5.

(82) See Holmes' speech at the A.G.M., R.R. 9 Oct. 1896, p.3.

(83) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1896, p.29; ibid, Sep. 1896, p.20ff.

(84) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1896, pp.10f, 26. Harford reported that this was being done.

(85) R.R. 28 Feb. 1896, p.4.

(86) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1896, p.31.

(87) R.R. 27 Nov. 1896, p.1; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1896, p.14.

(88) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep. 1896, p.20.

(89) R.R. 6 Nov. 1896, p.1.

(90) ibid.

(91) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1896, p.13.

(92) ibid, p.14f.

(93) R.R. 27 Nov. 1896, p.1.

(94) Speech at King's Cross, R.R. 13 Nov. 1896, p.5.

(95) Requests had come throughout 1896. See R.R. 21 Feb. 1896, p.1.; ibid 10 July 1896, p.3; etc.

(96) See R.R. 13 Nov. 1896, p.3., for R. Bell's report, and Swansea branch report; also see R.R. 27 Nov. 1896, p.3. for Quaker's Yard and Peterborough.

(97) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1896, p.33.

(98) See R.R. for May 1895. For Harford's tactics see also South Wales Daily News, 25 May, 1895, p.6.

(99) Rumours had to be denied by the R.R. 6 Nov. 1896, p.1.

(100) M.S. & L.Railway, 'Proceedings of Board of Directors, No.30', par.16920; confirmed in L. & Y. Railway, "Minutes of Meetings of Committees, 22nd Sep. 1896 to 9th Feb. 1897" p.379f. (Brit. Transp. Com.)

(101) R.R. 11 Dec. 1896, p.5 gives a vivid description.

(102) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March 1897, p.6.

(103) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1896, p.34f.

(104) Manchester Guardian, 9 Dec. 1896, p.5.; also see Daily Telegraph, 10 Dec. 1896, p.6 for a statement of Harford.

(105) See R.R. for 11th and 18th December.

(106) Manchester Guardian 9 Dec. 1896, p.5., London Correspondent's report.

(107) The Times, 12 Dec.1896. This news item is pasted in the relevant file of the Board of Trade, and so can be considered as authentic (P.R.O. M.T.6/978, file 17164 of 1896); also see R.R. 18 Dec. 1896, p.5.

(108) Alcock, op.cit. p.286.

(109) L. & N.W. Railway, "Board Minutes, vol.16." par.14849.

(110) Harrison, the General Manager, called on Ritchie unofficially in the evening on 10th December.(Letter and telegram in P.R.O. M.T.6/978 file 17164 of 1896).

(111) The results and the terms of settlement are in Board of Trade, Labour Gazette, IV, p.368.

(112) See branch reports in R.R. 18 Dec. 1896 onward.

(113) Speech at Manchester R.R. 18 Dec. 1896, p.5.

(114) See chart facing p.20/

(115) Fairplay, 17 Dec. 1896, p.1041f.

(116) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1897, p.6. (U.H.)

(117) R.R. 5 Mar. 1897, p.6.

(118) P.R.O. M.T.6/978, file 1868 of 1897.

(119) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1897, p.25.

(120) P.R.O. M.T.6/978 file 3241 of 1897.

(121) R.R. 18 Dec. 1896, p.1., letter reproduced.

(122) A.S.R.S., "Interview between the officials of the North-Eastern Railway Company and the representatives of the Guards, Shunters, and Brakesmen held in the Board Room, York, on Monday Dec. 21st, 1896", p.4.

(123) R.R. 22 Jan. 1897, p.1.

(124) R.R. 29 Jan. 1897, p.1; N.E.R., "Arbitration" min.of ev. p.409.

(125) R.R. 5 Feb. 1897, p.5. Speech at York.

(126) R.R. 19 Feb. 1897, p.1; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1897, p.3.

(127) R.R. 26 Feb. 1897, p.5. gives a clear account of events up to the 23rd. A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March 1897, p.3. gives Harford's account up to the 11th March. J.R. Bell should not be confused with Richard Bell.

(128) He had to attend the Birmingham Conference of Passenger Staff and Goods Staff on 23rd February. See Barnes p221

(129) A.S.R.S. "Mr. Edward Harford's Case" pp.6,39.

(130) N.E. Railway, "Board Minute Book" vol. 12, par.10642.

(131) ibid. par. 10645.

(132) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1897, p.3.; files of the Newcastle Daily Chronicle bear this out.

(133) Apart from the sources already mentioned this paragraph is based on the following:
R.R. 5 Mar. 1897, p.5; R.R. 12 Mar. 1897, p.5; R.R.19 Mar. 1897, p.5; N.E.Railway, "Railwaymen's strike at Newcastle-on-Tyne; conference between Delegates from the strike and Mr. Gibb, 26th Feb. 1897." (Hereafter N.E.R. "Strike 1897")

(134) N.E.R. "Strike 1897" p.11. Speech of Walton.

(135) A.S.R.S. "Mr. Edward Harford's Case." p.12f.

(136) ibid. pp.12f, 19.

(137) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1897, p.23f.

(138) N.E. Railway, "Board Minute Book, vol.12" par.10647.

(139) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1897, p.23f.

(140) M.S. & L.Railway Co. "Proceedings of Board of Directors,No.30" par. 17175.

(141) N.E. Railway, "Board Minute Book vol.12" pars.10651-2. (The printed statement is kept between these two minutes).

(142) See above. p118

(143) A.S.R.S. "Mr. Edward Harford's Case." p.20.

(144) N.E. Railway, "Board Minute Book, vol.12." par.10654.

(145) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1897, p.3f; R.R. 9 Apr.1897,p.5; N.E. Railway, "Board Minute Book, vol.12." par.10662.f.

(146) See above, p.34

(147) N.E. Railway, "Board Minute Book, vol.12." pars.10647,10651.

(148) N.E. Railway, "Arbitration"; min.of ev. pp.12,14-18, 20f.

(149) ibid; also see pp.22-4, 486.

(150) ibid., p.547.

(151) ibid., min. of ev. pp.217-19; award. p.8.

(152) ibid., min. of ev. p.40.

(153) Spence Watson's award, Webb T.U. Coll., Sect.A. V pp.199ff.

(154) N.E.R. "Arbitration", min.of ev. p.224f, 232, 239.

(155) ibid., Award. pp.2,4,27.

Chapter VII. All-Grades Movement, 1897-8.

By the time the award of Lord James was published in August 1897, the course of the National Grade movements had altered a great deal. At the beginning of the year the national committees of the movements had met in Birmingham on 5th January and made careful plans - to press the programmes through the local committees to the Companies as soon as possible; to keep Harford informed regularly; and to meet again on 30th March.(1) By the middle of the year they got a certain amount of concessions, but succeeded little in the way of establishing collective bargaining. The successes were all confined to railways catering almost exclusively for London, the Midlands, Lancashire and Yorkshire.(2) The concessions were mostly of a local character, but the Goods Guards succeeded in bringing hours down to 60 per week almost everywhere. (Appendix C). While the G.W.R. regarded the A.S.R.S.-sponsored deputation to be just one group of malcontents(3)the M.S. & L. accepted the A.S.R.S. delegates as being representative of their men; but it simply informed them of the concessions.(4)

Probably because of the N.E.R. dispute, the meeting of the joint committee of the national grade movements did not take place on 30th March, and was not held at any future date either. Ambitious plans had meanwhile been hatched, rather along the lines of what had already started in Ireland.

The same Executive Committee, which had decided against Richard Bell's proposal for an "all-grades" movement, had nevertheless

agreed to let Tevenan start a national all-grades movement in Ireland.(5) Tevenan had decided recently that such a movement would lift Irish railway trade unionism from the stagnation which had gripped it since the end of 1894.(6) A minority on the Executive had misgivings about the prospects of a movement initiated from above.(7) But during the first quarter of 1897 the 'victory' over the L. & N.W. had given an impetus to Tevenan's organising efforts, and convinced Harford of the strength of the movement.(8) Programmes were drawn up at a national conference in Dublin on 21st and 22nd May, at which Harford presided.(9) From then until October Tevenan travelled all over the system, especially in the South and the West, forming branches, trying, as he put it, to "make our line of defence complete".(10)

In England and Wales the union-leaders had moved towards accepting the "all-grade" strategy early in 1897, without making an adequate assessment of their strength. On his own initiative Harford had called conferences of Goods Staff and Passenger Staff in February.(11) Organisation was very weak, for even when the programmes of these movements reached the L. & Y.(?) and the M.S. & L. in June, the names of a deputation do not appear to have been added.(12) In March 1897 the Executive Committee had convened, for 20th April, conferences of Platelayers and Examiners and Greasers.(13) But requests for a conference among platelayers had come only from London, Tyneside, and the West Riding, and carriage examiners were not very active trade unionists, to judge by the reports in the Railway Review.(14) Nevertheless, on the appointed day, both these

conferences met and drew up programmes.(15)

Defects were most evident in the organisation of Locomen outside the N.E.R., although their support was essential for the success of any all-grades movement. In August 1896, at a conference in Leeds, the A.S.L.E.F. had considered starting a national Locomen's movement.(16) Meanwhile, Richard Bell had been running a campaign against the other union in course of that year, and trying to persuade all unorganised Locomen in his area to join the A.S.R.S., with some success.(17) He pressed for an A.S.R.S.-sponsored national Locomen's conference in November - having interpreted the recent overtures to set up joint committees, made by A.S.L.E.F. members in his area, to mean that the other union was prepared to co-ordinate its work with the A.S.R.S. His favourite scheme of an all-grades movement was in fact forwarded to the Executive at the same time as the suggestion for a Locomen's conference.(18)

The Executive in December 1896 had planned a Locomen's conference to take place in February,(19)but relations with the other union did not become friendly. The A.S.L.E.F. conference took place on 21st and 22nd January 1897, the A.S.R.S. conference on the 16th February. The A.S.L.E.F. asked all Locomen to support their programme, and sent a letter to Harford shortly before the 16th to inform the Locomen of the A.S.R.S. At the same time it sent this programme to the Companies.(20) The A.S.R.S. conference wanted a joint meeting of the two societies to co-ordinate tactics. The Executive of the union insisted in March that the A.S.L.E.F. should withdraw its programme and draw up a fresh one in conjunction with

the A.S.R.S.(21) To this request the reply of T.G. Sunter - Secretary of the A.S.L.E.F. - was to say bluntly that he was not prepared to let matters affecting his grade be influenced in any way by the A.S.R.S. Executive.(22) This put paid to all future co-operation. With relations with the A.S.L.E.F. at a deadlock it was not surprising that the Locomen's Committee of the A.S.R.S. was not effectively organised until July(23)and as late as September many programmes had not been sent in.(24)

Mainly because these conferences were composed of ambitious activists and drew up programmes in one day sessions each recent programme became a collection of ambitious demands, often inconsistent with the principles of another. The following table, giving a comparative study of the minimum and maximum wages demanded by the various grades and the wage census of 1891, shows that the activists were trying to bring the general minimum wage to that of the best paid sections of the best Company. Besides, some conferences aimed at the eight-hour day, while others asked for ten hours only; some wanted 'time and a quarter' for night duty, others did not. It was a far cry from the strategy of a carefully planned national grade movement which had been the union's policy in the previous year.(25)

Table XIII

Grade	DEMANDS Minimum	Maximum	Wage Census of 1891 Percentage	earning in Range
Drivers	36/-	48/-	67.4	40/- and more
Firemen	24/-	33/-	53.0	20/- ... 25/-
Signalmen	25/-	40/-	62.0	20/- ... 25/-
			20.9	25/- ... 30/-
Passenger Guards	30/-	40/-	52.0	25/- ... 30/-
Asst.Guards	25/-	30/-	34.0	20/- ... 25/-
Passenger Shunter	25/-	30/-	48.0	20/- ... 25/-
			36.0	15/- ... 20/-
Goods Porter	22/-	24/-	63.6	15/- ... 20/-
Checkers	26/-	30/-	61.0	20/- ... 25/-
			18.1	15/- ... 20/-
Draymen	23/-	27/-	29.8	15/- ... 20/-
			62.8	20/- ... 25/-
Examiners	30/-	35/-		
Greasers	26/-	28/-	not known, but far below the men's demands, judging by later evidence.	
Washers	23/-	26/-		

The decision to merge all these movements and call a national all-grades conference at a future date was taken in June; the opposition of executive committeemen with an additional year's experience was significant.(26) Harford seems to have become too optimistic following the disputes on the L. & N.W. and the N.S.R., and thinking of an open challenge on the question of recognition.

A letter sent to the G.C.R. in July by A.S.R.S. activists wanted an all-grade deputation to be accompanied by Harford.(27) Similar demands, made elsewhere,(28)when read in conjunction with Harford's hints about strikes during fog and snowstorm,(29)suggest that before Christmas he was planning a strike over the recognition of his union.

Yet, supervision of the local activists had been so lax that in September - when the all-grades conference was fixed for 11th and 12th October at Birmingham(30) - the union leadership had not squarely faced this question: was the all-grades movement aiming to secure recognition, or a national standard rate, or both? A great deal depended on effective central leadership in October at the A.G.M. and at the Birmingham Conference. By dismissing Harford for his conduct in the N.E.R. dispute the A.G.M. created a chaotic situation, whose effects were felt long after the immediate crisis had passed.

The closed session of the conference which decided by 35 votes to 23 not to limit its criticism of Harford to the one occasion when he was drunk, but to indict his general conduct of the N.E.R. dispute and call for his immediate dismissal,(31)was a passionate and bitter affair. Earlier, in June, the Executive Committee had been swung round by Walter Hudson to say that Harford's whole conduct during the dispute had been reprehensible, and had agreed to let the entire local committee of the N.E.R. attend the A.G.M.(32) At the conference, with a hostile president,(33)with one-fifth of the delegates coming from the N.E.R., and two-thirds of the delegates coming to a conference for the first time - straight from their work in recent movements - it was difficult to make an objective

assessment of Harford's conduct. Even his diplomacy in the dispute on the L. & N.W. was pooh-poohed by Albert Bellamy, a young Locoman from that railway, who resented that he had not called a sympathetic strike; snapping his fingers Bellamy said,

> "We should not have a man of that description if we intend to be a forward trade union."(34)

At the insistence of James Holmes, Harford was given a pension of £100, but the reins of office were handed over, pending a poll of the members, to Richard Bell.

Edward Harford died soon after, at the age of 59, on 4th January 1898, on board the ship that was bringing him back from the United States of America, where he had attended the convention of the A.F. of L., as the representative of the T.U.C.(35) With his departure the last link with the founders of the union was severed. Richard Bell was twenty years younger than him.

Because of the unfortunate circumstances surrounding his departure he has remained the forgotten man of railway trade unionism. Yet the A.S.R.S. would never have achieved any degree of power and influence, but for the patient and often thankless task of building up the Society which he had undertaken in 1883. Together with Evans, he had been instrumental in transforming the Society, in the dark days of 1879-80, from a hopeless friendly Society into a potentially militant union. Unlike Evans he had the right sense of priorities, and so had concentrated on encouraging organisation at the local level, while steadily augmenting the protection fund. He had adapted the cumbrous machinery of conducting strikes after

1887 to make it more effective, and during the critical years since 1889, used his accumulated wealth and increased membership with circumspection and ability. In the Welsh strike of 1890 he had shown that when the occasion demanded he could lead a strike as well as any one else.

He had possibly been too obsessed by memories of rank-and-file apathy in the late 'seventies and early 'eighties, and consequently emphasised and fostered local initiative, without increasing the number of full-time officials. As a result, after he was deposed, and there was no one to provide a continuity in policy, the position steadily deteriorated, until Taff Vale administered a shock.

II

In October 1897 almost overnight the A.S.R.S. seemed to lose whatever sense of direction it had had in recent months. Exactly when a centralised control was needed most, its absence was keenly felt. Without any precedent to guide it, the All-grades Conference met at Birmingham on 11th and 12th October.(36) If it altered the existing national programmes in any way, it was only to add bits and pieces of new items on behalf of Dockers in Grimsby, overhead railwaymen in Liverpool, Gasmakers on the Cheshire Lines Committee!(37) Harford's rules of 1896 had intended the first and second delegate conferences of any movement to be primarily agencies to advise the General Secretary of the state of organisation, leaving the decision in his hand. In October and November this All-grades Conference of about 100 delegates arrogated to itself, at its first and adjourned

sessions, the task of deciding strategy and tactics. A recall conference on 23rd November was to decide the course of action in the light of the replies of the Companies. The demand for recognition was explicit in the demands that went out from the conference; the national standard rate was also insisted upon.(38)

The advice of W.H. Shaw to suspend action until they had made a precise estimate of their membership in various grades was not heeded; that was left to the local committees and the General Secretary.(39) Richard Bell, as the temporary General Secretary, was anxious to launch his long-cherished project, and hoped that by bluffing he would secure recognition. He sent out the programmes on 25th October, expecting a reply by the 15th of November.(40)

In the meantime the Companies closed their ranks. Throughout the summer most of them had maintained their opposition to recognition, but some, like the G.C.R., had seriously considered giving the terms of the N.E. award, and were uncertain about what might happen.(41) The Railway News had praised the decision of the N.E.R. in April,(42) but now it advised the Companies to combine like the Engineering employers.(43) A very large meeting of more than 200 officers and Directors met at Euston on 4th November.(44) Although no full record of the proceedings have survived in manuscript, leakages in the press indicated that opinion had been divided on whether to prepare for a strike, or to meet the railwaymen since they seemed to be in a conciliatory mood. The N.E.R. officials were present by special invitation to explain Lord James's award.

After prolonged discussion the meeting set up a Committee of

General Managers - which included the N.E.R. - to see if the Companies could take "similar or united action" to meet "any unreasonable demands of the employees."(45) At a subsequent meeting on 9th November the Committee went so far as to try to fix a national maximum wage.(46) The inclusion of the N.E.R. and this attempt to fix a national basis for wages suggested the possibility of negotiation at a national level.

But at this point the General Manager of the L. & N.W. organised the opponents of compromise. Despairing of the effectiveness of big meetings of the Railway Companies' Association, and willing to fight a strike if necessary, he called together informally on the 17th November his colleagues of the G.N.R., G.W.R., Midland, L. & Y, and the G.C.R. They eventually drew up a draft agreement by which each company agreed to help each other in the event of a strike:-

(1) During a strike at competitive places, all traffic to and from that place - both competitive and non-competitive traffic - should be divided with an allowance for working expenses.

(2) Where it was possible, Companies should help each other by running trains over each other's lines or working traffic to pass by other available routes.

(3) At places common to more than one Company they should agree to a maximum scale of wages; each Company could pay what they chose within that maximum.

If possible, the Companies should agree at such places on similar actions as regards hours of work,

rate of overtime, holidays, and privileges like housing and fuel allowances.(47)

The minutes of the closed session of the adjourned meeting of the All-Grades Conference on 23rd November indicate that while very few wanted to strike at once, a majority wished to keep the threat of a national strike in the air, and not divide the movement to try to foster collective bargaining in different Companies.(48) Another appeal to the Companies, repeating the offer of arbitration, was to be accompanied by the simultaneous issuing of strike notices. Privately it was decided not to strike unless 75% were in favour of it. But the public tactics were to write to the Board of Trade if the offer of arbitration was refused - thus trying to retain public sympathy and blame the Companies for encouraging the strike to happen.

Bell's second letter was considered at another meeting of the Railway Companies' Association on 26th November, at which all General Managers were present.(49) Everybody agreed that "arbitration was entirely out of the question".(50) A great many managers were persuaded to accept the anti-strike agreement drawn up by the six Companies.

While the Companies had strengthened their position in this manner, the union was so badly led that it failed to get either public sympathy or the support of the Government during the next fortnight. Being committed to the 'Birmingham Programme' Bell had to spend a lot of time with press reporters making laboured attempts to justify its ill-assorted demands.(51) Still, as he stressed that collective bargaining was the main issue, he retained the

sympathies of the Liberal Press as late as Friday 3rd December. On that day in the morning Bell wrote to the Board of Trade asking them to intervene before a strike took place. He did not mention the question of recognition at all, but developed the point that the men were very eager for a strike since the Companies had refused the programme.(52) Maddison's editorial on the Railway Review of the same day was a carefully written piece against a strike at that juncture. After a spirited defence of the men's programme he argued that the men should not strike until membership increased to 150,000 from the present level of 90,000.(53) The belief that Maddison had written the official policy of the union inclined the Liberal press, as well as the popular Daily Mail, doubtless from a sense of relief, to urge Ritchie to accede to Bell's request.(54) But on that evening, Bell became nervous on reading Maddison's editorial, and publicly said, "The article has given the whole show away ..."(55)

The attitude of the Board of Trade had remained unaltered.(56) Being anxious to stop this "most mischievous agitation", Sir Courtenay Boyle was prepared to go as far as to arrange "a friendly meeting between the several Companies and their own men".(57) The brief and blunt reply finally drafted was also released to the press. It contained a refusal to help in the attempt to meet all the Companies together, and suggested that deputations should present the demands directly to their respective companies.(58) As the letter stressed that the approach of the A.S.R.S. had been ill-mannered, and added, for good measure, that the railwaymen had no justification for a strike in view of the Hours of Labour Act of 1893, it swung press

opinion against the union - especially against the background of Bell's display of consternation on Friday evening.(59)

An unnerved Executive Committee met on 6th December to be told by an unnerved Richard Bell that Maddison was responsible for the loss of public and government support. Maddison was censured in his absence. He quarrelled with the Executive Committee about this and was forced to resign.(60) When he sent his letter of resignation to the press, the last trace of public sympathy was gone.(61) As regards the national movement, the Executive Committee decided to ask the grade committees to resubmit the memorials to their respective Companies.(62) It then relinquished its year of office. It was left to Bell to pull the society together, organise the election of a General Secretary on a regular basis, and try to supervise the presentation of the various memorials to the Companies.

III

Meanwhile in Ireland the situation had become even more acute. In the third week of October Tevenan boasted of 7,500 members in Ireland. Being confident of further rapid growth he sent the programme to the Companies.(63) As only two Companies - the G.N.R. and the Gt. S. & W. - had shown their willingness to meet deputations by the middle of November, Tevenan planned a strike in the near future.(64) At the meeting with the Directors of the G.N.R. on 22nd and 23rd November, the men's deputation pressed for the recognition of Tevenan, which was refused. Their minimum demand for establishing collective bargaining through negotiations between branch secretaries

and the heads of departments was also refused. Then Tevenan issued strike notices for that railway, which were due to expire on 13th December.(65) Subsequent reports show that he had also planned to synchronise strikes on the other lines with this very well-organised line.(66)

But the G.N.R. had been promised a supply of trained railwaymen by the L. & N.W.(67) Being confident of winning it issued a circular on 4th December to the men, which cleverly aimed to break their unity by suggesting that in a strike over recognition the men themselves had nothing to gain, and a lot to lose - their jobs would disappear forever, and those who were still to rise to the higher maximum wage as fixed by the agreement of 1894,would be deprived of that prospect.(68) Being unsure of his chances of success Tevenan wrote to the Board of Trade on the same day asking the department to intervene,(69)but by the 7th December the local committee of the employees of the G.N.R. withdrew their notices under pressure from the public, and on being promised another hearing by the Companies. Dispirited, Tevenan withdrew notices from the other Companies as well.(70)

In the backwash of the collapse of the Irish movement the trade unionists of the Cork, Bandon and South Coast railway came out in January 1898. The strike was so well-disciplined for the first six weeks that Bell personally helped in fighting it, and took the cases of those who were sued for breach of contract to the appeal stage wherever possible. He also succeeded partially in sending home shiploads of 'free labour'.(71) The Company had the whiphand in its powers to evict the men from their cottages. Cases fought by Bell

against eviction were lost. Eventually the men went back on the Company's terms.(72) Bell and the Executive Committee were sufficiently sobered by recent experience to declare emphatically that no future strikes, started without notice or without official support, were to be supported.(73)

In England the reactions of the Companies to the memorials resubmitted in 1898 varied. The Midland Railway had planned to give a few general concessions, including overtime at 'time and a quarter', to all grades of railwaymen, but was disuaded from doing so by an earnest plea from the other Companies.(74) Nevertheless, some additional concessions given by this and a few other Companies meant that nearly all Goods Guards of the northern railways had obtained the 60-hour week, overtime payment, higher Sunday duty, and in some cases, a slight wage increase. (Appendix C). A similar improvement in the wages of the better classes of Signalmen, and some purely local concessions to lower grades in some areas, appear to have been the net result of all concessions given in 1897 and 1898.(75) The "all-grades" movement had failed. But, to a fair extent, the National Goods Guards' movement had succeeded.

The willingness of the Midland railway to grant general concessions was matched by its fairly clear record over the victimisation of trade unionists.(76) The union had to pay in protection benefits £1,768 in 1898 as opposed to £799 and £875 in the previous two years,(77)but a close scrutiny of the numerous papers prepared by Bell showed that Companies varied widely. A really serious blow was felt in Ireland, with 13 out of the total of 56 men victimised. In

England and Wales only the L. & N.W. dismissed as many as 11. An examination of the grades of the victimised men show that in the Northern Companies trade unionists among grades where trade unionism was of recent origin were liable to suffer - Platelayers rather than Signalmen, Draymen rather than Goods Guards. Even if the officials disliked the A.S.R.S., they had evidently come to accept that membership of the union came naturally to many of their senior and able men.(78)

Preparing this massive dossier on victimisation - which we have just referred to - was Bell's principal occupation in 1898, as he realised the futility of sending memorials to the directors. He blamed the Board of Trade, by implication, in a letter to that department sent on 14th May, describing how people had been dismissed who had but followed Sir Courtenay Boyle's advice of the previous December.(79) This was the precursor of a great many exchanges, in course of which Hopwood became convinced of the need to inquire about each case cited by Bell.(80) All managers replied to the inquiry of the Board of Trade, with the exception of the L. & N.W., whose manager told Hopwood "that the control of the Company's servants was a matter for the Company alone."(81) Bell was dissatisfied with the substance of the managers' replies, which was a simple denial that the dismissals were connected with membership of the union.(82) After writing to numerous M.P.s and preparing a complete dossier of victimisation, he called on Hopwood on 24th November, and found him a sympathetic listener.(83) With the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. he saw Ritchie on 15th December and pressed for a parliamentary

inquiry.(84) But as Ritchie and Sir Courtenay Boyle were reluctant to have one, they decided to meet a few typical victims first, before making up their minds.(85)

This interview, which took place on 7th February, 1899, did not lead to the desired inquiry. All the persons involved had been guilty of some breach of rules. The letter to the Railway Companies' Association which was finally sent exonerated the Directors from any blame.(86) But the one useful result of Bell's first venture into pressure group work was to bring home personally to the departmental officials the adverse circumstances in which the railway trade unionist lived. Hopwood at least was convinced by Bell's point that a great many subordinate officials frequently took the active trade unionist to task for his membership of the A.S.R.S., and tried to find fault in his work. But for Ritchie's intervention, this point would have been included in the final versions of the two official letters sent to the A.S.R.S. and the Companies' Association, and also released to the press.(87)

IV

If the National Goods Guards' movement had succeeded, what had happened to the efforts of the less skilled grades like Draymen and the Goods staff? The general success of the A.S.R.S. on the N.E.R. also enabled these grades to get higher rates of overtime and Sunday pay, as well as a revised schedule of hours ranging between 54 and 63 per week.(88) Elsewhere their movement was not strong enough to make any impact. A discontented activist at Leeds threatened to cause a

strike,(89)was dismissed, and then the draymen of Leeds and Sheffield, employed by the Midland railway, came out, against the advice of Bell and W.D. Dacey. The strike failed, throwing the strikers at Leeds on the uncertain charity of public subscriptions and a compassionate grant from the A.S.R.S.(90)

Outside the N.E.R. trade-unionism among the Draymen and Goods staff employed by railways became very weak. The movement that had started in 1895, and ended with the collapse of this strike, was, like the Draymen's movements of 1872-3, an offensive forward movement in the wake of organisation among other grades. More than eleven years were to pass before Draymen and Goods staff became once again organised in sufficient numbers in many areas to give a militant thrust to the work of the A.S.R.S. But then the factors behind their militancy were slightly different from what it was in 1896-8.

In spite of these defeats membership stood at the end of 1898 at a definitely higher level than it was in 1896. Appendices A and B show the geographical variations in the incidence of trade unionism. As was to be expected there was little leakage in Northumberland, and not much in Durham. The gains of 1897 were consolidated, and these two counties topped the list in terms of membership, South Wales coming third. Membership declined absolutely below the level of 1896 only in a few agricultural and outlying areas - in the West of England in Hereford, Somerset, and Devon, and in the eastern part in Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire. Elsewhere in the south membership had not grown much in 1897 and did not decrease much. In the only two agricultural counties where, in 1896, membership had been anywhere

near 15% of the eligible grades, we see stagnation in Shropshire and a rapid decline in Worcestershire.

But even after the flood-tide of 1897 had receded, it left a layer of increased membership in the industrial Midlands and Lancashire. While the net gain in Yorkshire was very little, it had a higher proportion of trade unionists than Lancashire and came fourth in order of strength. The strength of the Miners' Federation in the West Riding, and the dominance of the N.E.R. in the North and East Ridings, helped to maintain this position.

Despite the existence of a railway labour force as large as that in Yorkshire and Lancashire, London and Middlesex continued to lag a long way behind the other two, both in 1896 and in 1898. In their survey of trade unionism in 1892, the Webbs noticed a similar weakness in London.(91)

In Ireland railway trade unionism had suffered a blow from which it took years to recover. (Table XIV). To the demoralising effects of the collapse of the national movement, and the defeat on the Cork, Bandon and South Coast railway, was added an indiscretion of Tevenan. He was connected in a case of seduction, as a result of which he had to resign.(92)

Table XIV

Ireland: Provincial Variations in trade unionism in relation to total labour force.

1896-98.

(Source: Census of Ireland, 1901; A.S.R.S., 'Reports and Financial Statements'; Handbook of Stations and Depots.)

Province	1896		1897		1898	
	Member-ship	Proportion %	Member-ship	Proportion %	Member-ship	Proportion %
Ulster	916	25.6	1719	48.1	329	9.5
Leinster	1019	22.3	2101	45.8	393	8.1
Munster	619	22.3	1634	59.0	481	17.3
Connaught	359	50.9	646	91.6	81	11.5

The first all-grades movement was not entirely a failure. Richard Bell's favourite idea had not come to fruition, but some of the aims of the national Goods Guards movement had been achieved. In course of the campaign against victimisation Bell had rebuilt the bridges between the A.S.R.S. and the Board of Trade. Above all, membership stood at a level higher than 1896 - greater by nearly 10,000 members. The future was to show what use was to be made of this strength, and to what extent the union had learnt the lessons from its defeat.

Appendix A

Membership: Geographical Variations

1896-1898.

	1896	1897	1898
United Kingdom	42,662	80,816	50,292
Scotland	2,842	3,253	2,729
Ireland	2,893	6,203	1,284
England & Wales	36,927	71,360	46,279
Bedfordshire	44	55	70
Berkshire	54	189	83
Buckinghamshire	114	298	248
Cambridgeshire	113	113	87
Cheshire	1,008	2,503	1,423
Cornwall	49	98	77
Cumberland	236	455	460
Derbyshire	851	2,032	1,315
Devonshire	212	305	175
Dorsetshire	11	8	8
Durham	2,878	3,641	3,312
Essex	75	232	175
Gloucestershire	547	1,130	652
Hampshire	251	645	336
Herefordshire	83	147	43
Hertfordshire	211	216	174
Huntingdonshire	31	35	33
Kent	488	853	663
Lancashire	4,854	11,274	6,995
Leicestershire	659	1,364	791
Lincolnshire	613	1,235	656
London & Middx.	3,701	8,031	4,859
Norfolk	452	610	487
Northamptonshire	769	1,461	1,092
Northumberland	1,512	1,934	1,865
Nottinghamshire	1,193	2,568	1,575
Oxfordshire	6	30	19
Rutland	20	45	24
Shropshire	325	762	436
Somerset	215	272	197
Staffordshire	859	3,271	1,596
Suffolk	35	56	51
Surrey	303	435	325
Sussex	385	767	503
Warwickshire	755	3,023	1,558
Westmorland	72	116	96

Appendix A (Cont'd)

	1896	1897	1898
Wiltshire	195	293	228
Worcestershire	490	1,335	157
Yorkshire	8,599	13,391	8,952
South Wales & Monmouthshire	3,979	6,240	4,510
North Wales	219	733	332

Appendix B.

Geographical Variations in the incidence of trade unionism.

1896-1898.

(Source: (1) Membership: '<u>Report & Financial Statement</u>' for the respective years; Handbook of Stations.
(2) Eligible Railway labour force: "<u>Census of England & Wales, 1901</u>" (cd.1523 of 1903); <u>Census of Scotland, 1901</u> (cd.1798 of 1903); <u>Census of Ireland, 1901</u> (cd.1190 of 1902).)

N.B. - For the way in which the Census reports have been used, in this and other appendices, see p.506

	Census of 1901 Railwaymen Eligible	Proportion of Trade Unionists in 1896	1897	1898
United Kingdom	297,212	14.4	27.2	16.9
Scotland	31,342	9.1	10.4	8.7
Ireland	11,631	24.9	53.3	11.0
England & Wales	254,239	14.5	28.1	18.2
Bedfordshire	1,084	4.1	5.1	6.5
Berkshire	1,752	3.1	10.8	4.7
Buckinghamsh:	1,570	7.3	19.0	15.8
Cambridgeshr:	2,032	5.6	5.6	4.3
Cheshire	8,729	11.5	28.7	16.3
Cornwall	1,217	4.0	8.1	6.3
Cumberland	3,788	6.2	12.0	12.1
Derbyshire	7,717	11.0	26.3	17.0
Devonshire	3,802	5.6	8.0	4.6
Dorsetshire	1,225	0.9	0.7	0.7
Durham	10,629	27.1	34.3	31.2
Essex	7,869	0.9	2.9	2.2
Gloucestershr:	5,379	10.2	21.0	12.1
Hampshire	4,130	6.1	15.6	8.1
Herefordshire	980	8.5	15.0	4.4
Hertfordshire	1,851	11.4	11.7	9.4
Huntingdonshire	535	5.8	6.5	6.2
Kent	5,559	8.8	15.3	11.9
Lancashire	32,189	15.1	35.0	21.7
Leicestershire	3,802	17.3	35.9	20.8
Lincolnshire	4,384	14.0	28.2	15.0
London & Middx.	33,113	11.2	24.3	14.7
Norfolk	2,930	15.4	20.8	16.6
Northamptonsh:	4,654	16.5	31.4	23.5
Northumberland	4,337	34.9	44.6	43.0

Appendix B (Cont'd)

	Census of 1901 Railwaymen Eligible	Proportion of Trade Unionists in 1896	1897	1898
Nottinghamshr:	6,301	18.9	40.8	25.0
Oxfordshire	1,439	0.4	2.1	1.3
Rutland	228	8.8	19.7	10.5
Shropshire	2,316	14.0	32.9	18.8
Somerset	2,825	7.6	9.6	6.9
Staffordshire	8,298	10.4	39.4	19.2
Suffolk	1,590	2.2	3.5	3.2
Surrey	3,713	8.2	11.7	8.8
Sussex	3,314	11.6	23.1	15.2
Warwickshire	7,335	10.3	41.2	21.2
Westmorland	779	9.2	14.9	12.3
Wiltshire	2,681	7.3	10.9	8.5
Worcestershire	2,635	18.6	50.7	6.0
YORKSHIRE	34,715	24.8	38.6	25.8
South Wales & Monmouthshire	16,375	24.3	38.1	27.5
North Wales	4,189	5.2	17.5	7.9

Appendix C. Goods Guards Conditions.

Table I. Before 1897.

	G.C.R.[1] (M.S.& L.)	G.E.R.[2]	G.N.R.[3]	L.& Y.[4]	Mid-land[5]	N.E.R.[6]
Guaranteed week	Yes	-	Yes	-	Yes	No
Weekly hours	72	66	66	63	66	60
Overtime Basis Rate	Daily 1½	Weekly 6d.per hour	Not paid	Weekly 1¼	Not paid	Weekly Ordin-ary
Sunday pay.	Unpaid		Unpaid		Unpaid	
Separate Rate		-		No 1½		Yes Ordin-ary

Table II. After 1897, by August 1900.

(Source: apart from the references cited see tables submitted by Ammon Beasley to Royal Commission on Traders Disputes, p.48f. (Parl.Pap., 1906, LVI)

	G.C.R.[7]	G.E.R.[8]	G.N.R.[9]	L.& Y.[10]	Mid-land[11]	N.E.R.[12]
Guaranteed week	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Weekly hours	60	60	60	60	60	60
Overtime Basis Rate	Weekly 1¼	Weekly 6d.per hour	Weekly Ordin-ary	Weekly 1¼	Weekly Ordin-ary	Daily 1¼
Sunday pay Separate Rate	Yes 1¼	Yes 6d.per hour	Yes Ord. rate	Yes 1½	Yes 1¼	Yes 1½

Notes to Appendix C.

(1) M.S. & L.Railway, 'Board Minutes No.30' par.16995; also see ibid. 17260 for the absence of Sunday pay before 1897.

(2) Railway Servants. (Hours of Labour); Sel.Cttee; min.of ev. Q.9513; (Parl.Pap.,1890-91, XVI.)

(3) Hours Act Report, 1897, p.21. (Parl.Pap., 1897, LXXVII); R.R. 19 Mar. 1897, p.1; Traders Disputes, R.Com.p.48f. (Parl.Pap., 1906, LVI.)

(4) R.R. 2 Jan. 1891, p.4; M.S. & L.Railway, 'Board Minutes No.30' par.16995.

(5) Midland Railway, 'Traffic Committee Minutes No.24' par. 29765, 29832;

(6) N.E.Railway, Arbitration (1897), min.of ev. pp.387f, 393, 397, 409.

(7) M.S. & L.Railway, 'Board Minutes No.30.' pars.16995, 17237, 17260; R.R. 29 Jan. 1897, p.1; R.R. 7 May, 1897, p.1.

(8) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1897, p.16; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep. 1898, p.31.

(9) G.N. Railway, 'Traffic Committee Minute Book, No.16.' p.209ff; R.R. 19 Mar. 1897, p.1.

(10) R.R. 16 Apr. 1897, p.5; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1897, p.19; A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1898, P.8. That they had the Guaranteed Week by 1907 is seen from A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1908, p.78.

(11) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1898, p.9.

(12) N.E.Railway, Arbitration (1897), award. pp.2, 8f;

Notes to Chapter VII.

(1) A.S.R.S. Conference of National Committees of Signalmen, Goods Guards, Brakesmen, Shunters, Draymen, Horsemen, and Pulleymen ... at Birmingham, Jan 5th. 1897. passim; R.R. 8 Jan. 1897, p.5.

(2) These were the G.N.R., L.& Y., MIDLAND, and M.S. & L.

(3) Letter from the G.W.R. to the Goods Guards' Committee, R.R. 19 Mar. 1897, p.5.

(4) The Signalmen's Committee were refused a copy of the concessions and told that each individual would learn about it from his stationmaster, R.R. 26 Feb. 1897, p.5.

(5) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1896, pp.16, 32.

(6) R.R. 30 Oct. 1896, p.5; R.R. 20 Nov. 1896, p.5; R.R. 27 Nov. 1896, p.3.

(7) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1896, p.32.

(8) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1897, p.7; the R.R. from January to April, 1897.

(9) R.R. 14 May 1897, p.5; R.R. 28 May 1897, p.4f.

(10) R.R. 17 Sep. 1897, p.6.

(11) No permission had been given to this by the E.C. in December, but the next E.C. confirmed his action. See A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1897, p.9; A.S.R.S. Minutes of the Conference of Goods Workers held at ... Birmingham, 23rd Feb.1897, passim; A.S.R.S. Minutes of the Conference of Passenger Staff held at ... Birmingham, 23rd Feb. 1897, passim.

(12) M.S. & L.Railway, 'Proceedings of Board of Directors, No.31'. par. 17, 342; L.& Y.Railway, 'Minutes of meetings of Committees 9th Feb., 14 July 1897' p.504.

(13) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes Mar. 1897, p.25.

(14) ibid. p.7f; also see R.R. 20 Nov. 1896, p.6.

(15) A.S.R.S. "Minutes of the Platelayers' Conference held on ... April 20th 1897 at Birmingham", passim; A.S.R.S., Minutes of the National Conferences of Carriage and Wagon Examiners, Carriage Washers, Greasers, and others, 20th April, 1897., passim.

(16) R.R. 21st Aug. 1896, p.4.

(17) See the weekly Organising Secretaries' Report column. Also branch reports like Crewe in R.R. 27 Mar. 1896, p.3.

(18) R.R. 13 Nov. 1896, p.3; R.Bell's report, and Swansea branch report.

(19) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes Dec. 1896, p.32.

(20) See Garrity's account of correspondence between the two Societies, R.R. 2 July 1897, p.5; also see A.S.R.S. Minutes of Locomotive Enginedrivers and Firemen's Conference held at ... Birmingham, p.2.

(21) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1897, p.26.

(22) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Jun. 1897, p.16.

(23) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep. 1897, p.11.

(24) ibid. p.32.

(25) All the programmes are in leaflets, bound in A.S.R.S., 'Proceedings and Reports 1897.' (U.H.); one or two are also in A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1896.

(26) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1897, p.32.

(27) G.C.Railway, 'Board Minutes No.1.' par. 23.

(28) Midland Railway Goods workers' committee, R.R. 27 Aug.1897, p.5; Midland Railway all-grade meeting R.R. 24 Sep. 1897, p.5.

(29) Speech at Hyde Park on 13th September; R.R. 17 Sep. 1897, p.6; some Executive Committeemen considered this speech to be rather tactless; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep. 1897, p.43.

(30) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep. 1897, p.33.

(31) A.S.R.S. Mr.Edward Harford's Case, pp.55,62f.

(32) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1897, p.45.

(33) A.S.R.S. Mr.Edward Harford's Case, p.39f, for Hudson's attempt to bulldoze some cross-examination of the N.E.R. delegates from the floor.

(34) ibid. p.45.

(35) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March. 1898, p.3.

(36) A.S.R.S. Minutes of the Birmingham Conference for revising national programmes held on Monday and Tuesday, October 11th and 12th 1897 ... (hereafter First All-Grades Conference 1897). passim.

(37) ibid. pp.13-15.

(38) ibid. p.5f.

(39) ibid. p.4f.

(40) R.R. 29 Oct. 1897, p.5.

(41) G.C.Railway, 'Board Minutes No.1.' par. 23f.

(42) Railway News; 3 Apr. 1897, p.535.

(43) ibid. 9 Oct. 1897, p.527.

(44) G.C.Railway, 'Board Minutes No.1' par. 145; G.N.Railway 'Board Minute Book No.45' p.325f; Evening Standard, 5 Nov. 1897, p.8; Manchester Guardian 5 Nov. 1897, p.6; Daily Chronicle 5 Nov. 1897, p.6; also see A.S.R.S. Annual Report 1898, p.3.

(45) G.N.Railway, 'Board Minute Book', p.325f.

(46) L. & Y.Railway, 'Minutes of Meetings of Committee, July 1897 - Jan. 1898', p.356.

(47) G.C.Railway, 'Board Minutes No.1' par.168; confirmed in detail in G.W. Railway 'Minutes of the Board of Directors No.40' p.466f; also see L.& N.W.Railway, 'Board Minutes vol.17' par. 15481; L. & N.W.Railway, 'Minutes of Special Committee vol.43' par.6588.

(48) A.S.R.S. 'Minutes of the Adjourned National Conference of all grades united, held at ... Birmingham' p.6f.

(49) G.C.Railway, 'Board Minutes No.1' par.194; G.N.Railway, 'Board Minute Book No.45' p.349f; L.& N.W.Railway, 'Minutes of Special Committee vol.43', par.6588.

(50) G.C.Railway, 'Board Minutes No.1', par.194.

(51) Manchester Guardian 29 Nov. 1897, p.9.

(52) Letter in P.R.O. MT 6/808 file 13764 of 1897; also see A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1897, p.4f.

(53) R.R. 3rd Dec. 1897, p.4.

(54) Manchester Guardian, 3rd Dec. 1897, p.5; Daily Chronicle 4th Dec. 1897, p.4; Daily News 3rd Dec. 1897, p.2. Daily Mail, 3 Dec. 1897, p.4.

(55) The Times, 4 Dec. 1897, p.12; Daily News, 4 Dec. 1897, p.2.

(56) The sources for the following account are the following files in P.R.O. MT 6/808; file 13764 of 1897 for Hopwood's notes and draft replies, and file 13809 of 1897 for a note written by Sir Courtenay Boyle on the Irish movement, which also referred to the English movement.

(57) P.R.O. MT 6/808 file 13809 of 1897; the italics are his.

(58) Daily News, 6 Dec. 1897, p.4; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1897, p.5f. Boyle left out from the final draft Hopwood's attempt to argue reasonably why a national standard rate was not possible or desirable.

(59) Daily Mail, 6 Dec. 1897, p.4; Manchester Guardian 7 Dec. 1897, p.7; Daily News, 6 Dec. 1897, p.7.

(60) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1897, p.30f; Alcock, op.cit., pp.295-7; Daily News 8 dec. 1897, p.4.

(61) Manchester Guardian, 9 Dec. 1897, p.7; Daily Chronicle 8 Dec. 1897, p.6.

(62) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1897, p.29.

(63) R.R. 22 Oct. 1897, p.1; R.R. 29 Oct. 1897, p.1.

(64) R.R. 19 Nov. 1897, p.1.

(65) R.R. 26 Nov. 1897, p.1; Circular issued by the G.N.R. on 4th Dec. 1897 (kept in P.R.O. MT 6/808 file 13907 of 1897).

(66) R.R. 19 Dec. 1897, p.1.

(67) Letter of thanks from the G.N.R.(Ireland) to the L.& N.W. for this promise was acknowledged by the letter, of L.& N.W. Railway, 'Board Minutes vol.17', par.15522.

(68) Circular kept in P.R.O. M.T.6/808 file 13907 of 1897; for the agreement of 1894 see above p.

(69) Letter in P.R.O. MT.6/808 file 13907 of 1897.

(70) R.R. 17 Dec. 1897, p.1.

(71) A.S.R.S, E.C.Minutes, Mar.1898, pp.5-7, 35f.

(72) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1898, p.5.

(73) ibid. pp.6, 61f.

(74) Report of a meeting of the Chairmen of Companies on 13th Jan. 1898 in L. & N.W.Railway, 'Board Minutes vol.17' par. 15576; also see Midland Railway, 'Minutes of the Board of Directors, No.15' pars. 6965f, 6978.

(75) The sources for these local concessions are the company records, the R.R., and A.S.R.S. Annual Report - 1898, pp.6-10.

(76) The sources for this paragraph on victimisation are the papers and letters in P.R.O. MT.6/911, bundle headed 13525 of 1899. Detailed data on who were victimised will be found in - file 7131 of 1898 and file 230 of 1899. The latter also contains this printed pamphlet:

A.S.R.S. Railway Companies and their employees; statement of cases of victimisation, and correspondence with the Board of Trade thereon. (January 1899).

(77) See the Report and Financial Statement for each year.

(78) On this point see the following:

(i) Turner to the Board of Trade, 17 June 1898, referring to the Midland Railway (P.R.O. MT.6/911 f. 7646 of 1898).

(ii) Evidence of J.S.Beale, solicitor to the Midland railway, before the Royal Commission on Trades Disputes: "I think the organising of the union rather tends to bring out the qualities of the men, just like the railway service itself." (Parl.Pap., 1906, LVI, min.of ev. Q.4909).

(79) P.R.O. MT.6/911 file 6411 of 1898.

(80) P.R.O. MT.6/911 file 131 of 1898. memo by Hopwood.

(81) P.R.O. MT.6/911 file 8128 of 1898; memo by Hopwood, 30th June 1898, of a recent talk with the General Manager.

(82) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep. 1898, p.4.

(83) P.R.O. MT.6/911 file 13420 of 1898, memo by Hopwood, dated 24th Nov. 1898; also see A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1898, p.4.

(84) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March 1899, p.10f; (this also gives an account of all subsequent developments).

(85) P.R.O. MT.6/911 file 230 of 1899.

(86) Sir Courtenay Boyle to Railway Companies Association, 25 Feb. 1899. (P.R.O. MT.6/911 file 1454 of 1899).

(87) These drafts are all in P.R.O. MT.6/911 file 1454 of 1899.

(88) N.E.R. Arbitration (1897) pp.5, 26-28, 31-36.

(89) R.R. 4 Mar. 1898, p.5.

(90) R.R. 1st Apr. 1898, pp.3,8,10; A.S.R.S. The Strike of the Midland Draymen and Goods Workers at Leeds and Sheffield; special meeting of the Executive Committee. (verbatim report); A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1898, p.6.

(91) S. & B.Webb, History of Trade Unionism (1920 ed.) p.742.

(92) ASRS, Decisions of the AGM 1898. p.17.

Chapter VIII. Unsettled Years, 1898-1903.

By the middle of June 1898, Richard Bell had been elected as the General Secretary on a permanent basis, defeating Walter Hudson, probably because some of the 'North Eastern' vote went to him for his skilful advocacy in the arbitration case.(1) Bell was then 39 years old, and had been a full-time Organising Secretary since his dismissal, in 1891, from the G.W.R., where he had been a Goods Guard.(2) Until the Arbitration case he had been less well known than Hudson, Garrity, or Dobson. But his success in that case had enabled him to get elected as the temporary General Secretary, and so it was easier for him to acquire the office on a permanent basis. In course of his subsequent career he showed himself to be an extremely capable administrator; documents were kept more methodically, verbatim reports of crucial meetings taken fairly often, and the union's annual reports were enriched with appendices containing select railway statistics, culled from blue-books. Unfortunately, he also developed an egocentric streak, which grew more pronounced as the years went by. As we have seen, the strategy of a national all-grades movement was his favourite scheme. It remained the sheet-anchor of his policy.

The Society that Bell inherited had a tendency to expand in the years immediately after 1898. West of England was not the only area of expansion.(3) Appendices A and B bring out the distribution of membership in 1898, 1900 and 1903, and the proportion of membership to the total labour force. Between 1898 and 1900, while Holmes had

obtained a net increase of 443 men in the west of Britain - including 239 in South Wales - 988 members had joined in Kent, 536 in Leicestershire, and 425 in Derbyshire. Durham and Northumberland remained an area of growth. Scottish membership continued to rise more rapidly in these years, thanks partly to a less autocratic management on the North British Railway. The new management readily agreed to have a long and amicable discussion with a multi-grade A.S.R.S.-sponsored deputation in December 1899.(4) With the ending of the long-standing feud between the S.E.R. and the L.C. & D. by the amalgamation of both and the formation of the S.E. & C., Kent had one of the most highly developed and unified railway systems just about the time when the Goods Guards had benefited a great deal elsewhere.(5) A drive to increase A.S.R.S. membership in Kent was consequently successful,(6)culminating in new terms of service for Goods Guards, which were negotiated collectively between an A.S.R.S.-sponsored deputation and the management. S.E. & C. was, as a result, the only southern railway to have the 60-hour week for Goods Guards.(7) There was then a desire to start an 'all-grades' movement on that railway to benefit other grades.(8)

Wherever trade unionism had grown before 1897, it appeared to have the same tendency after that memorable year. If a sense of direction could be given by the centre, the situation was full of great possibilities. This sense of direction was lacking at the A.G.M. of 1898. It was so influenced by the failure of the strikes of the Midland Draymen and the men of the Cork, Bandon and South Coast railway, that it made strikes more difficult by insisting on

a ballot, in spite of Walter Hudson's plea for leaving some discretion to the Executive Committee. Harford's rules of 1896 were kept in other respects and formally written into the rule-book.(9) A dogmatic resolution requiring all movements to have the demand for an eight-hour day and a minimum wage of sixpence per hour was passed with little discussion as a sort of ideal to hold the Society together.(10) Its only effect on movements was to hold them back for the next twelve months, to the intense annoyance of the N.E. railwaymen, who wished to benefit from the prosperity in their area by pressing an ambitious, but not utopian, programme.(11)

The A.G.M. of October 1898 also saw changes in personnel. James Holmes (b.1863) filled Bell's vacancy in the west of Britain, and Walter Hudson gave up the presidency to succeed to Tevenan's post in Ireland. George Thaxton (b.1851) was elected to the part-time post of President of the A.S.R.S. Although membership at the end of 1898 was 10,000 more than 1896, nobody thought of appointing more organising secretaries.(12)

II

The Boer War began formally in the second week of October, after many preliminary skirmishings. War-time full employment and the great prosperity in trade led to a tremendous pressure from the rank-and-file for permission to start movements. The A.G.M. of 1899 readily agreed to relax the resolution of the previous year and allowed members to agitate for more suitable programmes.(12) The problem of controlling them was more complex. The amendment proposed to the

rules on strikes at the previous A.G.M. had clearly stated that the Executive Committee alone had the powers to sanction movements.(13) Hitherto this point had been unclear; Harford's rules of 1896 had tended, by implication, to leave effective powers in the hands of the General Secretary. Being anxious to assert his authority, Bell got this A.G.M., by procedural sharp practice, to leave the powers of sanctioning movements to him alone.(14) But in the following December the Executive Committee declared that this was against the rules, and implicitly reaffirmed its sole right to sanction or refuse movements.(15)

Before the Executive had decided in this manner, Bell had revealed his intention behind asking for these powers. Two important circulars issued by him - one of which was confidential - showed that he was very anxious to win recognition on a national scale, wiping out the defeat of 1897. Economic prosperity and the call-up of reservists for the war suggested that the Directors would be unable or unwilling to resist the threat of a strike.(16) In one manifesto - also published in the Railway Review on 27th October - Bell argued that prosperity justified starting a united all-grades movement on a few simple issues, leaving out the wages question except for a 2/- advance to the Platelayers. The traditional hours clauses of the National Programme of 1889 and the additional demand for 'time and a quarter' for night duty - these were the demands to be pressed on behalf of all grades.(17) The day after it was reproduced in the Railway Review Bell issued a confidential four-page leaflet to the branch secretaries and members, which sketched out the centralised

aggressive movement he was aiming at. He urged them not to waste time in conferences and committees, but to accept the programme, hold mass meetings in December, and loyally support an attempt by the officers and the Executive Committee to negotiate with the Railway Companies' Association at a national level. If the members were prepared to fight for it, Bell was confident of success by March, 1900.(18)

The Executive Committee was divided in its reactions to the published programme. Seven members approved of a uniform programme. The dissident minority of five - including the representatives of the N.E.R. - would have liked to leave programme-formulation exclusively in the hands of local grade committees. At all events, the eloquent silence of the Executive on Bell's confidential circular showed that he had little hope of starting a national movement.(19) He had made a mistake in leaving out a wages clause. Branches were at that time keener for getting local wages concessions to offset rising prices than for the self-sacrifice and self-discipline required for a national struggle, with the ultimate aim of recognition.(20) Of the thirteen members of the Executive of that year ten had never been on it before.(21) They were naturally very responsive to the wishes of branches.

A prolonged debate on the whole question of movements took place at the first meeting of the new Executive Committee in March 1900, showing the absence of any sense of direction, and Richard Bell's inability to provide one persuasively. This committee had seven members who had never even been to an A.G.M., let alone be on the

committee; only four had an experience of serving on the committee or being delegates to the A.G.M. that went back to the Harford era. Faced with twenty-two applications for local movements and one for a national wages movement under central control, the initial reaction of the committee was to reject the latter, declaring,

> " ... this committee is a purely administrative body and unable to initiate any movement as suggested."(22)

Afterwards, as the number of local movements that were sanctioned mounted up, the question of a national all-grades movement was raised again, but only four persons supported the idea.(23) Its opponents were either excessively cautious moderates like Alfred Moss, or parochially-minded militant new committee members like J. Guthrie, who later voted in favour of supporting the Taff Vale strike. The supporters of a national movement were a similar group of contrasting elements.

Bell recorded in his annual report later that year that he would have preferred an all-grades movement in place of the thirty-three local movements that were eventually sanctioned by October.(24) While his grand design had failed in this manner, he had been successful, in the winter of 1899-1900, in getting recognition on a definite basis on the N.E.R., by carefully handling a very militant local movement.

III

The crisis leading to the settlement of January 1900 was the culmination of two recent grievances - the unfulfilled desire of

local activists for a greater say in the industrial disputes of their area, and the strong pressure for a wages advance, and for extending the benefits of Lord James's award to all grades.

In the altered state of relations with the Company, the provisional committee that had conducted the movement of 1897 would have preferred to create a permanent thirteen-member N.E. Council, which would have "executive authority to deal with all matters affecting the men which (had) to go beyond the local superintendent."(25) While Bell and the Executive committee were hardly willing to delegate their powers of control over new movements and programmes, they agreed to set up such a council as long as its powers remained confined to questions arising out of Lord James's award - to the limited but necessary task of establishing uniform principles behind each complaint that went from an A.S.R.S. member to the General Manager.(26) The council was duly elected by December 1898,(27)but at a meeting between Gibb, Bell, and members of this council, Gibb refused to recognise the latter for purposes of interpreting the award.(28) Repeated efforts failed to change his opinion that the council was not representative of the employees,(29)and left a trace of resentment among the local activists.(30)

Meanwhile pressure had been growing in Durham since the autumn of 1898 for an all-round wages advance of 2/-,(31)and in June 1899 the Executive Committee at last decided to sanction a conference.(32) Newcastle was once again a barometer of industrial unrest - especially among lower grades. One local branch issued unofficial circulars in July calling for an overtime ban on behalf of some warehousemen at

Monkwearmouth, when Bell was actually negotiating with Gibb over the men's complaints.(33) The Executive Committee showed its softness to rank-and-file militants by deciding not to fine the branch secretary, but simply give a warning.(34)

After the A.G.M. of 1899 had given the green light to movements the N.E.R. activists sent in their programme at once. Being unable to agree to these sweeping demands and not being sure how representative the Tyneside militants were of the railwaymen of the entire system, the Company offered, in the middle of November, to set up a Conciliation Board. Suspecting this to be a dilatory device the men's delegates rejected the proposal. When a strike seemed imminent, Richard Bell's patient discussions with Gibb made the latter agree to have a meeting with the Board of Directors within a week to discuss the programme.(35) The militant atmosphere and the discontent of the lower grades was emphasised by the general applause given to an unofficial strike of Shunters at Newcastle in November, while the principal movement was in progress.(36)

The temperature was lowered considerably at the meeting of the Directors with the deputation on 6th December 1899, when Sir Joseph Pease, in a very able speech, said that the suspicion that the Company wished to delay matters was "quite unfounded", and promised to date any wage advance that might be negotiated in due course from 1st January 1900.(37) The combination of militancy and an ambitious all-grades programme, which placed the same value on different classes of labour, worried Pease. He urged them not to force the Company to make a reappraisal of its historic decision of 1897 to go to outside

arbitration, and to realise that detailed negotiations were necessary. As he was prepared toabandon the traditional method of negotiations through heads of departments, and, instead, have a meeting between a committee of men's representatives and a committee of heads of departments, the A.S.R.S. leaders felt that they had scored a victory. They promised him to have mass meetings on the following Sunday to get, for the men's Committee "full powers to negotiate and settle questions with the Directors."(38) In this way it was hoped that both sides would enter an era of peaceful collective bargaining.

In a friendly conference the settlement was reached in the middle of January, 1900.(39) An attractive 'all-grades' programme that had recruited members could not be sustained during negotiations. The original demands had included an all-round advance of 2/-, 'time and a quarter' for night-duty, and the Guaranteed Week's pay; these were not obtained. The one concession that contributed to uniformity between grades was the extension of overtime at 'time and a quarter' on a daily basis to all grades. While a universal wage advance was rejected, and some grades got only a deferred advance by having the maximum of the pay-scale raised, the wage increases of Newcastle Goods warehousemen were doubtless a reward of militancy. By raising the Fireman's minimum to 21/- and maintaining Lord James's award to the Passed Firemen of an extra 1/6 in his eleventh year, the A.S.R.S. consolidated its position among the Locomen here; not a bit too soon either, as we shall see in a later chapter.

The future was to decide whether this settlement had ushered in an era of peace. For the present, the Executive Committee welcomed

it, resisting a demand from Tyneside branches for strike action to obtain a higher rate for night duty.(40) The Board of Trade welcomed it for the conciliatory spirit displayed.(41) But as a similar spirit was not shown elsewhere, in course of 1900, the union faced a crisis of the most frightful magnitude.

IV

In South Wales, since the appointment of James Holmes as Organising Secretary in October 1898, the history of the union was bedevilled by personal rivalry and conflicting policies of Holmes and Bell. Like Richard Bell, James Holmes had been dismissed by the railway that had employed him for political and trade union activity in 1892. Since then, unlike Bell, he had not become a union official, but, for six years, was employed elsewhere, using his spare time in political and trade union work in Doncaster. He was a good orator, and, unlike Bell, capable of inspiring loyalty and affection.(42)

Soon after coming to Wales he organised the men on some small railways, hitherto untouched by trade unionism. By June 1899 he had nearly everybody organised on the Brecon and Merthyr, and the Port Talbot railway; he also had more than 200 members on the Cardiff railway.(43) Having obtained better conditions and recognition on the Brecon and Merthyr in July by threatening a strike,(44)he became anxious to repeat his success on the two other railways.(45) In course of July and August he built up such a loyal following among the men on the Cardiff and the Port Talbot railways that they were prepared to strike over the recognition of Holmes.(46) He then surprised Bell

and the Executive Committee by displaying strike notices and wanting full powers.(47) Being alarmed at this gross violation of rules, and hard pressed by Bell for a clear affirmation of his authority, the Executive Committee stressed the need for obeying rules, and declared Holmes to be under Bell's authority. But when Bell tried to take control of the current movements from Holmes, the latter threatened to resign, and the Executive Committee capitulated, and said that the resolution just passed was for future guidance.(48)

In the subsequent history of the Port Talbot dispute Bell obtained recognition by writing to the Board of Trade and getting Hopwood to persuade the railway's manager to meet him.(49) The settlement, effected in December, left a proportion of the men dissatisfied.(50) The delay in settling the matter and the poor outcome contributed to making suspect anything connected with the Board of Trade and Richard Bell in the eyes of some Welsh railwaymen.

The three Welsh railways with a longer history of trade unionism - Taff Vale, Rhymney, Barry - had had a fund of accumulated grievances over the interpretation of the guaranteed week's clause of the settlement of 1890.(51) As an advocate of the doctrine of a 'living wage' Holmes was urging them to agitate for a long overdue wage increase.(52) As prices rose this idea caught on. Mainly as a result of rank-and-file pressure Richard Bell sanctioned, in the autumn of 1899, a joint movement on these railways, and told the men of the Cardiff railway - whom Holmes had organised - to fall in as well.(53) By January 1900 the Companies had refused to negotiate with the A.S.R.S.(54) At that time Bell had got strike notices of more than 90% of the men, but,

instead of using them, he urged that each of the Companies should be appealed to again to receive the men's deputation.(55) Bell possibly planned these to be merely a preliminary formality before making an open challenge on the question of recognition, because, when the Taff Vale company asked the men's deputation if they would accept the terms given by the N.E.R. just about that time, the deputation brusquely replied that they could not accept anything.(56) Afterwards, in the middle of March, Bell challenged the Companies on the recognition issue,(57)and the Executive Committee, following the altered rules, took a strike ballot. In the meantime Sir William T.Lewis of the Cardiff Railway, had been in touch with the three other Companies and made arrangements for "importing fresh labour and protecting and housing the new men in the event of a strike taking place."(58) The Taff Vale Company distributed circulars warning the men that they would lose every privilege, including the Guaranteed Week's pay, if a strike occurred,(59)and that the decision in Lyons v Wilkins had made picketing illegal.(60) As a result of these counter-measures, the ballot did not show the required 90% in favour of a strike, and the movement was closed.(61)

The Executive Committee blamed the men for producing such a poor result,(62)but the preceding account shows that by failing to strike in January or early February Bell had given the Companies an advantage. Bell, indeed, visualised a railway strike mainly as a strategic weapon to be wielded nationally, and was never quite convinced about its tactical possibilities in a local situation.

James Holmes had been away from Glamorgan when this movement was

in its critical stages.(63) Its failure undermined Bell's popularity, embittered local activists, and increased Holmes's prestige. Holmes used the dismissal of many unionist tippers on the Cardiff railway after this fiasco to obtain an inquiry by the Executive Committee on the movements of the previous year, and got them to admit that if he had not been deprived of his independence in the previous September, the movement on the Cardiff railway would have been a success.(64) The stage was set for Holmes's own fight with the Taff Vale Railway to secure recognition. The absence of concessions in the recent movements, the removal of a local activist - Signalman Ewington - to a different Signal box - all these accumulated enough discontent by the middle of July.(65) By that time the Guards on the Barry railway had obtained concessions by threatening a strike - even though Bell and the Executive Committee had refused financial support;(66) this doubtless encouraged Ewington and his fellow Signalman Moses Jones to plan a strike for the reinstatement of the former to the same position as he used to hold before, unless within seven days the Company gave them a satisfactory interview.(67) Although Holmes had encouraged the men to issue notices, he was unable to co-ordinate their efforts anymore, as a result of which, on 20th August, when the notices of the Signalmen and some of the Guards expired, the notices of the others still had another week to go.(68)

The strike itself and its historic legal sequel is an oft-told tale. A recent work has dealt with it vividly and thoroughly.(69) In the internal history of the A.S.R.S. the actual course of the

strike serves to show how Bell's authority was severely shaken. Although Holmes was aware that a strike on the 20th August would make the men liable for breach of contract, he was temperamentally so impetuous that, during the discussions with the Cardiff Chamber of Commerce, in the week ending on the 19th, he continued to demand some kind of recognition in return for a suspension of hostilities. A plea from Bell, four days before the strike, to drop the agitation and leave the question of Ewington to the Board of Trade was not heeded. Holmes was confident of winning the Executive Committee's support. On 19th August, after an extended sitting, it promised financial support, by a majority of seven to five; the minority of five were all experienced men and included well-known I.L.P.-ers. Next day Bell came to Cardiff and took charge of the picketing, but the effective control of the strike lay in the hands of the local activists. In spite of Holmes's belated advice to them to forget about his rivalry with Bell and be loyal to the latter,(70) throughout the negotiations during the strike the Committee continued to maintain an independent existence, never directly meeting Hopwood, whom Ritchie had sent to help in the negotiations.(71)

Bell was anxious to settle the strike quickly, as he knew about the weak legal position of the men. But, as the Company had managed to put on a restricted service from the second day of the strike with the help of blacklegs sent by the 'Free Labour Association', the resistance of the men on strike stiffened. While at the end of the first week the strikers wanted at least three items - the establishment of a Conciliation Board, the reinstatement of everybody, and the

removal of blacklegs - during the next week the strike was prolonged over the last two points. On the 29th, nine days after the strike began, the Company applied for an injunction against Bell, Holmes, and the A.S.R.S. itself, restraining them from illegal acts of picketing. Next day the injunction was granted, so far as Bell and Holmes were concerned, by Mr. Justic Farwell. On the same day, late at night, the men went back, being assured that all of them would be reinstated, all blacklegs would be removed within a month, and a Conciliation Board be set up.

On the difficult legal point as to whether the union itself was liable for the tortuous acts of its agents Mr. Justice Farwell delivered his famous judgment on the 6th September.(72) Bell at once instructed the solicitor of the union to appeal against it, and the Executive approved, agreeing to take it to the House of Lords if necessary.(73) The Court of Appeal reversed the decision - to the jubilation of the A.S.R.S.(74) - but the Company took it to the House of Lords. Eight months later, the historic judgment was pronounced in July 1901.(75) The Company was now entitled to recoup its losses by suing the union for damages.

The actions of James Holmes, in the interval of time between the decision in the Court of appeal and the decision of the House of Lords, further embittered relations between him and the General Secretary. Having gone back mistakenly in the belief that a Conciliation Board would be set up and all blacklegs removed,(76)the Taff Vale men were bitterly disappointed when the blacklegs continued to be there, and planned further militant action.(77) Holmes

actively encouraged this.(78) For a while the Executive Committee supported him, against the wishes of Bell, and tried to enlist the Miners' support for a strike.(79) While these plans were eventually dropped in June 1901,(80)the Executive Committee, in its treatment of all recent tensions between Bell and Holmes, declared that both were equally to blame, and that differences in policy were to be referred to the Executive Committee.(81)

Towards the end of 1901 the Company filed its suit of damages against the Union. On sound legal grounds Bell tried to have a separate defence for the A.S.R.S., so that it could not be made responsible for the conduct of Holmes - in inciting the men to break their contract - before 19th August.(82) While this was agreed to by the Executive Committee, they rejected the demand of two branches - Liverpool No.1 and Accrington - not to pay for the defence of Holmes.(83) These branches then applied for an injunction to restrain the Society from using its funds for Holmes's defence.(84) A majority of the Executive, finding that Bell had helped the branches to get the necessary information to prosecute their case, wished to appeal against it, despite Bell's opposition.(85) Bell took the matter to the branches by publishing the Taff Vale Case and the Injunction, which went beyond the legal arguments, and was an indictment of Holmes's irresponsibility. The A.G.M. of 1902 decided to drop the appeal, thus upholding Bell against the Executive Committee, while deploring the behaviour of branches which had chosen to fight the Society in the law courts.(86) The whole proceedings aroused a tremendous amount of passion, the personal hostility between Bell and

Holmes overshadowing every other question.

Two months later, in December 1902, the Company won its suit for damages, the jury having found for it on all counts. At the adjourned Special General meeting on 6th January, 1903, Bell returned to attack Holmes, feeling aggrieved that he had been called a conspirator to injure the Taff Vale company.(87) Holmes replied, with characteristic oratory, in which the Paris Commune, the Penrhyn Quarrymen, the Boers, and the Irish nationalists - all played a part!(88) But the delegates censured Holmes, resisted an attempt by Holmes's friends to attribute equal responsibility to Bell and Holmes, and stressed that Holmes was sub-ordinate to Bell.(89) Next month the union decided to settle the exact amount of damages out of court,(90)and £23,000 were paid out in March.(91) The legal costs to the union had been £15,724-14-4, over and above the amount paid to the Company; the total costs of the whole episode - including out-of-work pay and other expenses - amounted to £41,892-14-9. The union had been fortunate in being able to meet this expenditure without having to realise any of its investments.(92)

V

It is now time to turn to examine how far the union had succeeded in its industrial efforts while the legal battle had been going on with the Taff Vale Company since September 1900. Being anxious to take advantage of the "golden opportunity" presented by war-time prosperity and offset the rising prices by at least a 10% wages advance, the A.G.M. of October 1900 belatedly decided on a

uniform programme for all movements.(93) But "all-grades" programmes drawn up on the G.N.R., G.C.R.,(94)and the Midland(95) soon petered out, as the Employers' resistance stiffened. On the N.E.R., however, the men did not give up without an attempt at a fight. The situation that developed on that railway, after the settlement of January 1900, gave a permanent twist to the triangular relationship between the management, the union official, and the rank-and-file.

Branches pressed for a flat-rate all-round advance of 2/- in 1900,(96)and some of them also wanted 'time and a quarter' for night duty.(97) But in the year of Taff Vale, Bell was anxious to prove to the public that recognition contributed to industrial peace, and so he wanted a lapse of time before fresh demands. At the A.G.M., on behalf of the N.E.R. delegates, George Loraine said "that recognition without good results was of no use to them." Bell declared, "the advance in money was not great, but a great principle was secured ..." With some asperity he added,

> "Perhaps the N.E. men would like to have a perpetual movement - nothing else, seemingly, would satisfy them."

In spite of his opposition and the opposition of the representative of the Executive, Alfred Moss, the A.G.M. sanctioned a conference to draw up a programme.(98)

The programme eventually drawn up was considered by the Executive to be too big to succeed - they would have preferred only a 10% wages claim - but, with characteristic weakness, they let it go forward because the A.G.M. had sanctioned it.(99) A lightning strike of the

Mineral Guards at Monkwearmouth in December 1900, in protest against the introduction of new brake vans, was symptomatic of the state of unrest.(100) When the Company refused to consider the programme, the new Executive sanctioned the strong desire for a strike, but insisted on a ballot showing 70% in favour.(101) Then the Company played its trump card, and declared that the state of trade could justify reductions. This threat was sufficient to make some of the activists wish to consolidate the gains of the previous year,(102)and the ballot, taken in April, 1901, was a failure.(103) Once again, as in 1889-90, the all-grade character of the union had inspired and made articulate the militants of Tyneside, but the interests of different grades had diverged sufficiently to make the ballot a failure. Once again, as in 1897, the union leadership was interested in nursing and fostering the principles of recognition and conciliation, whereas the rank-and-file activists stuck to their uncompromising programmes and could easily use the machinery of the union to make their influence felt.

The Company would have liked to see a properly representative Conciliation Board, which would not give the militant activists an undue influence. A preliminary ballot to test how far the men favoured setting up such a board had been planned in 1900, and, at the strong insistence of the Company, Bell agreed to conduct the poll among unionists and non-unionists alike.(104) Both he and a majority of the Executive - including the representative of the N.E.R. that year - believed that the Society would strengthen its position by being allowed to conduct this preliminary poll, and eventually they

would be able to exclude non-unionists from the Conciliation Boards. But many branches, and some quite moderate Executive Committee members like Alfred Moss, could not appreciate this involved reasoning, considering that it might well mean that no Board would ever be formed. Recalcitrant branches refused to issue ballot papers to non-unionists.(105) When they persisted in their refusal, the idea was dropped.(106) In November 1899, a Conciliation Board, as we have seen, had been associated with delay. In November 1900, it became associated with non-unionists. As a result it became a dirty word; eight years were to elapse before it became a reality.

Thus, in course of the eighteen months since January, 1900, the best organised area of the A.S.R.S. could show little fresh achievement. Instead, Richard Bell became steadily more unpopular with local activists, and frittered away most of the goodwill he had acquired there in 1897. With the counter-stroke of the Taff Vale Company in paralysing strikes, and the unsettled state of the N.E.R., it was evident that the militancy released in 1897 was "bound in shallows and in miseries ... "

VI

Railwaymen had also thought of fighting the Companies by an alliance with other unions since that memorable year, but like all their efforts, it had failed through internal dissensions. Early in 1897 P.J. King and Robert Blatchford had sketched out the '<u>Clarion</u>' Federation scheme in the pages of that journal - the scheme was designed to create a centralised strike fund of substantial propor-

tions which any union could join.(107) At the A.G.M. of 1897, the excitement of the all-grades movement, the dismissal of Harford, and a feeling of solidarity with the struggle of the Engineers enabled the Socialists(108)to pledge the A.S.R.S. to support the Clarion scheme by a resolution, which was carried by 39 votes to 8.(109) Next year King and Blatchford published a few more tracts on this subject,(110) and King organised a Federal labour parliament at Manchester on 16th July, 1898, to launch a Federation.(111)

Meanwhile Sam Woods, Robert Knight, and a few others had produced, on behalf of the T.U.C. a draft scheme for a General Federation of Trade Unions.(112) Its highest scale of strike pay was only 5/- a week, and consequently it was widely criticised by many A.S.R.S. branches in the north of England; they pledged themselves to support the Clarion scheme.(113) Under pressure from the Socialist group on the Executive Bell wrote to 1,530 trade unions and trades councils saying that the A.S.R.S. was supporting the Clarion scheme and asking them to do the same.(114) Although the Socialists made Bell attend the Manchester conference - he even became treasurer of King's provisional Committee(115) - Bell had never been enthusiastic about this expensive scheme. As King later said, Bell's circular in favour of the scheme was phrased in such a dull manner that it was not "calculated to call forth any response".(116) Even after his election as the 'treasurer' of King's Committee Bell became irritated at the former's unbusinesslike methods.(117)

Outside the branches in Lancashire and Yorkshire there had been

opposition to the scheme, mainly on grounds of expense.(118) At the A.G.M. of 1898 they had an ally in James Williams, who was chairman of the Standing Orders Committee and who disliked parting with the Funds of the Society for grandiose financial ventures. With his help, the resolution of the previous year was rescinded, P.J. King was refused permission to speak to the delegates, and the A.S.R.S. was left free to join any scheme - including the one to be discussed at the adjourned meeting of the T.U.C. in January 1899.(119)

This adjourned meeting, which created the G.F.T.U., was attended by a left-wing A.S.R.S. delegation - Steels, Benson, Hudson, Mear, Hackett, Miller, Thomas Williams, and N.Rimmer;(120) as no one had nominated Bell for any of the seats for the T.U.C. delegation,he could not attend. This left-wing delegation was very disappointed with the whole proceedings of the conference - especially for the refusal to consider any scheme other than the draft prepared by the T.U.C. It was now their turn to oppose the affiliation of the A.S.R.S. to the G.F.T.U.(121)

After a poll taken later that year proved to be inconclusive,(122) matters remained at a deadlock until 1901. In this period Bell praised the G.F.T.U. and hinted at affiliation,(123)but, on behalf of the left-wing opposition, J.W. Benson carried a resolution rejecting the idea at the A.G.M. of 1900. He declared that in an age when strikes assumed national proportions, the G.F.T.U. was quite inadequate to deal with them.(124) A year later Pete Curran and George Barnes tried to persuade the delegates, and came very near to success. Some erstwhile supporters of the Clarion scheme voted in favour of

affiliation, believing that afterwards they would be able to make the G.F.T.U. more militant. But the two old and respected members persuaded the A.G.M. to take a ballot of the membership first.(125) This gave Bell an opportunity to campaign against it,(126)for in the years after Taff Vale he was unwilling to take any financial risks. The poll was once again small - 14,995 voted out of 54,443 members; only 9911 were in favour of affiliation. The Executive Committee was lukewarm about affiliation,(127)and the A.G.M. of 1902 formally buried the idea.(128)

VII

Yet the hostility of the Companies to the A.S.R.S. - which had given rise to the Federation movement - was not of the same intensity everywhere. 'Packing' deputations no longer existed on some railways. The acceptance of an A.S.R.S.-sponsored deputation of Goods Guards and Shunters as being representative of the men, by the G.W.R. in October 1903,(129)the custom of the officials of the G.C.R. to communicate with the Secretary of the A.S.R.S.-sponsored Signalmen's committee,(130)the willingness of the Midland to meet the A.S.R.S.-sponsored Goods Guards' Committee - all these(131)indicated that some Companies might in the long run be prepared to accept departmental collective bargaining. The contrast with the G.E.R. - which had nearly provoked a strike in July 1900 by packing depuations(132) - was noticeable.

The records of the Midland, the G.N.R., the G.W.R., and the G.C.R. show no trace of any connexion with the Employees' Parliament-

ary Council or the National Free Labour Association. The Midland and the G.N.R. refused to subscribe to the latter body when approached just after the "all-grades" movement.(133) Like the Taff Vale railway the L. & Y. however, was sympathetic to it, having given £50 in October 1900, another £50 in 1903, and a further £50 in 1905.(134)

With the appointment of Guy Granet as a permanent Secretary the Railway Companies' Association had become recently a more effective body for parliamentary agitation.(135) But an attempt by the Rhymney railway in May 1901 to turn it into an organisation like the Shipping Federation, with facilities to maintain a permanent supply of blacklegs, did not succeed.(136) While a number of Companies were thus less pathologically hostile to the A.S.R.S. than the others, the L. & N.W. hit the headlines again in 1901 with the Linaker libel case. Linaker, an official of this Company, sued the Railway Review for libel contained in a letter which had alleged that he was habitually oppressive and inebriate. The trustees of the A.S.R.S. were the defendants in the case, as the union owned the newspaper. Mr. Justice Matthew decided the case in February 1901, declaring that a libel had been committed, and that the trustees were to be indemnified out of the union's funds. The damages amounted to £1,000.(137) As the Taff Vale judgment followed soon after in July, the union decided to abandon any ideas of appealing against the other decision, and, instead, transferred the ownership of the Railway Review to a newly created company - the King's Cross Publishing Company - in whose hands it has remained ever since. Meanwhile, the Company dismissed all those railwaymen who had given evidence for the defence, in spite of

a public outcry.(138)

Irrespective of the variations in their attitude to the A.S.R.S., all Companies had uniformly refused to give concessions during the war-time boom. They doubtless felt that after the concessions given in 1898, it was impossible to yield any more, when prices were rising and their rates were fixed. Long-term economy drives began to be introduced, whose effects we shall see in a later chapter. But in the short run men felt the pinch of high prices, which had, by 1903, risen by 6% since the war began.(139) Some grades, like the Midland Goods Guards, were even given adverse terms as long as the depression lasted.(140) Applications for movements poured into Bell's office, and he decided to tell his Executive, in December 1902, quite candidly, that it was no use sanctioning any of them. In 1899 many men were earning overtime pay and, if they had launched a forward movement, they might have obtained permanent gains. Now, in a period of depression the union ought only to sanction movements against overt encroachments on recent concessions; it should otherwise concentrate on building up the membership.(141)

Membership had been declining since 1900. For the first time in many years, the annual exodus was larger than the annual influx, (Table XV).(142)

Table XV

Year	New members	Net decline over previous years
1901	10,362	1,840
1902	8,989	1,670
1903	8,700	1,040

The decline was not arrested until 1904. At the end of 1903 the membership was a little higher than in 1898, but gains in Scotland and Ireland offset a slight decline in England and Wales. (Appendices A and B). From the peak of 1900 the average decline for England and Wales was 2%, but areas which remained at a level higher than 1898 show a decline of lesser magnitude. The exception is Kent, where, in spite of a 2.6% decline from 1900, there was a permanent and absolute increase since 1898, doubtless due to the amalgamation of the two railways. Once again, the figures suggest that railway trade unionism had less staying power in countries close to or including agricultural areas than in heavily industrialised parts. For example, in these five years the continuous decline in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire contrasted with stability in Derbyshire and increase in Nottinghamshire. One can perhaps also detect the contrasting influence of the policies of the Companies in the contrast between Leicester and Northamptonshire in the number of men lost. As the L. & N.W. ran through Leicestershire but not through Northamptonshire, the bigger leakage in the former county might have been connected with the 'Linaker' case.

Although the region covered by the N.E.R. remained a stronghold, the inability to launch movements prevented further expansion. The decline in Northumberland was possibly due to losses among dock workers at Newcastle and Blyth, for whom not many concessions had been obtained in 1900.(143) A similar exhaustion of the impetus given by the "all-grades" movement explain why in Lancashire and Yorkshire membership declined, although Yorkshire still had a greater proportion

than the national percentage. The position in Lancashire was more depressing. Perhaps the 'feud' between the Executive Committee and the branches of Liverpool and Accrington over the injunction case contributed to a general loss of confidence. On the other hand, membership in South Wales remained stable at the relatively high percentage of 29% of the labour force. So, it is only for the period after Taff Vale, and not before, that one can contrast the strength of the A.S.R.S. in that area with declining numbers elsewhere.

VIII

The Taff Vale strike was symptomatic of a malaise of the A.S.R.S. - a malaise that had become evident in Harford's last year. His deposition had accentuated this, and Bell was not such a skilful physician as to be able to cure it quickly. The malaise was a failure to weld the Society together into a purposeful organism, governed by one single authority. Older problems of how to decide between rival attractions of national versus local programmes, all-grade movements versus single-grade movements, strikes over recognition versus strikes over bread-and-butter grievances - all these had continued to dominate the Society. The structure of the union had been so democratic that without a central direction the Society could not solve any of these problems. Yet, until Taff Vale administered a shock, the Executive Committees and Annual General Meetings had been the cockpit of competing sectional interests. The chief official of the Society was a newcomer who was not a very good manager of men, and one of his chief subordinates was constantly

at loggerheads with him. The unsettled years after 1898 were also the wasted years.

Waste in every respects but one; after Taff Vale a reappraisal of the power-structure began, and the final decision was taken by the Special General Meeting of January 1903, which had also, as we have seen, censured James Holmes. In January 1901, when the House of Lords had not given its verdict, but Bell was smarting under the revolts against his authority in the previous year, he issued a circular suggesting important organisational changes.(144) Stressing the need for continuity in policy he advocated the replacement of the A.G.M. by triennial delegate meetings; the election of Executive Committees for a three-year term, with one-third retiring every year; the appointment of more organising Secretaries; and the centralisation of all funds except what was needed for branch management. The last-mentioned reform would have transferred the funds giving the Donation benefit to the head office; it would have avoided the recurrence of an occasion like the recent Monkwearmouth strike,(145) when the Executive Committee had to send frantic telegrams to the Post-Master General to prevent the strikers from using the money in the local post office savings bank.(146)

Articles and letters in the Railway Review discussed the problem.(147) Yet such was the strength of shortsighted militancy and political opposition to Bell among some socialist-dominated branches, that they denounced Bell's circular, questioned his right to issue them,(148)and raised protests at the A.G.M. of October 1901.(149) Nevertheless by that time the Taff Vale judgment and the

impending threat to the funds had made alteration of the rules an urgent matter. The union decided to wait until the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. had obtained legal advice on the best way of doing it,(150)and then a seven-member committee - elected in October 1901 - thoroughly revised them. The revisions were published in draft form by October 1902,(151)and adopted, with but few alterations at the Special General meeting in the following January.(152)

The suggestion of constituting two separate societies, to safeguard the Society's friendly benefits, was rejected as being "most embarrassing, if not impracticable." The alternative suggestion of making each rule very definite and decisive in relation to its purpose was accepted.(153) Two separate banking accounts were created - one to deal exclusively with friendly benefits. The other account covered administration, legal aid, the Donation benefit, the Protection benefit, and the Parliamentary fund.(154) The centralisation of the Donation benefit left branches with only three farthings out of a member's weekly dues for management expenses. Branches protested against this, but a motion against centralisation was defeated by a narrow majority of four (32-28).(155)

Henceforth Organising Secretaries were in no case to take part in trade disputes or issue circulars without the express authority of the Executive Committee or the General Secretary. The Executive Committee was elected for a three-year term - with one-third retiring every year. Its powers of dealing with trade disputes were strictly defined by Rule XIII: all movements had to get the Committee's

sanction before being started, and the Committee had no powers to authorise a movement after it had already started. Unofficial strikes were never to be given any benefits, and officers connected with them were liable to be suspended or dismissed. The General Secretary was to exercise control over all stages of a movement; before a strike could be contemplated the Company should have been approached three times - by a deputation, by the Executive Committee in public, and by an offer of Arbitration. The Executive Committee could close a movement without a ballot, but a ballot of the members involved was essential before strikes were authorised.

These rules suited Bell ideally, as they recognised, by implication, that a railway strike was only a strategic weapon. His authority as a whole was also enhanced. Technically the A.G.M. remained the governing body, and there was no age or experience qualification for being a delegate. But as rules could be altered only once every three years, and as the power of interpreting doubtful rules was taken away from the Executive Committee and given to the A.G.M.,(156)the chances of a small faction undermining Bell's authority was diminished. Already in October 1901 he had managed to reassert his control over the Annual General Meeting, by amending the standing orders in such a manner as to make sure that, during Conference week, the standing orders Committee accepted no amendments or resolutions without consulting him.(157) He scored another triumph in keeping out ex-railwaymen from the Executive Committee, for some of them had been either too militant industrially, or (like J.H. Palin) too left-wing politically. This dispossessed group

enlisted the support of the Executive Committee to amend the new clause, but, having heard Bell, the A.G.M. of October 1903 rejected their plea.(158) Finally, Bell became a standing delegate to the T.U.C. Ever since delegates to the T.U.C. had to be elected by the membership by a resolution of the A.G.M. of 1897,(159)Bell had to be nominated by his branch. An oversight had prevented his attendance at the Congress of 1898; "on principle" I.L.P.-ers had opposed a proposal to make him a standing delegate, at the A.G.M. of that year and defeated it.(160) Three years later another A.G.M. reversed that decision,(161)and now the right of the General Secretary to attend the T.U.C. was written into the rules.

As long as Bell did not become divorced from the mood and temper of the bulk of the active membership, his position was now very strong. It had taken just over five years, and a major upheaval, to enhance his authority. For the first time, the dream of F.W. Evans to establish a centralised union, became a full-fledged reality.

Appendix A

Membership: Geographical Variations

1898-1903

	1898	1900	1903
United Kingdom	50,292	55,961	51,436
Scotland	2,729	3,642	3,876
Ireland	1,284	1,100	1,437
England & Wales	46,279	51,219	46,123
Bedfordshire	70	117	170
Berkshire	83	100	68
Buckinghamshire	248	217	158
Cambridgeshire	87	143	121
Cheshire	1,423	1,393	1,390
Cornwall	77	104	111
Cumberland	460	537	611
Derbyshire	1,315	1,740	1,725
Devonshire	175	241	292
Dorsetshire	8	9	11
Durham	3,312	3,593	3,485
Essex	175	200	192
Gloucestershire	652	775	818
Hampshire	336	229	120
Herefordshire	43	48	48
Hertfordshire	174	146	139
Huntingdonshire	33	33	26
Kent	663	1,651	1,507
Lancashire	6,995	7,004	5,142
Leicestershire	791	1,327	930
Lincolnshire	656	651	586
London & Middx.	4,359	6,254	4,937
Norfolk	487	452	381
Northamptonshire	1,092	1,051	951
Northumberland	1,865	1,963	1,656
Nottinghamshire	1,575	1,709	1,932
Oxfordshire	19	10	13
Rutland	24	19	6
Shropshire	436	425	322
Somerset	197	260	331
Staffordshire	1,596	1,705	1,471
Suffolk	51	73	41
Surrey	325	349	622
Sussex	503	399	437
Warwickshire	1,558	1,846	1,727
Westmorland	96	99	70
Wiltshire	228	239	267
Worcestershire	157	291	359

Appendix A (Cont'd)

	1898	1900	1903
Yorkshire	8,952	9,279	8,202
South Wales & Monmouthshire	4,510	4,749	4,751
North Wales	332	361	183

Appendix B.

Geographical Variations in the incidence of trade unionism. 1898-1903.

(Source: (1) Membership: 'Report and Financial Statements for the respective years; Handbook of Stations.

(2) Eligible Railway labour force: Census of England & Wales, 1901. (cd.1523 of 1903); Census of Scotland, 1901. (cd.1798 of 1903) Census of Ireland, 1901. (cd. 1190 of 1902).)

N.B. - For the way in which the Census reports have been used, in this and other appendices, see p.506

	Census of 1901 Railwaymen Eligible	Proportion of Trade Unionists in 1898	1900	1903
United Kingdom	297,212	16.9	18.8	17.3
Scotland	31,342	8.7	11.6	12.4
Ireland	11,631	11.0	9.5	12.4
England & Wales	254,239	18.2	20.1	18.1
Bedfordshire	1,084	6.5	10.8	15.7
Berkshire	1,752	4.7	5.7	3.9
Buckinghamsh:	1,570	15.8	13.8	10.1
Cambridgeshr:	2,032	4.3	7.0	6.0
Cheshire	8,729	16.3	16.0	15.9
Cornwall	1,217	6.3	8.5	9.1
Cumberland	3,788	12.1	14.2	16.1
Derbyshire	7,717	17.0	22.5	22.4
Devonshire	3,802	4.6	6.3	7.7
Dorsetshire	1,225	0.7	0.7	0.9
Durham	10,629	31.2	33.8	32.8
Essex	7,869	2.2	2.5	2.4
Gloucestershr:	5,379	12.1	14.4	15.2
Hampshire	4,130	8.1	5.5	2.9
Herefordshire	980	4.4	4.9	4.9
Hertfordshire	1,851	9.4	7.9	7.5
Huntingdonshr:	535	6.2	6.2	4.9
Kent	5,559	11.9	29.7	27.1
Lancashire	32,189	21.7	21.8	16.0
Leicestershire	3,802	20.8	34.9	24.5
Lincolnshire	4,384	15.0	14.9	13.4
London & Middx.	33,113	14.7	18.9	14.9
Norfolk	2,930	16.6	15.4	13.0
Northamptonshire	4,654	23.5	22.6	20.4
Northumberland	4,337	43.0	45.3	38.2
Nottinghamshire	6,301	25.0	28.1	30.7

Appendix B (Cont'd)

	Census of 1901 Railwaymen Eligible	Proportion of Trade Unionists in 1898	1900	1903
Oxfordshire	1,439	1.3	0.7	0.9
Rutland	228	10.5	8.3	2.6
Shropshire	2,316	18.8	18.4	13.9
Somerset	2,825	6.9	9.2	11.7
Staffordshire	8,298	19.2	20.5	17.7
Suffolk	1,590	3.2	4.6	2.6
Surrey	3,713	8.8	9.4	16.8
Sussex	3,314	15.2	12.0	13.2
Warwickshire	7,335	21.2	25.2	23.5
Westmorland	779	12.3	12.7	9.0
Wiltshire	2,681	8.5	9.0	10.0
Worcestershire	2,639	6.0	11.0	13.6
Yorkshire	34,715	25.8	26.7	23.6
South Wales & Monmouthshire	16,375	27.5	29.0	29.0
North Wales	4,189	7.9	8.6	4.4

NOTES

(1) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1898, p.2; Alcock, op.cit. p.292.

(2) R.R. 17 June 1898 p.8 for biography of Bell.

(3) Dr. Pelling is not quite correct in stating that under James Holmes the west of England and South Wales was an area of expansion, while other areas were contracting (cf. Bealey & Pelling, Labour and Politics, 1900-1906 (London 1958) p.56.)

(4) For the new management see Railway News 24 June 1899, p.971f; for the deputation, R.R. 29 Dec. 1899, p.10.

(5) For the Kentish amalgamation see Clapham, op.cit. III, p.352.

(6) R.R. 9 Mar. 1900, p.4, Dobson's report.

(7) R.R. 9 Feb. 1900, p.10; R.R. 16 Feb. 1900, p.5; for a comparative survey of Goods Guards' Hours in August 1900 see Trades Disputes; R.Com. Appendix. p.48f. (Parl.Pap., 1906, LVI.)

(8) R.R. 6 July 1900, p.6.

(9) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M.,1898, p.6f; R.R. 7 Oct. 1898, pp.12,13.

(10) R.R. 14 Oct. 1898, p.10.

(11) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1899, p.5; also see Bell's remarks and the remarks of N.E. railwaymen at the A.G.M. of Oct.1899, R.k. 13 Oct. 1899, p.10; letter from an N.E. railwayman in R.R. 7 Dec. 1900, p.7.

(12) R.R. 13 Oct. 1899, p.10f.

(13) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M. 1899, p.6f.

(14) R.R. 13 Oct. 1899, p.10f.

(15) A.S.R.S. E.C. Minutes, Dec. 1899, p.36.

(16) That the position of the army reservists had entered into the calculations of the leaders is seen from the following: R.R. 13 Oct. 1899; R.R. 17 Nov. 1899, pp.1,5; Railway Times 23 Dec. 1899, p.822. These were mainly denials of charges of lack of patriotism, but one can read between the lines.

(17) A.S.R.S. Manifesto the Railwaymen of the United Kingdom, Oct. 1899 (Circular No.G.O.63); R.R. 27 Oct. 1899, p.8.

(18) A.S.R.S. To the Secretary and members, 28 Oct. 1899. (Circular No. G.O.64.), passim.

(19) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1899, p.35.

(20) The popularity of the wages demand is indicated in the number of branches who asked for its inclusion in Bell's programme, A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1899, p.16f; also see Hull branch report, R.R. 3 Nov. 1899, p.6; Midland railway Signalmen R.R. 10 Nov. 1899, p.5; R.R. 1 Dec. 1899, p.5.

(21) R.R. 10 Mar. 1899, p.10.

(22) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1900, p.85. (resolution No.51).

(23) ibid., resolution No.53.

(24) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1900, p.6.

(25) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep. 1898, p.12.

(26) ibid., p.33.

(27) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1898, p.

(28) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1899, p.17.

(29) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1899, pp.19,52.

(30) See Leeds No.3 branch report, R.R. 2 June 1899, p.3; Carlisle branch report R.R. 23 June 1899, p.2.

(31) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1898, p.11.

(32) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1899, pp.16,52; in December 1898 it had, by a narrow majority decided against sanctioning it. (ibid., Dec. 1898, p.34).

(33) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep. 1899, pp.10-12.

(34) ibid., p.33.

(35) The above account is based on the following sources:-
A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1899, p.11; R.R. 1 Dec.1899,p.1 (General Notes); ibid. p.8.(editorial); R.R. Dec.8,1899,p.7 (letter from 'Geordie'); R.R. 15 Dec. 1899, p.6f;
N.E. Railway, 'Board Minute Book', vol. 13, par.10915.

(36) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1899, pp.11-13. Bell persuaded Gibb not to dismiss the men on strike.

(37) N.E.Railway, 'Board Minute Book, vol.13,' par.10915, printed speech of Pease, pp.4-7.

(38) ibid., pp.3f, 6f.

(39) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March 1900, p.37f; the detailed concessions are in ibid., pp.38-50.

(40) ibid., p.51.

(41) Hopwood praised the settlement, Hours Act Report, 1900,p.15. (Parl.Pap., 1900, LXXVI, part i.)

(42) R.R. 4 Nov. 1898 for a biography.

(43) ibid., R.R. 14 July 1899, p.4; B. & M.Railway, 'Board Minute Book' No.5, pars. 8294, 8301, 8320.

(45) R.R. 28 July 1899, p.4; on the Port Talbot railway he wrote, "The point at issue is, therefore, the recognition of the A.S.R.S."

(46) R.R. 4 Aug. 1899, pp.4,10; R.R. 11 Aug. 1899, p.6.

(47) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep. 1899, p.12f; also see A.S.R.S. The Taff Vale Case and the Injunction, p.19f.

(48) The episode is described in detail in The Taff Vale Case and the Injunction, p.20; also see A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1899, pp.32f, 34.

(49) P.R.O. M.T.6/911 file 13437 of 1899 contains a full account by Hopwood, dated 30th October, 1899, of his meeting with the manager.

(50) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1899, p.14f; ibid., March 1900, p.34ff.

(51) There was some unrest over this in the autumn of 1898; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1898, p.9.

(52) R.R. 2 Dec. 1898, p.9.

(53) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1899, pp.13,34.

(54) R.R. 19 Jan. 1900, p.5.

(55) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March 1900, p.55f gives a full account up to the middle of March; also see R.R. 9 Feb.1900, p.9.

(56) South Wales Daily News, 12 Mar. 1900, p.4.

(57) R.R. 16 Mar. 1900, p.5.

(58) Cardiff Railway Co., 'Minute Book No.4', p.14f.

(59) R.R. 23 Mar. 1900, p.4.

(60) R.R. 13 Apr. 1900, p.10. This circular was sent to the Taff Vale Company by the Employers' Parliamentary Council.

(61) R.R. 30 Mar. 1900, p.7.

(62) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1900, p.39.

(63) See his reports as Organising Secretary in the R.R. during these weeks.

(64) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June, 1900, p.62f.

(65) R.R. 13 July, 1900, p.10.

(66) A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 15th July, 1900, pp.2-5.

(67) R.R. 3 Aug. 1900, p.7, full report of a meeting.

(68) The narrative of the strike, which begins from here, is based on the following:-
A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 19th Aug. 1900, p.2f;
A.S.R.S. Taff Vale Railway Strike: copies of correspondence;
A.S.R.S. Taff Vale Case and the Injunction;
Successive issues of the R.R., the Western Mail, and the South Wales Daily News.

(69) F. Bealey & H. Pelling, Labour and Politics, 1900-1906(1958), ch.III, passim.

(70) See his speech on the 19th August, after he had read the telegram from London offering financial support, R.R. 24th Aug. 1900, p.11f.

(71) cf. Hopwood's report, reprinted in R.R. 7 Sep. 1900, p.12.

(72) Bealey & Pelling, op.cit. p.64f.

(73) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1900, p.4f.

(74) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1900, pp.4,5.

(75) R.R. 26 July 1901, pp.9-14.

(76) The Company had not promised these two things in its final letter to Sir William T.Lewis, who had acted as a mediator in the last stages; see A.S.R.S. Taff Vale Railway Strike: copies of correspondence p.5.

(77) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1900, p.18.

(78) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1901, pp.12f, 37; also see speeches in R.R. 12 Apr. 1901, p.7; R.R. 17 May 1901, p.6.

(79) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1901, pp.12f, 37; A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 26th May 1901, p.13f.

(80) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1901, pp.25-28.

(81) ibid., p.27.

(82) Apart from the sources cited in connexion with specific points, the principal source for this paragraph is:
A.S.R.S. The Taff Vale Case and the Injunction.

(83) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March, 1902, pp.15-17.

(84) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June, 1902, pp.12-14; A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 22nd June, 1902, passim.

(85) A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 22nd June, 1902 passim; also see A.S.R.S. Decisions of the Annual General Meeting and Special General Meetings ... 1902, pp.76-80, for the statement of the Executive Committee representatives.

(86) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M., 1902, p.4.

(87) A.S.R.S. Agenda to be Considered at the Adjourned Special General Meeting, 6th Jan. 1903, p.1f.

(88) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the adjourned Special General Meeting Jan 6th 1903 ... p.16ff.

(89) ibid., p.4.

(90) A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 1st Feb. 1903, passim.

(91) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March, 1903, p.21f.

(92) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June, 1903, p.37f.

(93) R.R. 12 Oct. 1900, p.9f.

(94) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1900, pp.20f, 45-7.

(95) R.R. 15 Mar.1901, p.5.

(96) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1900, pp.11f, 30f.

(97) ibid., this appears to have been more popular with the upper grades; see correspondence by 'Puck' and 'Tired Tim' in R.R. 31st Oct. 1902, p.9; R.R. 7 Nov. 1902, p.7 and R.R. 21st Nov. 1902, p.9.

(98) R.R. 12 Oct. 1900, p.12f.

(99) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1900, pp.19, 43f.

(100) See details in A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1900, pp.41-3; ibid.,Mar. 1901, p.14; R.R. 14 Dec. 1900, p.6; R.R. 21 Dec. 1900, p.5f.

(101) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1901, pp.15, 37f;

(102) R.R. 22 Mar. 1901, p.10. - reports in various centres.

(103) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1901, p.20f.

(104) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1900, pp.19,41.

(105) ibid., also see correspondence columns of all issues of R.R. in November 1900.

(106) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1901, pp.14f, 37.

(107) An article on the dispute of the Penrhyn Quarrymen in Clarion 9 Jan. 1897, was the first of a series of articles on this question of Federation.

(108) See chap.X for an analysis of the Socialist group within the A.S.R.S.; this also discusses the altered method of representation at the T.U.C. since 1897.

(109) R.R. 15 Oct. 1897, p.2.

(110) Trades Federation (Revised ed.1898); Good and Bad Federation (1898).

(111) Reports in Clarion 23 July 1898, p.235; ibid, 30 July 1898, p.245.

(112) R.R. 11 Mar. 1898, p.6.

(113) ibid., also see R.R. 18 Mar. 1898, p.8 (editorial), and branch reports in this and subsequent numbers.

(114) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1898, pp.29, 49; ibid., June 1898, p.4; for a copy of the circular see R.R. 22 April, 1898, p.1.

(115) Clarion 30 July 1898, p.245; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1898, p.2f.

(116) Clarion 28 Jan, 1899, p.29.

(117) Yorkshire Factory Times, 14 Oct. 1898, p.1; he told the reporter of this paper that although the scheme was adopted in July, King had not called a meeting of the committee yet.

(118) See letters of Alfred Moss in R.R. 8 Apr. 1898, p.7; R.R. 13 May 1898, p.11.

(119) R.R. 14 Oct. 1898, p.9.

(120) Rimmer was not a Socialist but an enthusiast for the Clarion scheme (cf. his letter R.R. 7 July, 1899, p.7. where he opposed parliamentary representation but supported the Clarion scheme).

(121) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March, 1899, pp.3-5, for their report.

(122) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June, 1899, p.7.

(123) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1900, p.8f.

(124) R.R. 5 Oct. 1900, p.12.

(125) R.R. 11 Oct. 1901, p.12f.

(126) See his letters and controversy with Isaac Mitchell in R.R. 31 Jan. 1902, p.10; R.R. 25 Apr. 1902, p.7; R.R. 2 May 1902, p.6; R.R. 9 May, 1902, p.12; R.R. 16 May, 1902, p.6. Also see letters from members in R.R. 14 Feb. 1902, p.7; R.R. 21 Feb. 1902, p.10.

(127) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March, 1902, p.3.

(128) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M., 1902, p.10.

(129) G.W.Railway, 'Traffic Committee No.10' pp.45-7. The names of the delegates, and the seven-member composition of the delegation, indicate that it was A.S.R.S.-sponsored.

(130) R.R. 8 Nov. 1901, p.12.

(131) R.R. 10 Aug. 1900, p.6.

(132) Full details about this will be found in A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June, 1900, p.15; Special E.C.Minutes, 15th July, 1900, p.8; Special E.C.Minutes 19th Aug. 1900, p.6f; the R.R. for June, July and August, 1900.

(133) Midland Railway, 'Minutes of the Board of Directors No.15', par.6979; G.N.Railway, 'Board Minute Book No.45', p.370f.

(134) L. & Y.Railway, 'Proceedings of Directors' Board', vol.13, p.241; ibid., vol.14, p.512; ibid., vol.15, p.507.

(135) Railway Companies' Association, Minutes No.405-7, refer to these changes.

(136) Railway Companies' Association, Minutes No.411 (p.2) and 414 (p.1f.).

(137) N.A. Citrine, Trade Union Law (London 1950) p.465f; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1901, p.4f; R.R. 8 Feb.1901; R.R. 15 Feb.1901.

(138) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, 26th May, 1901, pp.1-10, 13; six successive issues of R.R. from 3rd May, 1901.

(139) E.H. Phelps Brown & S.Hopkins, 'The Course of Wage Rates in Five Counties', Oxford Economic Papers, June 1950, p.276.

(140) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1901, p.21.

(141) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1902, p.27.

(142) Source: Report & Financial Statements of the relevant years. The number of new members is calculated by reducing the total amount of entrance fees into shillings, as 1/- was the entrance fee.

(143) For the discontent among the Teemers at Blyth see A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 15th July, 1900, pp.5-7; R.R. 27 July, 1900 p.2; R.R. 24 Aug. 1900, p.2.

(144) A.S.R.S. Important Suggestions to the Members, January, 1901, (Circular No.G.O.107), passim.

(145) See above p.269f

(146) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1900, pp.41-43.

(147) Among others see 'Democracy and Trade Unionism' in R.R. July 5th, 1901, p.8.

(148) See Doncaster and Leeds No.1. in R.R. 8 Feb.1901, p.2f; Ormskirk in R.R. 22 Feb. 1901, p.4.

(149) R.R. 4 Oct. 1901, p.13.

(150) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1901, p.8.

(151) A.S.R.S. Annual General Meeting, 1902. Agenda: Rules as amended by the Revision Committee. (unless otherwise stated the discussion of the rules are based on this 38-page pamphlet).

(152) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1903, p8f.

(153) A.S.R.S. Annual General Meeting, 1902, Agenda. Rules as amended ... p.2.

(154) See ch.XII for more on the origins of the Parliamentary fund.

(155) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the Adjourned Special General Meeting ... January 6th, 1903 ... p.12.

(156) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar. 1903, p.9.

(157) R.R. 4 Oct. 1901, p.11; some technical difficulties in administering this came to light next year, but when they were removed by 1903, Bell's point remained unaffected. R.R. 17 Oct. 1902, p.9; R.R. 9 Oct. 1903, p.2f.

(158) R.R. 9 Oct. 1903, p.2.

(159) See below p. 339ff (Ch.X) for work of a Socialist faction in promoting this.

(160) R.R. 14 Oct. 1898, p.9.

(161) R.R. 11 Oct. 1901, p.14.

Chapter IX Parliamentary Work, 1894 - 1900

(1)

Between the passing of the Railway Regulation (Hours of Labour) Act of 1893 and the Railway Employment (prevention of accidents) Act of 1900, there was a gap of seven years, but these years were not wasted. We have seen how the Board of Trade became willing and even eager to listen to the A.S.R.S. over its complaints of long hours, in contrast to the attitude of the officials of that department in the eighteen-eighties.(1) A similar development happened in connexion with the vexed question of accidents to railwaymen, and the appointment of practical railwaymen as sub-inspectors of the Board of Trade.

Little had been done on this until A.J. Mundella came to this department in 1892. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach thought that to appoint sub-inspectors from the ranks of ordinary workers would undermine discipline and create "a sort of detective to go spying about." He could not be convinced by Harford's very reasonable plea that a great many mishaps were due to defective lighting in shunting yards, inadequate space between rails and so on - defects that went un-detected by the public or by the inquests on major railway accidents.(2) Sir Michael, in his majority report of 1892, firmly rejected this suggestion, and put in the somewhat disingenuous plea that the travelling public provided a practical inspectorate.(3)

Precedent for appointing workmen as factory inspectors existed, however, in the case of the appointment of J.D. Prior - formerly General Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters - as such

in 1882.(4) So the plea of the A.S.R.S. for an extension of it met with general support. The one hundred and sixty-six candidates in the election of 1892, who had sent definite replies to the A.S.R.S. questionnaire, were, with six exceptions, in favour of this idea, however much they differed on the other questions on state control of hours. (5) In May 1894 Channing elicited from Thomas Burt, by a question in Parliament, that a decision had definitely been taken to create this post,(6) and it later transpired that apparently one of Mundella's last acts before he had to leave the Board of Trade was to get the Chancellor of the Exchequer to grant the money needed to create this class of post.(7) Of the two persons appointed one was J.J. Hornby, a prominent member of the A.S.R.S. from the N.E.R. who had served on the Executive Committee for two years, and been secretary of the Newcastle Central branch.(8)

The aim now became to increase the number of sub-inspectors and, if possible, extend their functions. Within a year of these appointments the Conservatives had returned to power, and C.T. Ritchie was President of the Board of Trade. During the debate on estimates in August 1895 Channing tried to show that the inspectors had been very useful in reporting injuries to the Board of Trade that were due to defective equipment, but not very successful in reporting fatalities due to the same cause. This was so because they had no clear right to be present at Coroners' Inquests and give expert and unbiased evidence. In the case of mining accidents the right of inspectors to be present was well-established, but this plea for extending the same practice to railwaymen's accidents failed.(9)

Edward Garrity, the Assistant Secretary of the Society, urged Ritchie in an interview on 17th November 1896 to give official support to Channing's private bill on Railway fatalities (Coroner's Inquests). Ritchie did not agree to this, but he was sympathetic to the idea of increasing the number of sub-inspectors, and seeing that shunters were better protected by having wagons labelled on both sides, and yards better lit.(10) The union was disappointed at the absence of rapid results, but what the leadership did not know was that ever since 1894 the reports of the sub-inspectors had been steadily influencing the higher officials in the department in favour of some legislation. Within two years this became evident.(11)

Meanwhile, in the middle years of the 'nineties, the parliamentary work of the A.S.R.S. was concerned with attempts to weaken the hold that the various insurance funds of the railway companies had over railwaymen. These funds were often compulsory and a counter-attraction to the friendly benefits offered by the A.S.R.S. As the Railway Review once said, compulsory benefits were "used to weaken the men's independence" and "to prevent vigorous collective action."(12) Where they were not compulsory, but took the form of voluntary contracting-out of the uncertain benefits of the Employers' Liability Act in favour of a company's insurance fund, the hostility of the A.S.R.S. was due to a similar cause.(13)

During the agitation for the 'Darlington programme' on the N.E.R. in 1889, the men found that the company was trying to

introduce a compulsory pension fund by a clause in one of its omnibus private bills. Strong protest demonstrations organised by William Foreman and Walter Hudson(14)were supplemented by the efforts inside parliament of Henry Broadhurst, W.S.B. Mclaren, and Samuel Storey (Radical M.P. for Sunderland). As a result the N.E.R. withdrew that clause.(15)

The bright idea of making the compulsory deductions of wages for these provident funds altogether illegal by bringing them under the scope of the Truck Act was suggested by the A.S.R.S. leaders of South Wales and Monmouthshire in the middle of 1895.(16) Next year, in May, when the Truck Act Amendment Bill was in the Committee stage in parliament, Sir Charles Dilke (who was now M.P. for Forest of Dean) tried to introduce such a clause. Its effect would have been to make the membership of these funds optional, and give the railwaymen a chance of recovering part of his contributions if he ceased to be an employee. But Dilke failed narrowly by ten votes to twelve.(17)

Consequently the A.S.R.S. had to keep a close watch on each individual railway bill that came to parliament. Early in 1897 when the A.S.R.S. was very preoccupied with the national grade movements and the N.E.R. dispute, bills introduced by the G.E.R. and the N.B.R. had these "obnoxious" clauses, but the union found time to attend to them. With the help and advice of Sir Charles Dilke, Garrity gave evidence at the committee stage.(18) The A.S.R.S. succeeded in making the G.E.R. limit its compulsory fund for the salaried grades only. It failed in an attempt to get a permanent status for itself before all parliamentary committees on private railway bills, despite

the efforts of Dilke and John Burns.(19) This doubtless strengthened the desire to have a union-member in parliament.(20)

As the Webbs have pointed out, this hostility to employers' provident funds was the principal reason why all trade union leaders had vehemently opposed the practice of 'contracting-out' of the Employers' Liability Act.(21) As is generally well-known, this hostility made the Liberal Government withdraw the last Employers' Liability Bill ever presented to Parliament (in 1894), after the House of Lords had introduced a clause on contracting out, because the labour members "preferred to abandon the bill rather than accept an amendment allowing the detested contracting out under any conditions whatsoever."(22)

During the agitation over this bill, in February 1894, the L. & N.W. railway lobbied parliament in favour of contracting out, and the A.S.R.S. found that on this question most of the L. & N.W. railwaymen were in favour of retaining the ample insurance facilities they had been enjoying, and were unwilling to put up a stiff fight against contracting out. Nor would W.S.B. Mclaren, the Radical M.P. for Crewe, who had befriended the A.S.R.S. on other occasions, support the union's attitude, because his constituents were of a different opinion.(23)

Thanks mainly to the genius of Joseph Chamberlain, the next law on compensation for accidents was based on an entirely new principle. The Workmen's Compensation Act of 1897 made compensation automatic for industrial injuries, although a large group of manual workers were excluded.(24) The legal framework of liability, negligence and

common employment, within which the agitation of the miners, railway servants, and other unions had been conducted since the mid-seventies(25)was quietly ignored. Like other unions, the A.S.R.S. was taken by surprise, but welcomed it as a step in the right direction, especially as contracting out was hedged around with stringent conditions.(26)

(3)

Yet it was, after all, more desirable to prevent accidents than to be able to get compensation afterwards. In the closing years of the century the Conservative government passed another socially beneficial law to prevent accidents to railwaymen. Behind its passage lay the story of a very arduous fight by the A.S.R.S.

The Railway Regulation Act of 1889 had not required the compulsory adoption of continuous brakes on Goods and mixed trains or of an efficient and safe coupling appliance. By October 1897 the A.G.M. of the A.S.R.S. could note satisfactorily that continuous brakes and the block-signalling system were now almost universally adopted.(27) Anxiety still remained about the very inadequate provisions for the safety of Shunters, Goods Guards, and Platelayers.

The companies had various regulations for providing look-out men to protect platelayers, but in 1894 the Board of Trade, when pressed by John Burns, showed itself reluctant to formulate rules on its own responsibility.(28) Devices for giving automatic warning of the approach of a train when the men were doing signalling work during foggy weather had been designed in the early 'nineties, but not been considered perfectly reliable.(29) The proportion of Goods Guards

and Shunters killed and injured in the annual list of accidents to railwaymen was distressingly large, and showed little signs of decreasing with the passing of years. (Table XVI).

Table XVI

(Source: Columns (1) & (4): "General Report ... upon the Accidents ... on the Railways ...1898" p.24f; Parl.Pap,1899,LXXXV. Columns (2),(3),(5), and(6): "Railways(Shunting)Accidents: Return ... during the ten years ending 1897" p.13.Parl.Pap., 1898, LXXXII, 251.)

Year	Rly.Accidents other than train accidents: Total killed	Goods Guards: Total killed	Shunters Total killed	Rly.Accidents Total Injured	Goods Guards: Injured	Shunters Injured
1888	389	40	28	2100	365	329
1889	431	51	31	2652	427	355
1890	487	41	36	2975	524	391
1891	537	56	37	3007	528	400
1892	525	45	36	2823	467	359
1893	450	39	33	2558	473	336
1894	473	45	38	2649	464	391
1895	430	35	26	2566	487	332
1896	444	36	34	3833	794	598
1897	501	45	35	3989	779	585
1898	488			4039		

These two grades had to deal everyday with the movement of goods trains in and out of sidings and the separation and rearrangement of wagons. A great many wagons - especially those owned by private colliers - were still of an antiquated kind, with a screwing device, so that coupling and uncoupling could only be done by hand and by

going between vehicles.(30) Those wagons which had a loose chain and link mechanism could be coupled from outside by means of a 'pole' - which had come into general use in 1886 - but while it had reduced the number of fatalities it tended to increase the number of injuries.(31) Other dangerous practices like having to ride on buffers of wagons and separate them while in motion, and having to work in congested yards with very little space between converging railway tracks were quite common, but went on unknown to the general public.(32)

Ever since the successful agitation for the compulsory use of automatic couplings in the United States of America in 1889-92,(33) their compulsory adoption in Britain had been advocated by the A.S.R.S., as it did away with the need of going between the vehicles, or working too near them.(34) Though Harford had never been averse to giving greater powers to the Board of Trade to enforce the adoption of safety devices, in 1895 he tried, at the suggestion of some branches, (35) to send a circular to all private wagonowners and railway companies asking for a conference to discuss ways in which wagons with the screwing device ("stiff shackles") could be abolished soon. The replies were discouraging and the Union realised that legal enactment was necessary.(36)

A.J. Mundella had not introduced any Bill on safety devices during his short-lived tenure at the Board of Trade, but he had, in addition to appointing sub-inspectors, set up a committee to improve the return of accidents to railwaymen, so that the fullest information was available.(37) The data that came to the department as a result,

supplemented by the reports of the sub-inspectors, influenced Ritchie and Francis Hopwood in the direction of some kind of legislation.

(4)

Consequently, from the middle of 1898 the parliamentary tactics of the A.S.R.S. were increasingly successful. Speeches of Channing and Maddison during the debate on Civil Service estimates on 29th July 1898 on railwaymen's safety elicited from Ritchie that Hopwood was being sent to America in September to inquire into railway matters including the prevention of shunting accidents.(38) Before his departure Hopwood arranged to have details about automatic couplings in other countries ready at the Board of Trade, and on his return in November he prepared the materials.(39)

Richard Bell, hitherto an unknown person to the Board of Trade, had, as we have seen, met Hopwood on 24th November in connexion with the victimisation of railwaymen and made a favourable impression. He had been to the department again on 18th December on that business, but he might have discussed this other question on both occasions.(40) At all events, on 20th December Hopwood had his memorandum on automatic couplings ready for publication. In that he showed himself to be in favour of the American practice. The Safety Appliances Act of 1893 had required all American railways to introduce automatic couplers in five years' time. By 1898 70% of railway stock had been so equipped, and the number of accidents had been halved. Hopwood felt that legislation in Britain setting a time limit for the introduction of an efficient automatic coupler would stimulate invention

and make railway companies no longer dilatory about this very necessary reform.(41)

The Available evidence indicates that the Board of Trade had not consulted the Railway Companies' Association before publishing this memorandum, whereas Bell had seen the civil servant most keen for legislation, and might have got an idea of which way the wind was blowing. The advantage that Bell had he utilised to the full. From the last week of January 1899 to the last week of February, four week's intensive parliamentary pressure enabled him to commit the government publicly to a bill on the compulsory adoption of automatic couplings.(42)

He wrote to the Prime Minister and to Ritchie, in his official capacity, on 26th January,(43)and asked the branches to write too. By the third week of February a total of 137 branches had done so, and some had been in touch with their M.Ps. as well.(44) The Queen's speech at the opening of Parliament had not mentioned any bill on railwaymen's safety. So Channing raised this matter during the debate and pressed Ritchie with questions,(45)and Bell saw Ritchie privately on 17th February.(46) Three days later Maddison moved an amendment to the Queen's speech, urging the introduction of such a bill. He was so well supported that Ritchie admitted in public his intention of bringing a bill in that session, and referring it to a Select Committee so that the points of view of the companies could be heard.(47) A week later a bill was introduced which gave the Board of Trade powers to order companies to adopt certain safety devices at once, and, in addition, find, within five years, a standard

automatic coupling. Its second reading was scheduled for 6th March.(48) Victory in the first round went to the A.S.R.S.

Now the railway companies and owners of private wagons started a four-week counter-offensive to kill the Bill - a counter-offensive which was, in the opinion of Sir Charles Dilke, one of the most formidable he had seen in his career.(49) Leading railway directors had got the impression from their talks with Ritchie that no bill would be introduced in that session, and they were quite taken aback by the Minister's announcement of 20th February. If the bill was going to be read a second time at all, they were very reluctant to have it discussed by a Select Committee, or even a Royal Commission, and preferred an "expert committee" of men connected with the railways.(50) In the course of a fortnight they persuaded Ritchie to postpone the second reading from 6th March to 27th March, but their real intention was to secure its withdrawal altogether. They expected the support of private wagon owners.(51)

The companies decided to send some technical experts to the U.S.A. at once to check on Hopwood's data. In the same week the Executive of the A.S.R.S. decided to send Richard Bell to America too, to get in touch with S. Gompers, the American labour leader, and get support for Hopwood's memorandum.(52) F.W. Evans, the former General Secretary of the Union, took charge of lobbying while Bell was absent.

On 15th March a strong delegation of owners of private mineral wagons met Ritchie, urging him to abandon the Bill.(53) On the following day a long letter appeared in the Times signed by those Chairmen of railway companies who formed the Council of the Companies'

Association.(54) In the same week Lord Claud Hamilton, the Chairman of the G.E.R. resigned from the presidency of the North Kensington Conservative Association because the Government's policy on home affairs was disgusting.(55) During their interview with Ritchie two wagon owners had made a similar threat of withdrawing their political support.(56)

This strong opposition by the Companies and other interests was based partly on a desire to avoid state interference in railway management. Sir George Gibb, of the N.E.R. had already experimented with automatic couplings on some fast passenger trains, and he did not want a government department to interfere with his powers to take decisions.(57) The cost of introducing the couplers was however the main reason.(58) The bulk of the private wagons could not be adapted so as to add the new mechanism on to their structure; totally different kinds of wagons were needed.(59) It was not surprising that the various colliery proprietors opposed the bill, which they understood to require them to change their rolling stock within five years.

How far existing patents of automatic couplings were technically suited for the British railway network, which was in many ways different from the American pattern, was another debatable point.(60) Hopwood had been so impressed by American success in saving lives that he had not developed this point in his memorandum. Still, the main purpose of the memorandum and the bill that had followed it, was not to recommend any particular patent but to encourage invention and technical change by imposing a time limit and giving the Board of

Trade powers to goad the companies. When the haze of propaganda is lifted, the tripartite struggle among the Companies, the Board of Trade and the A.S.R.S. over this Bill, is seen to be essentially a struggle of the humane and collectivist idea of uniform safety devices under state control against the doctrine of laissez-faire. The merits and demerits of automatic couplings only obscured the issue.

It had obscured the matter sufficiently to make the bill be postponed once again from 27th March to 10th April. This was taken by Sir Charles Dilke, John Burns, and F.W. Evans as a capitulation by Ritchie to the strong railway group both inside and outside the Cabinet.(61) (see Tables XV~ II & XV^ III). Nevertheless, after an interview

---

Table XVI.(62)

Railway Directors in Parliament, 1895-1900.

	Total	Major Rlys.	Minor Rlys.	Foreign Rlys.
	74	32	33	9
Conservative	55	25	22	8
Liberals	19	7	11	1

Table XVII.(63)

Railway Directors in the Cabinet, 1899.

Total	8	
Earl Halsbury - Lord High Chancellor		(N.Cornwall Rly.)
Duke of Devonshire - Lord President		(Furness)
Viscount Cross - Lord Privy Seal		(G.C.R.)
Sir M.W.Ridley - Home Secretary		(N.E.R.)
Sir M.Hicks-Beach - Chancellor of Exch.		(Collingbourne & Avon Valley)
Lord Balfour of Burleigh - Scottish Secretary		(San Paulo)
A.Akers-Douglas - Com.of Works.		(L.C. & D.)
Walter Long - Board of Agricul.		(G.W.R.)

with Ritchie, Evans felt that given adequate political support Ritchie would be prepared to ignore the threats of the Conservative railway lobby.(64) So, on Sir Charles Dilke's advice, he took the exceptional course of trying to enlist official support from the Liberal party to enable the Minister to push the bill through during that session. At a recent Liberal banquet, the newly elected leader of the strife-torn Party Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had made political capital out of Ritchie's discomfiture, declaring, "a parliamentary seat in the hand is worth any number of shunters' lives in the bush."(65) This gave Evans some hope and, since the last week of March, he tried to obtain a definite promise from the Liberal Chief Whip, Tom Ellis, a fellow Welshman.(66) Branches were asked to do another round of petitioning.

But the prospects of official support from the opposition receded with the unexpected death of Tom Ellis during the Easter recess.(67) In any case it is doubtful whether Campbell-Bannerman would have risked alienating leading figures of his party like Sir Joseph Pease and Sir James Joicey - both of whom were directors of the N.E.R.(68) at a time when the unity of the Liberal party hung in the balance.(69) Dilke then undertook to collect signatures himself from Radical members for a petition to Ritchie pledging support to him at the second reading of the Bill.(70) This was presented on 20th April signed by seventy-one members.(71) Meanwhile 125 branches had returned the petitions, distributed at the end of March, with 125,000 signatures, and these were submitted on the same day.(72) Considering the total membership of the branches, as well as the wide distribution

of petition forms, this was rather a poor show. Evans's grand design was thus frustrated by the Easter recess, the preoccupations of the branches with orphan fund fetes, and the lack of support from the Liberal front bench.

(5)

On 21st April, five days after Bell returned from America - in the same ship bringing back the Company's experts!(73) - he saw Ritchie and realised that the companies were prepared to let the bill go through if it was shorn of the clause on couplings.(74) Bell had become very enthusiastic about what he had seen in America.(75) So he agreed with Ritchie's suggestion that rather than have a truncated bill, it would be better to have a Royal Commission on all kinds of accidents to railwaymen, and withdrew the present bill.(76) Ritchie announced this in the Commons on 27th April.(77)

This was only a partial set-back for the A.S.R.S. The Royal Commission was going to have comprehensive terms of reference, and not confine itself to automatic couplings.(78) Ritchie was willing to have an A.S.R.S. representative on it, and Bell nominated Walter Hudson. This left Bell free to prepare the evidence, while Hudson could bring his practical experience to the other members of the Commission, having left his job as a Mineral Guard only in 1898.(79) The initial desire of the Companies to have an "expert committee" (see above p.306) was thus frustrated. Ritchie had never liked that idea. As he told the private wagonowners earlier,

"I say your experts are for your purposes much better as witnesses than as judges."(80)

The Royal Commission was appointed on 30th May, under the chairmanship of Lord James of Hereford. Labour was represented on it by Charles Fenwick and Walter Hudson. As a corporate body, the Railway Companies' Association did not show much willingness to co-operate. At the outset it made the unusual request of being represented by Counsel before the Commission.(81) To this the A.S.R.S. was strongly opposed,(82)and the Companies did not persist in it.

The Commission started taking evidence on 16th June and this went on until 3rd August. Under the able chairmanship of Lord James the Commission tackled a difficult subject with depth as well as speed. While the two railway directors on the Commission were open to new ideas and suggestions on safety devices, the minutes of the Companies' Association for these months reveal a general attitude of suspicion towards the whole inquiry.(83)

An unanimous report was published in the last week of January, 1900.(84) The report declared that the work of Goods Guards, Shunters, Brakesmen, and Permanent-way men was so risky that these should be classified as dangerous trades, like mining and merchant shipping.(85) It gave a list of the dangerous ways of working that were hitherto common and urged that these should be legally abolished.(86) On the controversial question of automatic couplings, the report could not recommend any existing patent for general use in Britain, and recognised that the technical factors which made them easily applicable in America did not exist in Britain. But it agreed that the need for going between the vehicles should not exist, and so the Companies should "either voluntarily or by obligation placed upon them" at once

start making practical experiments with automatic couplers. The Board of Trade should appoint a Departmental Committee to co-operate with the Companies in making such tests.(87) Thus the Commission retained the spirit of the controversial clause of the Bill of last year, while taking away the five year time limit.

It came down firmly in favour of state interference, especially as the railways possessed special statutory privileges, and, after all, the State was already exercising a large amount of control over various aspects of the railway industry.(88) Instead of a detailed statute specifying the requirements for safe railway working, the Board of Trade was to be invested with powers "for the inspection and regulation of the work done by Shunters, Goods Guards, Brakesmen, and Platelayers." The department was given the power to define a dangerous practice and to order the Companies to adopt general or specific safety rules. With a proviso that the departmental powers should "not unduly" interfere with railway working, and that there should be an appeal to the Railway and Canal Commission, legislation along these lines was recommended.(89)

(6)

Richard Bell, whose talents lay more in administration and organisation than in leading strikes, did another round of methodical and intensive lobbeying as soon as the report came out. He sent sheafs of copies of a resolution to the branches asking them to copy it out on branch notepaper and then send it to members of the government and to the local M.P. On 9th February he also wrote to

each M.P. enclosing a summary of the report and the history of the agitation.(90)

On 12th February a Bill was introduced. Among its sixteen clauses there were six which clearly and unequivocally increased the powers of the Board of Trade over the entire field of accidents to all classes of railwaymen.(91) The department could not only make rules specifically on the twelve practices listed as dangerous by the Royal Commission, but if other practices indicated that avoidable danger to railwaymen existed, it could exercise similar powers. One contentious sub-section declared,

> "The Board of Trade may, by any rules made under this section, require, amongst other matters, the use or disuse of any plant or appliance."(92)

The procedure for the publication of draft rules and considering objections to them left it to the discretion of the departmental officials to select those which came from persons "appearing to them to be affected", although everybody who was dissatisfied with the way the department had dealt with his complaint had a right of appeal to the Railway and Canal Commission. But to prevent frivolous or unnecessary complaints, the Commission had the power to award costs against the complainant. State inspection of railways to detect the need for safety devices for railwaymen, or to prevent evasion of departmental rules, was laid down by law for the first time - twenty-two years after a consolidated Act of a similar nature had been passed for the Factories and Workshops. Loopholes that had existed so far in the reporting of accidents were filled by making sure that all

accidents to railwaymen were reported, even if they happened on lines and sidings belonging to private owners. Finally, the Treasury could sanction payments to enable the Board of Trade to conduct experiments and inquiries to discover better safety devices, and the Companies had to give facilities for conducting these. Any expenses the Companies incurred in introducing safety devices could be met by new capital issues, authorised by the Board of Trade, as long as the money raised was used for the purposes of this Act only. Commenting on this bill, Richard Bell said,

> "if allowed to pass in its present form [it] will meet the requirements of railwaymen generally."(93)

The efforts of the Companies were now directed towards whittling down the fairly extensive powers given to the Board of Trade. But these efforts were frustrated, thanks largely to Ritchie's firmness, and the support given by Channing, Dilke, and Maddison, as well as by Conservatives like Sir Fortescue Flannery, and R.Purvis (who represented the railway constituency of Peterborough). In the standing Committee Renshaw, on behalf of the Companies, failed to limit the Bill's applicability to the four grades of railwaymen mentioned in the Commission's report. He failed to reduce the effectiveness of state inspection by making it conditional on non-interference with the working of traffic. He failed, by one vote, to limit the Board of Trade's powers to order experiments with automatic couplings only. He also failed to secure a universal right of appeal against rules issued by the Board of Trade, even after they had been passed by the Railway and Canal Commission. Another railway director,

Tomlinson, failed in a clever attempt to prevent the draft rules becoming effective quickly by giving every vested interest an absolute right of appeal.(94) When the Bill came back from the Committee it had not dropped any essential features, but had merely introduced some clauses that were legally necessary. Ritchie had also disarmed opposition to sub-section (iii) of the first clause by indicating clearly that only dangerous equipment and plants were meant to be abolished.(95)

The Companies now fought in the last ditch to get a universal right of appeal against rules issued by the Board of Trade, after they had been in operation for six months, without any time-limit.(96) At the report stage W.L. Jackson, in an ingenious speech, tried to smuggle through a clause which was ostensibly aiming to detect un-practical or dangerous rules, but which left a big loophole for a wealthy railway company to go on objecting perpetually. Fenwick and Maddison pointed out these undertones with alacrity. As a result the clause was amended to prevent the existence of that loophole.(97)

As the Bill was on its way to the House of Lords Richard Bell reported to his Executive with relief how all the efforts of the Companies had been thwarted. Progress in the House of Lords was uncertain, for Lord James of Hereford was the only "one friend who [could] be relied upon."(98) Lord James was, however, a member of the Cabinet - he was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster - and so the Bill had strong support. He gave a firm negative to the private suggestion from a representative of the Companies' Association for an unlimited right of appeal,(99)and steered the Bill through the Lords

without any difficulty or opposition. It received the royal assent on 30th July 1900.

(7)

The Act of 1900 was the third major legislative achievement of the A.S.R.S. as a pressure group.(100) It had succeeded in its efforts in the teeth of the stiffest fight put up by the Companies so far, primarily because the departmental officials and the Minister had become steadily influenced by its views. Unlike the position before the Hours of Labour Act of 1893 the practice of consultation between the Board of Trade and the A.S.R.S. had developed since then. The practical sub-inspectors, whose appointment had been a victory for the A.S.R.S., had also helped in this process of influencing the department. Questions and interventions in Parliament by Dilke, Channing and Maddison had kept alive the issue, but the Liberal party had not helped the union officially at all. The behind-the-scenes influences had to be supplemented by a vigorous campaign to hold back the Companies' counter-offensive. Though that campaign had failed in its immediate object of having automatic couplers, it had contributed to starting a thorough examination of the whole question, and eventually produced a law. It now remained to be seen how effectively the Board of Trade was going to use the powers given to it under this law.

In the meantime the A.S.R.S. could congratulate itself on having once again contributed to the spread of collectivist social legislation, even though there were no railwaymen in Parliament to speak on its behalf. The need for such a direct spokesman was never

more keenly felt than in June 1900, as the Executive reflected on how narrowly the Bill had escaped unscathed from the House of Commons.(101) For about eighteen years before this the A.S.R.S. had been discussing how to send a railwayman to Parliament, but had come up against various difficulties. We must therefore now turn to an examination of the efforts made inside the union on this question, and trace the complicated history which culminated in the return of Bell as the junior member for Derby in October 1900.

NOTES

(1) See above pp. 88 f, 162 ff

(2) Hours, 1890-91, min.of ev. Qq, 2585, 2588, 2591-3.

(3) Railway Servants (Hours of Labour); Sel.Cttee Rep.p.ix. (Parl. Pap., 1892, XVI).

(4) S. & B.Webb, History of Trade Unionism (1920 ed.) p.372.

(5) Based on a survey of the answers published in R.R. 15 Apr. 1892 to 15 July 1892. I have excluded the nineteen candidates who were evasive or openly hostile to all the questions.

(6) Parl. Del., 4th S, XXIV, 1419f.

(7) A.S.R.S., E.C.Minutes, June 1894, p.1 (U.H.)

(8) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1894, p.2f.

(9) Parl Del., 4th S, XXXVI, 684-8; also see letter from Channing, R.R. 20 Sep. 1895, p.1.

(10) R.R. 20 Nov. 1896, p.1; for Channing's "Coroners' Inquests Bill" see Parl. Pap., 1896, I, 419.

(11) See below. p 304 ff

(12) R.R. 29 May, 1896, p.4.

(13) Harford said, commenting on the success of the L. & N.W. in introducing contracting-out, "Company's provident funds are, as a rule, only intended as an antidote to Trade Unionism." (A.S.R.S., Annual Report, 1894, p.3.)

(14) R.R. 15 Mar. 1889, p.121f.

(15) R.R. 5 July 1889, p.316; A.S.R.S., E.C. Minutes, May 1889, p.3f. (U.H.)

(16) R.R. 30 Aug. 1895, p.3.

(17) Report of the Standing Committee ... on the Truck Bill ... p.14. (Parl. Pap., 1896, XIV, 357); R.R. 29 May, 1896, p.4.

(18) A.S.R.S., E.C. Minutes, March 1897, p.17; R.R. 19 Feb.1897. p.1.

(19) A.S.R.S. E.C. Minutes, June 1897, p.3.

(20) See below. p 324ff

(21) S. & B. Webb, Industrial Democracy (1920 ed.), p.373,n.1.

(22) ibid. p.373; For a useful history of this bill see W.C. Mallalieu, 'Joseph Chamberlain and Workmen's Compensation.' Journal of Economic History, X, (1950), pp.50-4.

(23) R.R. 23 Feb. 1894, p.1.

(24) Webb, op.cit. p.387ff; Mallalieu, op.cit. pp.54-7.

(25) See above, pp 65 ff

(26) A.S.R.S. E.C. Minutes, June 1897, p.3; Annual Report, 1897, p.4.

(27) R.R. 15 Oct. 1897, p.3; for the details of continuous brakes see Return (in pursuance of the Railway Returns ... Act, 1878)... 1897, p.3. (Parl. Pap, 1898, LXXXII, 1.).

(28) Parl. Del., 4th S, XXIII, 629f.

(29) C.E. Stretton, Safe Railway Working (3rd Ed.1893), pp.265-7; the election questionnaire of the A.S.R.S. for 1892 had asked, rather prematurely, all candidates to support this. (A.S.R.S. E.C. Minutes, Feb. 1892, p.3f.)

(30) Accidents to Railway Servants; Royal Com., Min.of Ev. Qq. 970,977. (Parl. Pap., 1900 (cd.42), XXVII). hereafter Accidents 1900; min.of ev.

(31) ibid. Qq. 2576, 2640, 3351, 3357.

(32) ibid. Qq. 1028-33, 1037-43.

(33) For a useful account of the American agitation see Memorandum upon the use of Automatic Couplings ..... pp.4-8. (Parl. Pap., 1899, (c.9183), LXXXV.)

(34) The election questionnaire of 1892 had asked candidates to support this. (A.S.R.S., E.C. Minutes, Feb. 1892, p.3f)

(35) R.R. 30 Aug. 1895, p.3.

(36) The whole correspondence is in A.S.R.S., "Stiff shackles and standard pattern couplings" 1895. (U.M.)

(37) Railway Accidents Return. Committee Report. pp.3-5. (Parl. Pap., 1895, (c.7603) LXXXVI, 37).

(38) Parl. Del., 4th S, LXIII, 563; for Channing's and Maddison's speech see ibid., 551-4, 559-61.

(39) P.R.O. MT6/935, a bundle of files headed by file 2617 of 1900.

(40) See above. p235

(41) Memorandum upon the use of Automatic Couplings on railway stock ... passim. (Parl. Pap., 1899, (c.9183), LXXXV, 695).

(42) A.S.R.S., E.C. Minutes, March 1899, p.11f, gives a useful summary of his activities up to the middle of March.

(43) Letters reproduced in R.R. 3 Feb. 1899, p.1.

(44) See branch reports from R.R. 10 Feb. 1899 to 24 Feb. 1899; also see R.R. 24 Feb. 1899, p.11 for a summary of the work done to date.

(45) Parl. Del., 4th S, LXVI, 122f, 343.

(46) R.R. 24 Feb. 1899, p.1.

(47) Parl. Del., 4th S, LXVI, 1561-88.

(48) Text of the bill will be found in Accidents 1900, min.of ev. p.320. (Appendix C.).

(49) He said this to F.W. Evans, R.R. 31 Mar. 1899, p.8.

(50) Railway Companies' Association, Minute No.366 (22 Feb.1899) p.6f. This and subsequent minutes give a very full picture of the tactics of the Companies.

(51) Railway Companies' Association, Minutes No.367 and 368. (2nd & 8th March, 1899). (a summary).

(52) R.R. 17 Mar. 1899, p.10; A.S.R.S., E.C. Minutes, Mar. 1899, p.11f.

(53) "Regulation of Railways Bill ... Deputation ... from the Mining Association of Great Britain" (1899). Kept in Railway Companies' Association, Minutes of 17 Mar. 1899.

(54) The Times 16 Mar. 1899, p.12.

(55) The Times 7 Mar. 1899, p.11.

(56) "Regulation of Railways Bill ... Deputation ... from the Mining Association of Great Britain" pp.18f, 28f.

(57) Accidents, 1900, Min.of Ev. Qq.7347

(58) The companies estimated that it would cost £10 per wagon where it was simply a question of fitting the mechanism to an adaptable wagon.
(The Times 8 Mar. 1899, p.15).

(59) "Regulation of Railways Bill ... Deputation from the Mining Association ..." pp. 34-7.

(60) The argument is summarised in
Accidents to Railway Servants; Royal.Com.Report,p.8f.
(Parl. Pap., 1900 (cd.41), XXVII; hereafter Accidents, 1900, Report).

(61) R.R. 31 Mar. 1899, p.8.

(62) Dod's Parliamentary Companion, 1895; Bradshaw's Railway Manual, 1895.

(63) Dod's Parliamentary Companion, 1899; Bradshaw's Railway Manual. 1899.

(64) R.R. 7 Apr. 1899, p.5.

(65) The Times, 23 Mar. 1899, p.10.

(66) R.R. 31 Mar. 1899, p.8, and R.R. 7 Apr. 1899, p.5, give full accounts of Evans's efforts.

(67) R.R. 21 Apr. 1899, p.1.

(68) Joicey was, in addition a colliery proprietor.

(69) For an idea of the problems facing him see
J.A. Spender, The Life of the Rt.Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, I, (1923), Ch.XII passim, pp.224-6.

(70) R.R. 21 Apr. 1899, p.1.

(71) R.R. 28 Apr. 1899, p.5.

(72) ibid., A.S.R.S., E.C. Minutes, June, 1899, p.2f.

(73) The Times, 17 Apr. 1899, p.10.

(74) R.R. 28 Apr. 1899, p.1; On 20th April the Companies had taken this decision. (Railway Companies' Association, Minutes No.371, p.2.)

(75) He issued a six-pate pamphlet on this immediately after. "Memorandum upon the use of Automatic Couplers on Railway Stock in the United States of America."

(76) A.S.R.S., E.C. Minutes, June, 1899, p.2f.

(77) Parl. Deb., 4th S, LXX, 695f.

(78) ibid.

(79) A.S.R.S., E.C. Minutes, June, 1899, p.2f.

(80) Railway Regulation Bill ... Deputation from the Mining Association ... p.42.

(81) Railway Companies' Association, Minutes No.372, p.2f.

(82) R.R. 2 June, 1899, p.1.

(83) Railway Companies' Association, Minutes No.378 to 386.

(84) R.R. 2 Feb. 1900, p.1.

(85) Accidents 1900 : Report pp.6f, 11f.

(86) ibid., p.10.

(87) ibid., p.8f.

(88) ibid., p.12f.

(89) ibid., p.13.

(90) A.S.R.S. E.C. Minutes, Mar. 1900, p.22f. The circular sent to the branches (G.O. No.70) is kept in "Proceedings and Reports, 1900" (U.H.).

(91) This paragraph is based on Railways. (Prevention of Accidents) Bill. (78)., Parl. Pap., 1900, IV , 267.

(92) This was Clause 1, S-S, iii.

(93) A.S.R.S., E.C. Minutes, March, 1900, p.23.

(94) "Report from the standing Committee ... on the Railways (Prevention of Accidents) Bill ... passim (Parl.Pap., 1900, VIII, 279)

(95) Parl. Pap., 1900, IV, 275.

(96) Railway Companies' Association, Minute No.397. (24 May 1900). p.3.

(97) Parl. Deb., 4th S., LXXXIII, 1608-23.

(98) A.S.R.S., E.C. Minutes, June 1900, p.2f.

(99) Railway Companies' Association, Minute No.400. (3rd July, 1900), p.2f.

(100) The Railway Regulation Act (1889) was only partly concerned with Railwaymen.

(101) A.S.R.S., E.C. Minutes, March 1900, p.2f., 36. (Both Bell's report and the resolution of the Executive stressed this.).

Chapter X. Labour Representation and Socialism, 1880-1900.

The difficulties faced by the A.S.R.S. in its efforts to return a railwayman to Parliament were rooted in the widely divergent political loyalties of the British working class. The Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884 did not materially change these loyalties, although they were stages in the path to democracy. The two workingmen who were returned to Parliament in 1874 from mining constituencies were not the precursors of a separate Labour party, but representatives of constituencies where the miners were such a powerful and closely-knit community that the party leaders adopted their leaders as candidates. Burt and Macdonald were essentially Lib-labs.(1)

F.W. Evans had indulged in some wishful thinking about returning a railwayman to Parliament in the early 'seventies,(2)when some amateurish efforts at returning more workingmen to Parliament were being made by the Labour Representation League.(3) But by the end of that decade the decline in the strength of trade unions, and the domination of the political scene by the Party associations of the Liberal and - to a lesser extent - the Conservative parties made it very difficult for attempts to create an independent working-class party.(4) Evans's own achievements in pressure group work were helped by his willingness to fight beside the Liberal party instead of in opposition to it.(5)

Even after the agitation for the extension of the franchise in 1884 had been successful, working-class political loyalties

continued to follow, for a long time, a traditional pattern in which religious and regional influences were important factors. Lancashire and Cheshire was heavily biased in favour of Conservatism, whereas the voters of the West Riding of Yorkshire and the north-eastern counties tended to vote Liberal.(6) Wales was almost solidly behind the Liberals.(7)

In the early eighteen-eighties the A.S.R.S. began to discuss representation in Parliament. Just as William Foreman was the leader of the young and militant N.E.R. movement, so was he a keen advocate of this other cause. In his speeches and writings one can see the influence of Radical leaders of the Tyneside, like Joseph Cowen,(8) and the 'franchise agitation' of the Lib-lab miners of Durham.(9) At the A.G.M. of 1883 the delegates from the N.E.R. said that the large railway vote at Gateshead would provide a basis for an entry into Parliament, but their attempt to persuade the other delegates to set up an election fund failed by 29 votes to 14.(10)

Non-involvement in politics was a powerful slogan. Many years later, in 1895, an I.L.P.-er in the A.S.R.S. attributed this to the Conservatives saying, "Some of our Tory members probably ridicule the idea [of labour representation] altogether."(11) This identification of an a-political attitude with Conservatism is also suggested by the opposition of some Lancashire branches to the way in which Evans became identified with the Liberals during the election of 1880 over the reform of laws on Employers' Liability.(12) The Accrington branch proposed, at the A.G.M. of that year that the Society should take no further part in politics.(13) Throughout

the eighteen-eighties the opponents of labour representation used the disruptive effects of politics and the misuse of the Society's funds to hinder the efforts of Foreman and Harford.(14) While members from Lancashire formed a high proportion of the average membership of 12,000 in the late 'eighties, the Radical sympathies of Foreman and Harford were well-known. In 1889 Foreman wrote, on behalf of the North Islington Liberal Club, a pamphlet in which he made fun of the 'Conservative workingman', and argued why workmen should vote Liberal.(15)

Early in 1885 Harford issued a circular asking members whether railwaymen wished to pay for direct representation, because, as a result of the extension of the franchise, they "need no longer submit to be legislated for by directors, stock-brokers, and others in a higher social sphere ..." To the question whether direct representation was desirable, 56 branches (with 3,335 members) replied in the affirmative, 39 (with 2,406 members) in the negative, while 83 (with 2,719 members) did not reply at all. Only 47 branches promised an annual subscription.(16) At the following A.G.M. William Foreman proposed some definite action to raise funds - and the poor response to the questionnaire was kept dark - but the matter was referred back to the Executive for drafting a detailed scheme.(17) A sub-committee of the Executive Committee of next year - headed by Foreman - was advised by Macliver to have a compulsory fund. Members were given the option of deciding between an additional levy of twopence per member per week for political purposes, or a voluntary subscription of sixpence.(18)

A poll taken among the 178 branches on this scheme - to which 113 branches replied - showed that while members were almost equally divided over a voluntary fund, they were very much against a compulsory fund.(19) By the time of the A.G.M. in October 1886, the Labour Electoral Association had been formed, with T.R.Threlfall as Secretary and Harford as Treasurer.(20) It provided an excuse to remove the question of labour representation from the agenda of the A.G.M., when the report of the sub-committee seemed to start an acrimonious debate.(21)

In 1886 and 1887 the help given by Harford to the L.E.A. was not matched by adequate support either from his colleagues in the A.S.R.S. Executive or from the membership generally. He had helped Threlfall to write a pamphlet How the classes rule the masses (second edition 1887), which had included data on the domination of Parliament by railway directors and other propertied interests. But it was only by a majority of one vote that the A.S.R.S. Executive sanctioned the purchase of 1,000 copies of this.(22) With the approval of the Executive Committee (by a vote of 8 to 5) he had organised the issue of subscription books for the L.E.A. to the members of the A.S.R.S., but very little money was raised thereby.(23) At the A.G.M. of 1887 a delegate from the West Riding - inspired by Ben Pickard's success as a Miner's M.P. - raised the topic of Parliamentary representation, but his plea for practical action by the union itself was lost. Most of the others argued that the L.E.A. provided the best agency for agitation on this for those who were interested. But nobody moved that the A.S.R.S. should affiliate to

it.(24)

The A.G.M. of 1888 was addressed by Threlfall, who was trying to get solid trade union support for the L.E.A. He urged the delegates to let the A.S.R.S. be represented at the Labour Electoral Congress shortly to be held at Sheffield.(25) On behalf of the union Harford and Sabin went. Apart from a half-hearted attempt by Harford to prevent the exclusion of Socialists at this Congress,(26) very little was done by the A.S.R.S. for the L.E.A. It did not affiliate to it.

When the issue of parliamentary representation was debated in the correspondence columns of the Railway Review in 1889, it brought forth a tremendous amount of passion. The A.G.M. debated three motions on this subject, and revealed this tussle of views. A simple declaration that the A.S.R.S. should have a direct representative in Parliament was passed by the narrow majority of two. For a consequential motion that such a representative should be a railwayman member of the A.S.R.S. the majority was eight. But the crucial motion, which was to create a parliamentary fund out of an annual levy of 1/- on each member gave rise to an acrimonious debate. After Macliver had said that the cost of keeping an M.P. might be £500-£600 a year, a motion to proceed to the next business (carried 33-9) quashed the matter.(27)

II

The events of 1890-91 certainly quickened the political pulse of the Union. Membership increased, and there was a growing awareness of

the need for parliamentary control of hours. A great many motions on labour representation were sent up to the A.G.M. of 1891.(28)

Earlier that year, Harford had committed a faux pas. Through the efforts of the L.E.A. he had got adopted as the Liberal candidate for Blackburn (against the sitting M.P. who was a Conservative railway director).(29) Within a short while he had realised that it was a hopelessly Conservative Seat, and his candidature was annoying a great many members in Manchester.(30) So he withdrew,(31)but personal and political hostility to his candidature continued and won the day at the A.G.M. of 1891. The A.G.M. decided for an involved procedure, by which branches could nominate a parliamentary candidate, one of whom would afterwards be selected by a vote of the entire membership. By a narrow majority of two, opponents of a compulsory levy got their way.(32)

By these two resolutions the A.G.M. made the worst of both worlds. The uncertainty and delay involved in selecting a candidate - who might not be a full-time official and consequently would have to be paid a full salary - and the further uncertainty of the amount a voluntary levy would bring in reduced the possibility of getting an A.S.R.S.-sponsored candidate adopted by a Constituency in good time. If they were really serious about parliamentary representation the Conservatives and the 'a-political' group could have either a Liberal candidate like Harford and save money, or an 'independent' candidate and pay a lot of money by a compulsory levy. Next year Harford told the delegates at the A.G.M. with some asperity that while the Select Committee on hours of labour had

published their report and an election had come and gone, the ridiculous resolution of the previous year had prevented him from accepting invitations to contest seats.(33)

This year, at long last, but only by a majority of five, the A.G.M. declared effectively in favour of parliamentary representation. Harford was to be the candidate, with extra clerical assistance to help him to combine the duties of an M.P. and the General Secretary. Those who opposed making a big hole in the Society's funds were thus placated. Those who resented the idea of the A.S.R.S. representative voting in the Liberal lobby were in a minority, albeit a large one.(34) During the debate it had been generally accepted that since an M.P. represented his constituents he should have a free hand on political questions. The resolution gave Harford the green light to be adopted as a Lib-lab. candidate.

Liberal-labourism was not regarded as an effective political force by those on the left who had the experience of being refused by middle-class caucuses. Keir Hardie had failed to be adopted by the Liberals in mid-Lanark when he appeared there as the miner's candidate in March 1888.(35) Six years later, in the summer of 1894, the refusal of the Liberal association in the Attercliffe division of Sheffield to adopt the Lib-lab. workingmen's nominee Charles Hobson made Ramsay Macdonald sever his links with the Liberal party and join the I.L.P.(36) The I.L.P. had meanwhile been formed, in January 1893, representing the culmination of the efforts of those who had been agitating for an independent workingclass party, with a Socialist programme.(37) For most trade unionists however,

'independence' might be a good slogan, but socialism was not. Some erstwhile independent labour candidates soon drifted into Liberal-labourism, like John Burns, and like William Foreman's friend Havelock Wilson.(38)

Liberal-labourism in fact did not seem a spent force in the parliament of 1892-95. After all, there were ten Lib-labs there, who were soon strengthened by the adhesion of Burns and Wilson.(39) The isolated position of Keir Hardie was not likely to inspire confidence in the I.L.P. as an alternative to Liberal-labourism among the practical men of the A.S.R.S. In these years the Fabian doctrine of permeation was working well in the municipal government of London through the 'Progressive Party', of which Sidney Webb was a pillar.(40) Many A.S.R.S. branches in London came under the influence of this approach to politics - some of them helping Webb in his election campaign.(41) The short-lived Liberal government had passed the Railway Regulation Act of 1893, in return for active help given by the A.S.R.S. at many constituencies.(42) Consequently, within the A.S.R.S., opposition to Liberal-labourism in the early 'nineties came more from the right than from the left.

With Gladstone's resignation on 3rd March 1894, the prospects of a not too distant election made local caucuses begin to select candidates, and made London members of the A.S.R.S. - West Brompton,(43)London District Council(44) - take a keen interest in promoting Harford's candidature. At a dinner at the 'Eighty Club' (a Liberal Society) given in honour of Ben Pickard and Harford on 23rd May, where Harford was introduced by Herbert Gladstone, the

Secretary of the A.S.R.S. discreetly hinted that it was time some local caucus adopted him as their candidate, especially as the A.S.R.S. was going to bear the expenses.(45) Shortly afterwards he was adopted by the Liberal Association of Northampton.

The politics of the Liberal caucus and the majority of the trades council in Northampton were in many ways the reverse of the situation that arose at the bye-election in the Attercliffe division of Sheffield in July 1894. Northampton was primarily a centre of the Boot and Shoe industry, one in which there were growing signs of a militant approach identified in some ways with the avowed Socialist members of the Boot & Shoe Union.(46) E.L.Poulton, the collectivist but non-socialist secretary of the Northampton No.1 branch of this trade union, had been trying to get his society directly represented in Parliament.(47) Though the Northampton Radical Association was prepared to accept a labour candidate as a partner of H. Labouchere,(48)William Inskip, the secretary of the Boot & Shoe union, who was first suggested, felt obliged to retire because he could not accept the socialist programme which his Executive Committee had drawn up as his election manifesto.(49)

The Northampton Liberal caucus then began to consider the candidature of J.M. Robertson. He had been the secretary of Charles Bradlaugh and had succeeded him as the editor of the National Reformer. Before the general election of 1892 he had agreed not to press his nomination when Labouchere had given an assurance that if the senior member for the borough, Sir Philip Mansfield, decided not to retire at the end of his term, Labouchere would step down. Although this

agreement, signed on 6th June 1892, specifically declined to pledge the Association to supporting any future candidature of Robertson, and reserved that right to itself, it appears to have given Robertson the impression that if Manfield retired he would step into his shoes.(50) At all events, early in June 1894 his candidature, while still not formally accepted, was considered likely.(51)

But many local Radicals wished to have a genuine labour member, if only to prevent the militant workingmen of the town from being won over by the Socialists.(52) Two such members went up to London in the middle of June, saw John Burns and Charles Fenwick, and were told that if the Northampton caucus adopted Harford he would be supported by all the Labour members in the House of Commons. They then learned from the A.S.R.S. Executive that the Union would pay Harford's election expenses. At their request a special meeting of the caucus was called on 18th June, at which, amidst tremendous opposition from the supporters of Robertson and general confusion, it was decided that Harford should be invited to meet the Association.(53) Harford came down to Northampton and was adopted as candidate on 24th July.(54) The supporters of Robertson seceded from the local Association, calling themselves the Bradlaugh Radicals, and continued to sponsor him as an independent candidate. Their annoyance was directed both against Labouchere, for not intervening in favour of Robertson, and against Harford. During the election campaign Robertson described Harford as "his particular opponent."(55)

At the Executive Committee in June 1894, two London members,

West and Terrill, had moved the resolution which endorsed Harford's candidature. It had been opposed by only four members.(56) But the news created a stir among many branches. Two patterns of opposition were indicated in the resolutions that were passed at various branch meetings condemning his candidature. The Conservative opposition was reflected in resolutions that either criticised him for being a Liberal candidate or called on Harford to resign his post as the General Secretary if he wanted to stand for election. These twelve branches contained seven from Lancashire and one from Cheshire, i.e. Earlestown,(57)Lostock Hall,(58)Manchester Central,(59) St.Helens,(60)Stockport,(61)Salford,(62)Patricroft,(63)and Wigan.(64) The Lancashire District Council had a 'spirited discussion' and decided to protest against Harford standing as a Liberal candidate, and instructed the local delegates to vote against it at the A.G.M.(65) The only Lancashire branch to dissociate itself from the District Council's resolution was Widnes, which felt that this was political inquisition.(66) Another group of branches opposed Harford unless he was an independent candidate. There was undoubtedly a number of Conservatives in this group of thirteen too, for four were from Lancashire or Cheshire, e.g. Accrington,(67)Altrincham,(68) Edge Hill,(69)and Oldham.(70) They approved of parliamentary representation but stressed that alliance with any political party was to be condemned and that the joint consent of all labour bodies in that selected constituency ought to be obtained first.

The use of the phrase independent labour representation by Liverpool Edge Hill branch foreshadowed the development of I.L.P.

influence among trade unionists in Lancashire and Cheshire. The I.L.P. had decided, earlier that year, to make a special appeal to trade unionists,(70)and already two A.S.R.S. members had been converted - Tom Peacock of Newcastle,(71)and J.H. Monaghan of Stockport.(72) At the A.G.M. the I.L.P.-ers found themselves allied with the Conservatives.

At the A.G.M. there were two issues to be debated; firstly, whether to reaffirm that expenses would be paid by the Society, and secondly, whether to support the Northampton candidature. Walter Hudson's opening speech was favourable to I.L.P. sentiment. He said that they should "raise one common standard for the cause of labour, ... alone, clear, and distinct from either of the two political parties."(73) The debate on providing the funds took place smoothly. Immediately afterwards the Lib-lab. George Green(74)tried to get the conference to support Harford's candidature irrespective(75)of either political party, but was out-smarted by the I.L.P.-ers, who wanted to stress that Harford must be an independent labour candidate. Although Green argued that Harford was sure to vote against a Liberal government if it passed measures detrimental to the working classes, his motion was lost by 17 votes against 26. Another motion proposed by Tom Peacock, said that the endorsement of Harford's candidature by the Executive Committee was valid only if Harford remained independent. This was carried by 27 votes to 21. Not satisfied with this, however, Peacock moved another resolution, stressing the 'independent' character of all A.S.R.S. candidates, and carried it by 42 votes to 2, before the Chairman passed on to a

different item on the agenda.(76)

The Labour Leader, Keir Hardie's journal, hailed the proceedings as a great victory for the I.L.P.,(77)but it was not really so. Harford's subsequent electoral tactics were not those of the I.L.P. and did not bring out any significant protests from the branches. He called himself a Radical and Labour candidate, and when he was heckled about the resolution on independence he said that his independence lay in the fact that he was not being financed in any way by the funds of the big parties, and that he must have a free hand on labour questions. He always added, however, that his sympathies were Radical and not Socialist.(78) Unlike the Boot & Shoe Union, where Inskip had been forced to have a Socialist programme drawn up by Richards,(79)Harford drew up his own programme, which, however contained a great many collectivist pledges.(80) An anonymous A.S.R.S. official, who described himself as a member of the I.L.P., wrote an article in the Labour Leader urging that, although Harford was a Radical, his election was desirable.(81) In view of the fact that the official policy of the I.L.P. in this election was to urge that only avowed Socialists should be supported,(82)this was an indication that the I.L.P.-ers inside the A.S.R.S. did not feel strong enough as yet to be intransigent.

Harford failed to secure election. Labouchere came at the top of the poll, but the other seat, so far held by another Radical, went to a Conservative. Harford was 117 votes behind him, as the runner-up. The bulk of Harford's votes were "split" with Labouchere. But Labouchere had an extra 1,346 votes, of which 722

were "split" with Robertson, and 343 with the S.D.F. candidate F.G. Jones.(83) Thus the divisions within the left were mainly responsible for Harford's defeat, and not any Conservative swing. The propaganda of Robertson had been sufficiently strong to make the Secretary of the Trades Council launch an eve-of-poll appeal to pro-Robertson workmen for supporting Harford.(84) The Trades Council itself had become divided in March 1895, when it could re-affirm its support for Harford only by a narrow majority of two.(85) This division was possibly aggravated by the lock-out in the Boot & Shoe industry from March onward,(86)during which Tom Mann had come down to speak.(87) The S.D.F. was doubtless strengthened as a result. One official of the Boot and Shoe union - W. Votier - campaigned on behalf of Jones, although E.L. Poulton and C. Freak supported Harford.(88)

The post-mortem on the election, which had cost the A.S.R.S. about £300, revealed the latent opposition to using the funds of the Society for political purposes. Being unable to agree on conflicting resolutions which were motivated either by fear or by jealousy of Harford, the Executive Committee referred to the A.G.M. all questions of further electoral activity.(89) At the A.G.M. it became a clear-cut debate on the continuation of the fund itself. So all the supporters of parliamentary representation, irrespective of their views on Harford as a candidate, rallied together and saved the fund by a narrow majority of two.(90)

The first phase of the struggle over parliamentary representation revealed that there was as yet no reason to expect a swing away from

Liberal-labourism to I.L.P. policies. In reporting how he had come very near to winning Northampton Harford told the A.G.M.,

> "... direct labour representation has nothing to gain by wantonly ignoring, much less repudiating, the political party willing to co-operate with us for a common object."(91)

Nobody had challenged this at the A.G.M. Serious opposition came more from quarters which did not want parliamentary representation rather than from those who were I.L.P.-ers. This party had indeed been unable to win a single seat at the election.(92) Alcock commented in his column in the Railway Review that although he was sorry to see Keir Hardie lose his seat at West Ham, - Alcock was an East Londoner, - this should teach people that the policy of "smash" did not work.(93) Walter Hudson's views on labour representation were also no longer quite as optimistic about independence as at the previous A.G.M. He now said,

> "It is, however, most deplorable that in the use of the parliamentary franchise Labour as a whole has no fixed policy. The principles that guide labour with regard to work and wages have too little weight for Labour's interest in politics. Why should we not be solid for Labour politics first and for party politics afterwards?"(94)

These cryptic remarks show a hankering after a large labour group in parliament but reveal some confusion about whether such labour people would be welded together into a political party with a programme of its own. Hudson's attitude was made clearer at a speech in Huddersfield in the following December in which he

"strongly advised the running of candidates on purely trade union lines."(95) This indicated that if the I.L.P.-ers wanted to win over potentially sympathetic people in the A.S.R.S. they could succeed if they emphasised the trade union character rather than the Socialist character of their organisation.

III

The Socialists in the A.S.R.S., however, began to score a series of victories after 1896. The first well-planned success was over representation at the Trades Union Congress.

Between the Trades Union Congresses of 1894 and 1895 James Mawdsley and John Burns planned to impose new standing orders on the T.U.C. to make voting proportionate to union membership, to exclude trades councils, and to keep out politicians who were no longer trade union officials. It was essentially an anti-Socialist measure.(96) Harford supported the new standing orders, especially as it gave him more voting powers without obliging the Society to send too many delegates.(97) His dislike of the way the Socialists were using the annual congresses was seen from his remark after the T.U.C. of 1896 that at last the speeches were practical and not dreamy.(98)

The standing orders were approved by the A.S.R.S. Executive in the middle of June 1895, with only three dissentients (including Tom Peacock.)(99) Nor had there been much articulate opposition directly bearing on their introduction at first. But two branches of the Society - Doncaster and Sheffield - where I.L.P. influence

was strong, had decided to follow a subtle policy to outsmart Harford from the start. Immediately it became known that the A.S.R.S. Executive was pledged to support the standing orders the Doncaster branch passed a resolution at the end of June which said,

> "... the time has arrived when this society should be fully represented at the Trades Union Congress, and that the delegates be elected by the members of the Society."(100)

Probably because Harford had shelved this resolution under the obscurity of 'Miscellaneous matters' in his report, the Executive Committee in September did not discuss it.(101) But the Sheffield branch had decided at the same time as Doncaster to put a similar proposal on the supplementary agenda of the A.G.M.(102) This proposal, which urged that one delegate should be sent for every 10,000 members, was taken at the end of the second day's session of the conference, and lost by 30 votes to 20 without any apparent discussion.(103)

The Sheffield branch, in July 1896, reaffirmed its previous position and asked other branches who favoured the democratic election of T.U.C. delegates to get in touch with it.(104) It had no luck at the A.G.M. of 1896, where the matter was not discussed, but the Socialists were successful in the elections to the Executive Committee for the following year. An I.L.P.-er from Doncaster, T.R. Steels, was returned with a record number of votes for the electoral district that grouped Sheffield, Doncaster, and other branches together.(105) The new committee was almost evenly divided between Socialists and Lib-labs, as was shown from a very

significant vote, taken in June 1897, as to whether Tom Mann or Sam Woods should be nominated for the secretaryship of the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. The supporters of Tom Mann (who would be referred hereafter as the I.L.P.-ers) were E.Bancroft (Stockport), J.Burton (Southport), T.R. Steels (Doncaster), B. Kirkby (Batley), E.J. Perry (Stratford, E.London), and J. Miller (Parkhead, Glasgow). Walter Hudson maintained his neutrality by vetoing both proposals.(106) (See Appendix A for a fuller "namierisation" of the I.L.P. faction).

With such a left-wing Executive Committee it was possible for Steels to get a majority for his motion that the delegates to the forthcoming T.U.C. should be as many as one per every 10,000 members.(107) The original proposal for election by the membership was carried three months later at the A.G.M. The propaganda of the Sheffield branch had obviously worked well, for similar proposals this year came from Newcastle Central, Denton, and Quaker's Yard (S.Wales).(108) The astute Lib-lab George Green tried to oppose the measure, but a motion to proceed to the next business was lost by 20 votes against 26, and the new mode of electing the T.U.C. delegates was passed by 35 votes to 5. The appeal of a democratic method seems to have swayed the delegates in the tense atmosphere of the A.G.M. that had deposed Edward Harford.(109)

IV

Keir Hardie had welcomed the dismissal of Harford, as he had not forgiven him for his Northampton candidature and his opposition of Pete Curran at the Barnsley bye-election of 1897.(110) Harford's

successor Richard Bell was every bit as much a Lib-lab. as the older man, but he had to contend with a more effective I.L.P. faction.

The failure of the all-grades movement had revived interest in an Eight-Hour Bill, Railway Nationalisation, and an extension of the Conciliation Act in the direction of compulsory arbitration.(111) With these collectivist ambitions there developed a greater sympathy to the use of the Society's funds, but the I.L.P.-ers were now trying to ensure that an A.S.R.S.-sponsored candidate should be run in sharp opposition to the two major parties - even at the risk of three-cornered contests. They thus hoped to demonstrate that one trade union at least was breaking loose from the traditional alliance with Radicalism. The resolution moved by Tom Peacock at the A.G.M. of 1894 remained as a useful debating point for a precedent-hunting I.L.P.-er.

Despite its diminished strength nationally, the I.L.P. had held together fairly well in the West Riding, assisted by Philip Snowden, in the years after 1897.(112) Since 1896 Keir Hardie had contemplated co-operating with the T.U.C. and the co-operative organisations to develop a political alliance.(113) He had also been able to establish a foothold in South Wales during the strike of the coal-miners in 1898.(114) Until then the A.S.R.S. branches in that area had been untouched by Socialist ideas - in 1897 the Welsh delegates had made the others laugh by their ignorance of the '<u>Clarion</u>' Federation Scheme.(115) But after the strike a number of them became disillusioned with Liberalism as a result of the conduct of some Liberal M.P.s. The speech of a young man called J.H. Thomas at

the A.G.M. of 1898 was typical of others.(116)

The Executive Committee of 1898 had Steels, Kirkby, Turton, and Perry on it. By dismissing Maddison from the post of editor of the Railway Review Bell created a vacancy, which the I.L.P.-ers filled with their nominee. Although there were twenty applicants for this job, Steels and Turton managed, in March 1898, to get the unanimous support of the committee for the immediate appointment of George Wardle.(117) Wardle, who was a railway clerk from Keighley, had edited the Keighley Labour Journal, and was also a member of the I.L.P.(118) Some members thought that the selection had been too hasty, and some had misgivings about his politics. Wardle wrote a paragraph trying to allay these fears by discreet phrases.(119) He did, however, present in his editorial columns arguments slanted towards the I.L.P. point of view. From 9th September 1898 onwards Philip Snowden a member of the I.L.P. National Council(120)began to contribute a column in the Railway Review called the 'Labour World', under the pseudonym 'Candid Friend'. In his first article he began to talk about the necessity for 'a trades federation for political action'.(121) The identity of 'Candid Friend' was revealed generally only four years later!(122)

In 1898 the tactics of the I.L.P.-ers were a bit too obvious, although they succeeded in making Walter Hudson move closer towards them. In September he was asked by the Darlington branch of the A.S.R.S. to stand as a labour candidate in an impending bye-election, and was also promised support by the I.L.P.(123) As there was not enough time to make sure of financial support for him during and after the election, he had to withdraw. A few days later the Executive

Committee decided that in future he, as well as Bell, should be the two parliamentary candidates of the Society,(124)but of course until Hudson could be a full-time official, he could not really risk throwing up his Guard's job and be a parliamentary candidate.

Meanwhile the I.L.P.-ers in Rotherham, Sheffield, Mexborough and Doncaster were hoping either to get Bell fight Rotherham on an independent ticket, or Hudson fight a Doncaster bye-election.(125) At Rotherham after W.J. Davis (the Brassworkers' leader) had withdrawn as the Liberal candidate, the caucus chose a middle class candidate who had the support of a great many Lib-lab. trade unionists. But the I.L.P. group, who had revived and dominated the Trades' Council, tried to put forward a labour candidate who would fight both the parties.(126)

The A.G.M. of 1898 revealed the tussle between the Lib-labs. and the I.L.P.-ers in three ways: in the rivalry between Bell and Hudson, in the recommendation that Bell should fight Rotherham, and in the speeches made on a resolution of George Green that Bell should be the nominee of the Society for any parliamentary candidature independent of either political party.(127) The upshot was that Hudson was not lucky in becoming a paid president. His appointment as the organiser for Ireland made him a full-time official, but since he had to be away in the other island, and since the A.G.M. had been silent on his liberty to contest seats, he had to refuse the offer from Doncaster.(128) Green's resolution was passed.(129) Though speeches in its favour defined independence as being merely independence on "labour questions", there was nothing in the resolution itself

to prevent it from being interpreted as an invitation to fight three-cornered contests or be in parliament only as an independent group. After Green's resolution was passed, Bell was recommended to fight Rotherham by a snap vote.(130) Though the inadvisability of not contesting it if it proved to involve a three-cornered fight was mentioned, no line was explicitly laid down on this point.

In course of the next twelve months circumstances and correct tactics helped the I.L.P.-ers not only to commit the A.S.R.S. definitely against any alliance with the major political parties, but also to initiate a new phase in the entire political labour movement. The idea of fighting Rotherham was dropped, when the amateurish I.L.P. politicians of the local trades council found that it was too late to make adequate preparations.(131) But in the last two months of 1898 the Lib-labs. - whose stronghold was the London District Council - suffered a reverse as well.

On 18th October this council met to discuss the recent decision of the A.G.M. and decided to interview the party caucuses.(132) E. Everett, vice-president of the council, wrote a month later, defending this decision,

> "It will be a long time before we get a direct representative in the House of Commons without being first selected by a constituency, and one or other of the two principal political parties declining to oppose him."(133)

A deputation of four met the Conservative and the Liberal whips on 11th November. The Conservative whips told them that unless Bell was a Conservative in politics and was adopted by a local association they could not help the A.S.R.S. in this matter. On behalf of the

Liberals, Tom Ellis and Robert Hudson, who were interviewed afterwards, took a more subtle line. They told the deputation that while the responsibility for contesting an election lay ultimately with the local association, the Liberals were prepared to help the A.S.R.S. to find a suitable constituency; further, they did not require any pledge from Bell at all as to whether he would support the Liberal Party. If he was successful in getting a straight fight in a constituency he would be supported by the entire Liberal Party machinery, since he was such a prominent trade union leader. The Liberal Daily Chronicle was pleased that the party whips had given this elastic answer in view of the resolution of the A.G.M. of that year.(134)

The I.L.P.-ers were alarmed and angry. The Labour Leader criticised the action of the London Council on the day following the interview.(135) Two strongly worded protests came from two Lancashire branches - Wigan and Southport. When the Executive Committee met from 5th December onward, only three people - George Loraine, W.J. Tye, and J. Cody - supported the Council to the hilt, declaring that if Bell was going to be independent, it was justifiable to know how much opposition to expect from the other parties before contesting a seat. But the rest, led by Tom Steels, attacked the London Council; their action was a "violation of the letter and spirit" of many decisions of the A.G.M., including that of the recent A.G.M. Only an attitude of "absolute independence" was to be tolerated.(136)

The Labour Leader was jubilant at this resolution, and wrote a column headlined 'Railwaymen Firm.'(137) But the Lib.-labs. were

angry, though not very well-organised. Bell, considerably ruffled, appears to have resigned his candidature rather than adhere to such stringent terms; but he later changed his mind.(138) The London Council passed a strongly-worded resolution criticising the Executive Committee.(139) Others insinuated that the I.L.P. was trying to capture the union, and alleged that while Green's resolution had used the phrase "independent of any political party", the Executive Committee had altered it to "independent of both political parties", and was trying to involve the Society in expensive three-cornered contests. B. Kirkby felt it necessary to issue a denial:

> "It has further been charged against us that the majority of us belonged to a party not named in the A.G.M. decision. Also to further the interests of that party we were prompted to the course we took."

He said that although they had various political views among the members of the committee it was ridiculous to suppose that decisions had been guided by these views. He was on firmer ground in denying the charge of tampering with the resolution, for the actual text contained "independent of <u>either</u> political party."(140)

The Lib-labs. had a strong card in their desire to avoid expensive three-cornered contests. On this point James Williams criticised the resolution of the Executive Committee effectively.(141) Another attempt by the I.L.P. incorruptibles of Rotherham, in January 1899, to make Bell stand as a candidate was refused by him for the same reason. He could not waste the savings of the Society on three-cornered contests, and preferred to heal the breach within the

Rotherham trade union movement by quashing once for all the idea of a triangular fight. (Ben Pickard had pledged the miners' vote to the Liberals.)(142) Bell decided to maintain a sphinx-like silence for the first seven months of 1899 about the various invitations he received from local constituency associations and trades councils. Eventually he selected Derby, at the invitation of the local trades council, and the Liberals decided to run only one candidate for this double-member constituency.(143) Although the Executive Committee contained I.L.P.-ers like Topping and Benson, nobody made a fuss about this underhand Lib.lab. alliance at the September session, because, meanwhile, the strategy of the I.L.P.-ers had been more subtle, aiming to attack on a number of fronts.

Wardle had decided to let Steels and an anonymous contributor argue the pros and cons of parliamentary representation from December 1898.(144) This was biased in favour of Steels as his opponent was on the whole against any form of political participation. While the Lib-lab. case for bargaining with the Liberal party for parliamentary seats was not presented, Steels got ample coverage for his arguments that an independent party, modelling itself on the Irish party, and prepared to fight three-cornered contests, was the only hope of the working-class.(145) The I.L.P.-ers' arguments were strengthened when, in the last week of March and in early April, the Liberal party failed to give official support to the efforts of F.W. Evans to save the Railway Regulation Bill.(146) The Labour Leader stressed that an independent party of even ten people would have been able to push the bill through by virtue of its strategic position.(147) Wardle

reminded railwaymen that the record of the Liberal party on this bill had been as bad as that of the Conservatives.(148) These arguments seemed to add force to Snowden's recent remark that the "Liberal Party had ceased to be an active force", and so the English labour movement should emulate the recent efforts of the Scottish T.U.C. to invite Socialists and co-operators for a political alliance.(149)

Steels sent a resolution along those lines, on behalf of the Doncaster branch, to the Executive Committee in March, 1899, for submission to the T,U.C. (He himself was no longer eligible for the Executive, having served two years in succession). This resolution, which became historic, ran as follows:

> "That this Congress, having regard to its decisions in former years, and with a view to securing a better representation of the interests of labour in the House of Commons, hereby instructs the Parliamentary Committee to invite the co-operation of all the co-operative, socialistic, trade union, and other working organisations to jointly co-operate on lines mutually agreed upon, in convening a special congress of representatives from such of the above-named organisations as may be willing to take part to devise ways and means for securing the return of an increased number of labour members to the next Parliament."(150)

The A.S.R.S. Executive contained well-known Lib-labs. like George Green, W.J. Tye and George Loraine. But when Topping and Benson proposed that this resolution be sent to the T.U.C., only Loraine

opposed the idea.(151) The support of everyone else was possibly due to the moderate tone of the resolution, in sharp contrast to the articles Steels had been writing in the Railway Review. The uncertain fate of the Railway Regulation Bill - which was under attack from the Companies' Association just at that time(152) - might well have influenced everyone to support a resolution which simply wanted more labour members.

Now the I.L.P.-ers were anxious to make sure that this resolution was well supported at the T.U.C., and that the A.G.M. of the A.S.R.S. continued to affirm a line of rigid independence. Benson was standing against Loraine for being one of the delegates to the T.U.C., and the Labour Leader canvassed for him, without mentioning Loraine.(153) It also canvassed for C.A. Henderson for election as a delegate to the A.G.M.(154) Although the T.U.C. delegation included Loraine, James Holmes made a powerful speech on behalf of this Doncaster resolution, and it was passed by a narrow majority.(155) Having committed the T.U.C., the I.L.P.-ers turned to the A.G.M. in October, to vanquish the Lib-labs. of London. The simmering opposition from that quarter was seen in a proposal from the New Cross branch, that the A.G.M. should give an opinion on the meaning of the resolution of the previous A.G.M.(156) But this subtle resolution was not taken up at all. Instead standing orders were suspended to discuss a resolution from Derby that was quite straightforward in its Lib.-lab sympathies. This innocently asked the A.G.M. to delete the phrase "independent of either political parties" from the resolution of the previous year, since Bell was likely to win the seat, and the Liberals

were co-operative. At once one after another the Socialists were on their feet. G.W. Chappell quoted precedents, Turton referred to the very recent decision of the T.U.C. to plan a big move on labour representation, C.A. Henderson called it an "ignoramus ~~resolution~~ recommendation", and J.H. Thomas declared,

> "For a workingman's representative to bind himself to any particular party was suicidal."

The resolution was lost by acclamation. Neither George Green nor James Williams were delegates.(157) The whole purpose of the scene was to remind Bell that although he was trying to be on friendly terms with the Liberals, the I.L.P. incorruptibles were going to watch every action of his, either as a candidate or an M.P.

V

In February 1900 the Labour Representation Committee came into being, as the direct outcome of the resolution sponsored by the A.S.R.S. In a recent work, the history of the L.R.C. has been fully covered.(158) In the preceding account an attempt has been made to trace the exact origins of that organisation, and assess how much truth there is in the tradition that Keir Hardie drafted the resolution sponsored by the A.S.R.S. at the T.U.C.(159) It is evident that while Keir Hardie's personal role remains obscure, the decisive influence of an I.L.P. faction inside the A.S.R.S. is proved beyond reasonable doubt. As Steels was in London during December 1898 - when he led the attack on the London Council - he might well have consulted Hardie about the resolution he sent up by the following March. That

might account for its moderate tone.

The I.L.P.-ers had been assisted by the fact that the Conservative areas of the country, where the A.S.R.S. had a number of branches, had always preferred independence if they were at all going to participate in parliamentary politics. By the latter half of the eighteen-nineties the industrial experiences of the A.S.R.S. had weakened the opposition to participation in politics, and the I.L.P.-ers have been successful in using the democratic structure of the A.S.R.S. for a policy of infiltration.

How far the L.R.C. was going to fulfil the ideals of the I.L.P. 'incorruptibles' remained to be seen. Richard Bell could not be present at its inaugural conference, as he had not been nominated by the Executive in December, 1899; as a result, the four-member delegation from the A.S.R.S. was dominated by Wardle and Benson.(160) At the inaugural conference Wardle seconded a crucial amendment by Keir Hardie, which emphasised the need for "a distinct Labour group in Parliament who shall have their own whips, and agree upon their policy."(161) But when Bell was returned to Parliament as the junior member for Derby at the General Election next October,(162)he could be described either an independent labour member, with a completely free hand, since his adoption at Derby had preceded the establishment of the L.R.C., or a candidate of the L.R.C., since the A.S.R.S. had affiliated to the new organisation in March, 1900.(163) The future was to show whether Bell was going to let the Socialists shape the L.R.C. as they wished, in the same way as he had been forced to let them direct the policy of the A.S.R.S. on labour representation since 1898.

Appendix A.

The Socialist faction in the A.S.R.S.

The following list of people is not meant to include all the Socialists, but only those taking a prominent part in the period covered in this chapter, and some a little after that. The list has been compiled by collating on a card-index direct evidence - like an open admission of I.L.P. sympathies or signs of support from the Labour Leader - and indirect evidence, like a consistent pattern of votes in favour of independent labour representation, the Clarion federation schems, a legal eight-hour day, and Tom Mann. The Labour Leader's election fund supplement of 6th May 1899, which gives a list of subscribers is a mine of information, after it has been checked with names and addresses of prominent A.S.R.S. members in the Annual Reports and Financial Statements, which have a branch directory, and each E.C.Minute Book. The I.L.P. subscription list does not give the actual residential address of Doncaster subscribers. But I find that both the names of I.L.P. collectors - like G.W. Chapsell, Thos. Steels - and the people they collected from - like D.J. Cooper, W. Crowcroft, W.E. Crawford - are identical with well-known A.S.R.S. names that appeared in the E.C.Minutes and the Railway Review in connexion with Doncaster. Surely, then, it is evident that the subscription list in the Labour Leader, 6 May 1899, supplement, refers to A.S.R.S. members of those names.

Biographical index.

AYRES, A. (Doncaster) - Branch Chairman in 1898; speech at a local meeting in September 1898, when Snowden was principal speaker,

indicated his political affiliation. (R.R. 9 Sep.1898, p.5).

BANCROFT, E. (Stockport) - Goods Guard of L.& N.W.; In October 189 strongly advocated independent labour representation; On the E.C. in 1897 voted for Tom Mann as Secretary of the Parliamentary Committe of the T.U.C. (R.R. 5 Oct.1894, p.6; R.R. 11 Dec.1896, p.5 for his grade; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June, 1897,p.37).

BELL, J.R. (Newcastle) - 6, 1864. Pilot Guard of the N.E.R. Secretary of Newcastle Central branch since 1894. Leader of the N.E.R.strike of 1897. Is described as an I.L.P.-er in 1907. (Reformers' Year Book, 1907, p.236; N.E.R. Arbitration (1897), p.466f; A.S.R.S.,Mr.Edward Harford's Case, passim).

BELLAMY, A. (Stockport) - Delegate at the A.G.M. of 1896 and 1897; attacked Maddison sharply for being a Lib-lab M.P., Engine Driver by 1908; statement issued after Richard Bell's attack on Socialists in October 1909 shows he was a Socialist by then, and probably earlier; Labour M.P. for Newcastle-under-Lyme, 1929-31. (Labour Who's Who,1927; R.R. 15 Oct. 1897, p.3 for a I.L.P.-type speech; A.S.R.S. Agenda and decisions of the Annual General Meeting, 1909, p.93).

BENSON, J.W. (Leeds) - Fireman of the N.E.R. since 1891; (therefore probably born c.1870); Delegate at A.G.M. 1896; Active supporter of Clarion Federation Scheme; On Executive Committee, 1899; seconded the Doncaster resolution; attended inaugural conference of L.R.C.; Councillor of Ilkley Urban District Council, 1901; S.D.F. candidate at a bye-election in Pudsey, 1908 (N.E.R. Arbitration (1897) p.301; List of A.G.M. delegates and E.C. representatives in successive "Proceedings & Reports'; R.R. 29 March 1901, p.1; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March 1898, p.3; G.D.H.

COLE, British Working-Class Politics (1941), pp.195f, 288; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1903, p.10; Labour Leader 22 Apr.1898, p.127).

BOOTH, J.A. (Sowerby Bridge) - Delegate to the A.G.Ms of 1898 and 1899; opposed Bell's right to be a standing delegate to the T.U.C. "on principle"; an I.L.P. election agent in 1899 (Labour Leader 1 Apr. 1899, p.99; ibid. 7 Oct. 1899, p.319; R.R. 14 Oct.1898,p.9.)

CHAPPELL, G.W. (Doncaster) - Fireman of the G.N.R. in 1898; Delegate to the A.G.M. of 1899; collector for I.L.P. election fund; propagandist on behalf of Steels; at the A.G.M. of 1901 tried in vain to prevent Bell being a permanent delegate to the T.U.C. (Labour Leader 6th May 1899, supplement, p.15; R.R. 29 Apr. 1898, p.10 for his grade; R.R. 7 Apr. 1899, p.7; R.R. 14 July 1899,p.7; R.R. 11 Oct. 1901, p.14).

CRAWFORD, W.E. (Doncaster) - Elected delegate to the T.U.C. in 1899, but prevented from going by the Company. Gave Steels 2/- for the I.L.P. election fund. (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1899, p.3; Labour Leader 6th May 1899, supplement, p.16).

GUERRIER, W. (Ystalyfera) - Signalman of the Midland railway. In 1894 his branch, of which he was secretary, urged railway nationalisation, and independent labour representation. Delegate at the A.G.M. of 1897; collector for the I.L.P. election fund in 1899. (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1900, p.20f, for his grade; A.S.R.S. Supplementary Agenda A.G.M. 1894, p.2; Labour Leader 6 May 1899, supplement,p.5).

HART, T.J. (Cardiff) - Editor of Cardiff Labour Pioneer; strong supporter of Clarion Federation scheme; On Executive Committee, 1902. (R.R. 6 May 1898, p.5; Cardiff Labour Pioneer; E.C.Minutes for 1902).

HEMMINGSLEY, J. (Masboro') - Delegate at the A.G.Ms. of 1897 and 1898; one of the prime movers in trying to make Bell fight Rotherham; attacked Ben Pickard for his Lib-lab. views, (Sheffield and Rotherham Independent, 21st Jan.1899, p.8; R.R. 14 Oct. 1898, p.8; List of A.G.M. delegates for 1897).

HENDERSON, C.A. (Tyne Dock) - b.1866. Guard on the N.E.R.; member of A.S.R.S. from 1888; Delegate at the A.G.Ms. of 1898, 1899, 1903, and 1904; Active I.L.P.-er. J.P. in 1908. (Biography in R.R. 3 Apr. 1908, p.8; also see Labour Leader 20 May 1899, p.159; relevant A.G.M. reports in R.R.).

HOLMES, James (Doncaster) - b.1863; Delegate at the A.G.Ms. of 1896 and 1897. While he was a keen supporter of the Clarion Scheme and believed in many Socialist doctrines, he passionately defended Harford in 1897. In 1908 his feud with the Hull I.L.P. suggests that either he had a streak of Lib-labourism all along, or that he had mellowed with the years. (Biography in R.R. 4 Nov. 1898, p.9; A.S.R.S. Mr. Edward Harford's Case pp.52-55; R.R. 15 Oct. 1897, p.2; R.R. 19 June, 1908, p.7).

KIRKBY, B. (Dewsbury) - On E.C. 1897 and 1898; Delegate to A.G.M. 1900. Voted for Tom Mann in 1897, and took a leading part in the feud with the London Council in 1898. (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1897, p.37; ibid. Dec.1898, p.28f).

MILLER, J. (Parkhead, Glasgow) - Driver, of the N.B.R. On the E.C. 1896 and 1897. Voted for Tom Mann. Supporter of Clarion scheme. Delegate to the T.U.C. 1898 and 1900. (Relevant E.C.Minutes, esp. June 1897, p.37; for his grade see R.R. 29 Dec. 1899, p.13).

MOORHOUSE, C. (Sheffield) - Chairman of the local branch; delegate

to the A.G.M. of 1896. Supported railway nationalisation with an attack on private property. (R.R. 16 Oct. 1896, p.3;).

NOBLE, J.G. (Selby) - Delegate to A.G.M. 1897. A believer in the "living wage." (R.R.18 Mar. 1898, p.7; list of A.G.M. delegates).

PALIN, J.H. - Signalman of G.N.R. at the time of leaving railway service in 1899. An I.L.P.-er. On E.C. in 1901 and 1902; Delegate to A.G.M. in 1903, 1904, and 1906. By 1906 an official of Tramway-workers' Union. Active in Bradford local politics. (R.R. 5 Oct.1906; p.5; R.R. 12 Oct.1906, p.3; List of A.G.M. delegates; E.C.Minutes, for respective years; his speeches at the A.G.Ms. of 1903 and 1904).

PEACOCK, Tom (Newcastle) - Clerk of the N.E.R. Delegate to A.G.M. of 1894; On E.C. 1895; became I.L.P.-er in 1894; active supporter of an Eight Hour bill. Councillor at Gateshead in 1901. (R.R. 22 July 1898, p.12 for his grade; Labour Leader, 23 June 1894, p.5; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec. 1895, p.16; R.R. 1 Feb.1901, p.6).

PERRY, E.J. (Stratford) - Goods Guard of the G.E.R. A.G.M. delegate 1891; E.C. member 1897 and 1898; voted for Tom Mann; took an active part against the London Council; A.G.M. delegate 1902. (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1897, p.37; other lists of E.C.Members and A.G.M. delegates).

STEELS, Tom R. (Doncaster) - Signalman of G.N.R.; left railway service in 1900. On E.C. in 1897 and 1898; voted for Tom Mann; collector on behalf of the I.L.P.; Delegate at the A.G.Ms. of 1903 and 1904. (R.R. 25 May 1900, p.3; R.R. 6 Nov. 1896, p.6, for his grade; Labour Leader, 6 May 1899. Supplement p.16; relevant E.C.Minutes and lists of delegates.)

TOPPING, Thomas (Mirfield) - Locoman of the L. & N.W.; A.G.M. delegate in 1894, 1901 and 1902; On E.C. in 1899, 1900, 1905, 1906 and 1907. (His address as given in A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March 1899, p.36, is the same as that of the T.Topping, who appears as an I.L.P. collector in Labour Leader, 6 May 1899, supplement p.10; see R.R. 21 Jan.1898, p.10 for his grade.)

TURTON, J. (Southport) - On E.C. in 1897 and 1898; Delegate to A.G.M. in 1899 and 1901; voted for Tom Mann in 1897. (relevant E.C.Minutes, and R.R. for A.G.M. reports).

NOTES

(1) H.J. Hanham, Elections and Party Management: Politics in the time of Disraeli and Gladstone. (London 1959), p.326.

(2) R.S.G. 17 Jan. 1874, p.12.

(3) Hanham, op.cit. p.327.

(4) ibid. p.324f. for a discussion of this.
(5) See above ch.III.

(6) F.Bealey and H.Pelling, Labour and Politics, 1900-1906, (London 1958) pp.4-6.

(7) ibid. p.7.

(8) R.R. 27 July 1883, p.10.

(9) R.R. 28 Sep. 1883, p.9f.

(10) R.R. 12 Oct. 1883, p.7.

(11) Labour Leader 6 Apr. 1895, p.10.

(12) See above. p75ff

(13) R.S.G. 8 Oct. 1880, p.2. This proposal does not seem to have been discussed.

(14) While the argument was continued through many volumes of the R.R., the following references to the correspondence columns of the year 1889 provide a useful collection of the points raised: R.R. 1 Mar. 1889, p.103; R.R. 22 Mar.1889, p.143; R.R. 29 Mar. 1889, p.152; R.R. 12 Apr. 1889, p.177f; R.R. 19 Apr. 1889, p.190; R.R. 26 Apr. 1889, p.197; R.R. 3 May, 1889, p.215; R.R. 10 May 1889, p.225f; R.R. 24 May 1889, p.250; R.R. 31 May 1889, p.262f; R.R. 7 June 1889, p.275; R.R. 14 June 1889, p.287; R.R. 21 June 1889, p.299; R.R. 12 July 1889, p.335.

(15) W. Foreman, Workingmen and Politics. (London 1889.). (kept in A.S.R.S. 'Proceedings and Reports 1889').

(16) Manuscript: Circular issued on 25 Feb. 1885, with Harford's notes about the voting figures. (kept in A.S.R.S.'Proceedings and Reports 1885').

(17) R.R. 9 Oct. 1885, p.5; R.R. 16 Oct. 1885, p.2f.

(18) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1886, p.2f.

(19) R.R. 15 Oct. 1886, p.2. For a compulsory fund, embodied in the rules of the Society, 674 men voted 'yes', 5,583 voted 'no'; for the voluntary alternative 3,039 voted 'yes', but 3,263 voted 'no'.

(20) B.C.Roberts, The Trades Union Congress, 1868-1921, (London 1958), p.

)21) R.R. 15 Oct. 1886, p.2.

(22) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, May 1887, p.3.

(23) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Feb.1887, p.2; Report of the Labour Electoral Congress, 1888, p.30f; Harford's speech in R.R. 4 Oct. 1889, p.477.

(24) R.R. 14 Oct. 1887, p3f.

(25) R.R. 5 Oct. 1888, p.472f.

(26) Report of the Labour Electoral Congress, 1888, pp.9-15.

(27) R.R. 4 Oct. 1889, p.471.

(28) R.R. 16 Oct. 1891. p.4.

(29) Blackburn Times 18 Apr.1891, p.3; ibid. 25 April 1891, p.4; Report of the Labour Electorial Congress, 1891.

(30) cf. M. Lyons's letter R.R. 13 Mar.1891, p.130; letter of 'Liverpudlian' R.R. 20 Mar.1891, p.140; the remarks of Webber at the A.G.M. of 1892. (R.R. 14 Oct. 1892, p.5).

(31) Blackburn Times 25 July 1891, p.4.

(32) R.R. 16 Oct. 1891, p.5.

(33) R.R. 7 Oct. 1892, p.5.

(34) R.R. 14 Oct. 1892, p.4.

(35) H.Pelling, Origins of the Labour Party (London 1954), p.68.

(36) ibid. p.174.

(37) ibid. pp.65-76 for the origins of these efforts; ch.VI. passim. for the emergence of the I.L.P.

(38) See above Ch.II for Foreman's friendship with Wilson (p 37) Foreman had campaigned on his behalf at his election from Middlesbrough; see J.H.Wilson, My stormy Voyage through Life, I (1925), p.257f.

(39) For the number of Lib-lab. M.Ps. see G.D.H.Cole, British Working-Class Politics, 1832-1914, (London 1941), p.116f.

(40) Pelling, op.cit. pp.78,96f, 167.

(41) R.R. 5 Feb.1892, p.3; R.R. 12 Feb.1892, p.2.

(42) See above. ~~ch.~~ pp 156 ff

(43) R.R. 11 May 1894, p.3.

(44) R.R. 22 June 1894, p.3.

(45) Eighty Club, Labour Questions. Speeches by Mr.B.Pickard, M.P., Mr.E.Harford ... May 23rd. 1894, (London 1894),p.25.

(46) A.Fox, History of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives, 1874-1957, (1958) pp.166-68, 197f.

(47) ibid. p.194.

(48) ibid. p.196; also see Labouchere's letter in Northampton Daily Reporter 23 Jan.1895, p.4.

(49) Fox, op.cit. p.198f.

(50) Northampton Daily Reporter, 16 Feb.1895, p.3 reproduces this agreement.

(51) Northampton Mercury 15 June 1894, p.7 c2.

(52) See letter in Northampton Daily Reporter 12 June 1894, p.4, c4; also the controversy between Labouchere and the supporters of Robertson in the January and February issues of the same journal in 1895.

(53) Northampton Daily Reporter 12 June 1894, p.4 c 2-4; Northampton Mercury 22 June 1894, p.6 c7.

(54) Northampton Mercury 27 July 1894, p.6.

(55) Northampton Daily Reporter 10 July 1895, p.4 c5.

(56) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1894, p.19.

(57) R.R. 10 Aug.1894, p.2.

(58) R.R. 14 Sep.1894, p.2.

(59) R.R. 24 Aug.1894, p.2.

(60) R.R. 7 Sep.1894, p.3.

(61) R.R. 3 Aug.1894, p.3.

(62) R.R. 10 Aug.1894, p.2.

(63) R.R. 10 Aug.1894, p.2.

(64) R.R. 7 Sep.1894, p.3.

(65) ibid.

(66) R.R. 14 Sep.1894, p.3.

(67) R.R. 24 Aug.1894, p.2.

(68) R.R. 7 Sep.1894, p.2.

(69) R.R. 7 Sep.1894, p.2.

(70) Pelling, Origins, p.161.

(71) Labour Leader 23 June 1894, p.5.

(72) R.R. 13 Apr. 1894, p.1. Both of them had recently suffered at the hands of the Companies. Ronaghan had been dismissed; Peacock was prevented by the N.E.R. to be an A.S.R.S.branch secretary because he was a clerk. (account of this is in R.R. 22 July 1898, p.12).

(73) R.R. 5 Oct. 1894, p.5.

(74) Green, who was also the secretary of the Leicester Trades Council, had revealed his Liberal-labourism that summer by being among the minority which had opposed supporting Joseph Burgess, an I.L.P. candidate, at a local bye-election. He had argued that labour was adequately represented by Broadhurst, while an I.L.P. candidate was only likely to let a Conservative in. (Leicester Daily Mercury, 22 Aug.1894, p.2; ibid. 23 Aug.1894, p.3.).

(75) my italics. - P.S.G.

(76) R.R. 5 Oct. 1894, p.6.

(77) Labour Leader 13 Oct.1894, pp.7,9.

(78) Northampton Daily Reporter 15 Jan.1895, p.4; ibid. 4 July, 1895, p.4.

(79) A.Fox, Boot & Shoe Operatives, p.198f.

(80) Northampton Daily Reporter, 15 Jan. 1895, p.4.

(81) Labour Leader 6 Apr. 1895, p.10.

(82) Cole, British Working-Class Politics (1941), p.147.

(83) Northampton Daily Reporter 17 July 1895, p.4.

(84) ibid. 13 July 1895, p.3.

(85) Northampton Trades Council, Annual Report for the year ending June 30th 1895, (Northampton 1895),p.5.

(86) Fox, op.cit. Ch.XXII passim.

(87) ibid. p.227ff.

(88) Northampton Daily Reporter, 16 July 1895, p.3.

(89) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1895, p.30.

(90) R.R. 11 Oct. 1895, p.2.

(91) A.S.R.S. Annual Report 1895, p.8.

(92) Pelling, Origins, p.176f.

(93) R.R. 2 Aug. 1895, p.4.

(94) R.R. 4 Oct. 1895, p.5.

(95) R.R. 13 Dec.1895, p.3.

(96) B.C.Roberts, The Tradee Union Congress, 1868-1922. (London 1958). pp.145-52. for a very clear account of how it was done.

(97) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1895, p.4f; A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1895, p.8f.

(98) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1896, p.2. By that time, of course the trades council delegates no longer came.

(99) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1895, p.22; R.R. 14 June 1895,p.1.

(100) R.R. 28 June 1895, p.2.

(101) A.S.H.S. E.C.Minutes Sep.1895, p.15.(U.H.).

(102) R.R. 21 June 1895, p.3; A.S.R.S. Supplementary Agenda of the AGM of 1895, p.3.

(103) R.R. 4 Oct. 1895, p.5.

(104) R.R. 17 July 1896, p.2.

(105) Voting figures and scrutineers' reports are in A.S.R.S. 'Reports and Proceedings 1896' (U.H.).

(106) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1897, p.37.

(107) ibid. p.35f.

(108) A.S.R.S. Supplementary Agenda for the AGM of 1897, p.7.(U.H.).

(109) R.R. 15 Oct. 1897, p.2; A.S.R.S. Decisions of the AGM.of 1897, p.16,(U.H.).

(110) Interview to a press reporter, Daily Mail, 8 Oct.1897.p.3.

(111) Resolutions in favour of these were passed at the A.G.M. of 1898. R.R. 7 Oct.1898, p.13; R.R. 14 Oct.1898, pp.9,10.

(112) Pelling, Origins, pp.189,191.

(113) ibid. p.213f.

(114) ibid. p.191f.

(115) R.R. 15 Oct.1897, p.2.

(116) R.R. 14 Oct. 1898, p.10.

(117) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1898, pp.4,39ff.

(118) R.R. 1 Apr.1898, for biography.

(119) R.R. 8 Apr.1898, pp.1,12.

(120) Philip Viscount Snowdon, An Autobiography (1934) Vol.1,p.85.

(121) R.R. 9 Sep.1898, p.11.

(122) R.R. 14 Mar.1902, p.9.

(123) Darlington and Stockton Times, 10 Sep.1898, p.7.

(124) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1898, p.29. The E.C.Minutes record a discussion of Hudson's candidature but not this decision.

(125) Reports of "warm discussions" on the Rotherham electoral scene occur in some branch reports, and acquire significance in the light of what happened shortly after. R.R. 7 Oct.1898, p.3.

(126) The files of the Sheffield and Rotherham Independent for 1898 at the British Museum have been destroyed, but the following contain an account of what happend between September and Dec.:

Sheffield and Rotherham Independent, 23 Jan.1899,p.7; ibid. 28 Jan.1899, p.9.

(127) Reports in R.R. 7 Oct.1898, p.13; R.R. 14 Oct.1898, p.8.

(128) Doncaster Gazette, 11 Nov.1898, p.6.

(129) R.R. 7 Oct.1898, p.13; A.S.R.S. Decisions of the AGM of 1898, p.11;; there is a misprint in the Railway Review's report which says that Green's motion was lost by one vote. The official minutes, 'Decisions of the AGM' record that Green's motion was adopted. So the latter must be true. At all events, it was not decided to have both the President and the General Secretary as candidates; so the report in the Labour Leader on which Dr.Pelling bases his account (Origins, p.210) should be regarded as incorrect.

(130) R.R. 14 Oct.1898, p.8.

(131) R.R. 21 Oct.1898, p.1.

(132) R.R. 21 Oct.1898, p.1.

(133) R.R. 16 Dec.1898, p.10.

(134) R.R. 11 Nov.1898, p.11.

(135) Labour Leader 12 Nov.1898, p.373.

(136) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1898, pp.5,28f; also see R.R. 9 Dec.1898, p.9.

(137) Labour Leader, 17 Dec.1898, p.413.

(138) This is the only construction to be put on conflicting reports in Yorkshire Factory Times, 16 Dec.1898, p.4 and Labour Leader 17 Dec.1898, p.412.

(139) R.R. 16 Dec.1898, p.4.

(140) R.R. 23 Dec.1898, p.11.

(141) R.R. 30 Dec.1898, p.6.

(142) Sheffield and Rotherham Independent, 21st Jan.1899,p.8; ibid. 28 Jan.1899, p.8; also see Bell's letter about Rotherham a year later in the Labour Leader 2 Dec.1899,p.378.

(143) R.R. 1 Sep.1899, p.1; R.R. 15 Sep.1899, p.1.

(144) R.R. 9 Dec.1898, p.10.

(145) For Steels's opponents' views see R.R. 10 Feb.1899, p.10. Steels's articles appeared from Dec.1898 till March 1899; a few important ones are R.R. 9 Dec.1898,p.10; R.R. 24 Feb. 1899, p.6; R.R. 6 Jan.1899, p.4; R.R. 3 Mar.1899, p.5.

(146) See above. p 309 f.

(147) Labour Leader 15 Apr.1899, p.113.

(148) R.R. 26 May, 1899, p.1.

(149) R.R. 20 Jan.1899, p.6.

(150) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes,Mar.1899, p.10; that Steels was its author is known from the report of another Doncaster man, James Holmes, who moved the resolution at the T.U.C.(Cardiff Labour Pioneer Apr.1900, p.2.).

(151) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1899, p.11f.

(152) See above. p 306 f

(153) Labour Leader 22 Apr.1899, p.127.

(154) ibid. 20 May 1899, p.159.

(155) R.R. 20 Oct.1899, p.10. Holmes's account.

(156) A.S.R.S. Supplementary Agenda ... A.G.M. ...1899, p.10; A.S.R.S. Addendum to the supplementary Agenda ...A.G.M.1899, p.7 for another explicit reference that this was meant also to cover the resolution passed by the Executive in December 1898 on the action of the London Council.

(157) R.R. 13 Oct.1899, p.11.

(158) F. Bealey & H. Pelling, Labour & Politics, 1900-1906. (1958)

(159) F. Williams, Magnificent Journey. (1954). p 215.

(160) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1899, p.48. While the Executive Committee was sitting in December, Bell was called away to deal with the critical situation of the N.E.R.movement, and the emergency meeting with the Board of Directors on the 6th December. The delegation might well have been appointed on the day he was absent.

(161) For the significance of this amendment see Bealey and Pelling, op.cit. p.28; for Wardle's support, R.R. 2 Mar.1900,p.7.

(162) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1900, p.2.

(163) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1900, p.81.

Chapter XI. Richard Bell and Recognition, 1903-1909.

Taff Vale had been a blessing in disguise, for it had enabled Bell to centralise the Society for a national struggle on a future date, when prosperity returned. But until 1906 prosperity did not return to the railways,(1)and until the passage of the Trades Disputes Act in the same year, strikes were not possible. In the meantime his two principal problems were labour relations on the N.E.R., and relations with the A.S.L.E.F. Overshadowing both were the aggravating influences of technical changes.

Larger locomotives and wagons of greater carrying capacity which were being built between 1899 and 1902 seemed by 1904 to indicate the shape of things to come on the G.C.R., L. & N.W., and the G.N.R.(2) The big locomotives blocked the promotion prospects of a fireman, extending it beyond the usual seven or eight years.(3) Electrification threatened to do away with his need altogether. When the Metropolitan District Railway completed the electrification of its lines, it refused to have two men in the motor cab, and Bell's intercession with the Board of Trade failed to change its attitude.(4) By the end of 1903 the N.E.R. had electrified a section between Newcastle and Tynemouth, and the L. & Y. a section between Liverpool and Southport.(5) The effect of electrification on other grades was seen when, in course of the following year, certain signal boxes of some Companies changed over to electric or pneumatic methods, which saved man-power.(6)

Firemen suffered most, and the Midland Firemen's programme

(Table XIX) showed what this class of ambitious young men felt. They could no longer accept a minimum wage that had remained unaltered for over fifteen years, when prices were rising and the promotion line was likely to be blocked. When the Chairman of the Company, in rejecting this programme, said that he could easily dispense with three hundred firemen, the men were bound to be apprehensive.(7)

Table XIX

Midland Firemen's Wages, 1903

(Source: Midland Railway, 'Locomotive Department Minutes No.17', par.7625; R.R. 29 July, 1887, p.7, which also shows that conditions had not altered since 1887.)

	Existing Daily Wage	Demands
1st year	3/6	4/3
2nd year	4/-	4/6
3rd year	4/3	4/9
4th year	-	5/-
Passed Firemen	4/6	5/6
" after three more years	5/-	

N.B. The men had a six-day week.

II

Industrial relations on the N.E.R. in the years between Taff Vale and the Trades Disputes Act were marked by the unwillingness of the Company, until the end of 1905, to give any general concessions or to grant interviews to "all-grades" deputations, in spite of

repeated requests to Gibb from the men's committee.(8) George Loraine, an N.E. Signalman who was President of the A.S.R.S. between 1902 and 1904, thought that this reflected a post-Taff Vale stiffening of attitude.(9) While there was simmering discontent over the long deferred desires of basic all-round wage increases, which would benefit lower grades, and the demand for 'time and a quarter' for night duty,(10)two grades - Firemen and Signalmen - felt the stagnation in their conditions most keenly. In view of the technical changes, Firemen were anxious to raise the starting wage of the passed Firemen from 28/6 to 30/- per week,(11)and also to remove a few blocks in the pattern of annual increments.(12) Signalmen wished to abolish twelve-hour boxes and to have a rate of Sunday pay as high as the other upper grades.(13)

In 1904 and 1905 Richard Bell was partially successful in his demand that at least those who were directly affected by technical changes should get payment for the responsible nature of their work. After the electrification of the Newcastle-Tynemouth line early in 1904, the new wage scale for Motormen was found to have a starting pay one shilling less, and a maximum pay twelve shillings less, than those of the steam engine driver.(14) As a result of the union's pressure, the maximum was raised by another three shillings, the motorman earning his maximum had prospects of promotion to senior vacancies on Steam locomotives, and the passed fireman got the right of favoured treatment for vacancies among motormen.(15) The A.S.R.S. had not been able at all to keep the wages of the drivers of electric trains at the same level as those of the men on the footplate. But this settlement set

the pattern for future determination of the wages of motormen elsewhere; a comparison between this and the scale adopted on the Metropolitan District Railway next year brings this out, if we allow for a difference of 3/- between London and Provincial rates. (Table XX).

Table XX

Motormen's Weekly Wages, 1904-5.

(Source: (1) N.E.R. : A.S.R.S.E.C.Minutes, June 1904, p.49.

(2) Met.Dist. : A.S.R.S.E.C.Minutes, Mar.1905, p.59ff.)

The weekly wage for Met.Dist.Rly. is calculated from hourly rates given.

	N.E.R.	Met.Dist. Rly
1st year	32/-	35/-
2nd year	34/-	36/3
3rd year	36/-	37/6
4th year	39/-(Max.)	38/9
7th year	-	42/6(Max.)

Next year, while Gibb would not discuss the "all-grades" programme (drawn up in December 1903), he agreed in July to give bonus payments to Guards and Locomen of the new type of heavy engines and trains.(16) Signalmen in the electrified area had maximum wages raised at 34 boxes and hours reduced elsewhere.(17) Signalmen got a further instalment in the general settlement of May 1906, when, not only was the rate of Sunday Pay raised, but hours were reduced to 10 per day for everybody with wages of 26/- and more per week, and 8 per day for people with wages of 29/- and more per week. The union also got rewards for greater responsibility and skill by adding a number

of items to the "mark-system", and consequently raising the piece-rates of a number of boxes.(18)

This major settlement of 1906 was significant both for its contents as well as for the tussle between Bell and the militant activists before and after the negotiations. After stalling for two years, Gibb was at last persuaded, in December 1905, to arrange an interview between the all-grades deputation and the Directors to discuss their programme.(19) The interview did not take place until March 1906, because of unforeseen circumstances, including Gibb's departure to become the General Manager of the Metropolitan District Railway.(20) The pressure from the rank-and-file, bottled up for six years, was so strong that the agreement arrived at after eleven days' bargaining in May, 1906, was explicitly stated to be not final, unless ratified by the Darlington Conference of men's delegates; if that was done, the officials of the Company would recommend its adoption to the directors.(21) Bell did not succeed in having that ratification, but the Executive Committee almost forced the agreement on the N.E. railwaymen, declaring that the spirit of collective bargaining must be maintained.(22) Rebellious branches appealed to the A.G.M. with resolutions which would have crippled the decision-making powers of their elected representatives.(23) While this appeal failed(24)the prospects of regularizing the process of collective bargaining remained uncertain. Although Bell and Butterworth, the new General Manager, had discussions about setting up a properly representative Conciliation Board,(25)no fresh developments occurred in that direction for about eighteen months.

In spite of the discontent of local activists, the three settlements of 1897, 1900, and 1906 had contributed, step by step, to uniform and better conditions of hours and wages.(26) The calculation of overtime at a daily rate on the basis of a ten hour day in a six-day week had started in 1897 with its application to Locomen, Goods Guards and Goods Warehousemen; by 1906 that was extended to Passenger Guards and to both Passenger and Goods Shunters, with a proportion of Shunters working only an eight hour shift. The same applied to all other Passenger Staff, except some in country districts who still worked eleven hours. The Goods Staff of Newcastle retained their nine-hour day, which they had won in 1889. Henceforth the senior grades aimed at getting at least a nine-hour day, if not eight hours. Signalmen whose wages were less than 26/- per week still worked a twelve-hour shift, but even they had overtime at a daily rate. Sunday work was universally rated at 'time and a half'. But 'time and a quarter' for night duty could not be obtained. Bell remarked, "I am doubtful whether it could be secured on any one railway alone."(27)

The wages position was more complicated. In lieu of flat rate advances to all, the union secured the removal of some blocks in the scale of increments, wage increases for Firemen and skilled Signalmen,(28)and also for the Goods Staff at Newcastle. Indeed, the last-named group were getting, in 1906, wages that were decidedly higher than the position after Spence Watson's award of 1889 - Checkers (7/- higher), Loaders (6/- higher), Porters (4/- higher), and Hulleymen (1/- higher). What rankled with the men was the failure to win anything more than an advance of a shilling or so for Porters in

other places, for Platelayers outside the electrified and other important lengths, and for Platform Staff generally. Shunters worked at a dangerous trade in all kinds of weather for ten hours a day, but their wages had remained unaltered within a range of 20/- and 26/- per week. They were getting restive, as they saw prices continued to rise. By continuing to refuse a Guaranteed Week's Pay to its permanent staff, the Company kept a source of general discontent open.

For Locomen the latest settlement gave additional concessions to the Drivers and Firemen of Express trains. As the A.S.R.S. had thus maintained its reputation for looking after the interests of the North Eastern Locomen, the A.S.L.E.F. made little progress in this area.(29) But elsewhere the two unions had been competing for members for a long time, without much success at bettering the Locomen's conditions. As a result, since the turn of the century, they had tried to establish a working agreement.

III

A dispute on the G.C.R. had prompted the two Societies to have a joint meeting and draw up a federation scheme in January 1900.(30) But the polls taken among the membership by both Societies had shown tremendous apathy, and the idea had been dropped.(31) Throughout the latter half of 1901 and the whole of 1902, local movements of Locomen tried to base themselves on co-operation between the two unions - on the L.& Y.,(32)Midland,(33)G.W.R.,(34)G.C.R.,(35)and the G.N.R.(36) Although they failed to get any concessions, they aroused, towards the end of the year, a strong desire among Locomen members of the

A.S.R.S. for accepting the overtures of the other Society for some Federation scheme.(37) The Special General Meeting of January 1903 pressed for talks on amalgamation or federation.(38) On the Executive Committee of 1903 there was a young and enterprising Fireman called J.H. Thomas, who had already shown his keenness to foster co-operation at the local level.(39) So it was not surprising that the Committee took the initiative in arranging a meeting between the two Societies.(40)

At this meeting, held at Leeds on 18th May 1903,(41)Bell's offer of amalgamation was politely refused by Albert Fox, the Secretary of the A.S.L.E.F., who appeared to be keen for a Federation so that all Locomen could start a united national movement.(42) It did not occur to any A.S.R.S. delegate to suggest organisation on the departmental principle within an amalgamated society - as the N.U.R. is organised nowadays - although some A.S.L.E.F. delegates did seem ready to favour amalgamation, if Locomen had an opportunity to represent their group interests inside the amalgamated union.(43) The arrangement finally adopted was a federation which would conduct industrial disputes. The control of all-grades movements and Locomen's movements was vested jointly with the two Societies, but the A.S.R.S. had a free hand in movements affecting other grades. All offers of arbitration and all strike notices were, however, to be signed by both Secretaries. A joint committee of five Executive Committee members of each Society was to run the scheme, but the ultimate sanction of both Executive Committees was needed for starting a movement.(44) The scheme, then, created a situation where both Bell's

favourite idea and Fox's favourite idea had to compete for approval before the full Executive Committees of both Societies.

A.S.R.S. members had mixed feelings about the scheme. Bell candidly told the A.G.M. of 1903 that the balance of advantage lay with the other Society, whose 10,000 members would get the support of the 60,000 members of the A.S.R.S. in any locomen's movement. He had also found it embarrassing and difficult to appear at recruiting meetings jointly with Fox, and see the latter use the goodwill created by the federation scheme to induce locomen to join the A.S.L.E.F. only. But powerful speeches by Thomas and other delegates, who were anxious to get something done, resulted in the adoption of the scheme, after Bell himself urged the delegates not to retreat after having gone so far. The resolution finally passed by 43 votes to 12 did add, significantly, that it was hoped the scheme would lead eventually to amalgamation.(45)

Bell's strategy was to test the willingness of the A.S.L.E.F. to co-operate in all-grade movements, and at the same time to pour cold water on schemes for movements by Locomen only - whether local or national - because he knew that these would strengthen the A.S.L.E.F. at the expense of the A.S.R.S. as long as the two societies were federated. But he was in the unenviable position of not being confident of starting an all-grades movement until ill-organised grades were better organised, the Taff Vale judgment was reversed, and economic prosperity returned. He persuaded the Executive in March 1904 to let him issue a circular to the branches advising them not to use 'movements' as a basis for organisation, because his experience

had shown that these tactics did not succeed. At a time of depression an aggressive movement was bound to fail, and the result would simply demoralise new recruits and prevent further organisation.(46) While this remained his general policy his handling of movements on the L. & Y.that year was slightly inconsistent with this approach, but served its purpose in revealing the real intentions of the A.S.L.E.F. behind its desire for a federation. An "all-grades" movement on the L. & Y.had been sanctioned by the A.S.R.S. Executive in December 1903 pending talks with the A.S.L.E.F.,(47)but the other union opposed it, preferring a purely Locomen's movement.(48) But Bell let the all-grades movement continue, against the rules of the Federation, to the intense annoyance of the A.S.L.E.F.(49) Possibly at Bell's insistence, the final comment of the A.S.R.S. Executive on this episode was to affirm, in December 1904, their sole right to conduct movements.(50)

By this time Bell's conduct at two joint meetings of the two Executive Committees had alienated many members of the A.S.L.E.F. In March locomen members of the A.S.R.S. Executive like J.H. Thomas and S. Bartlett had managed to authorise Bell to arrange a joint meeting, in response to the request of the A.S.L.E.F. for a Locomen's programme.(51) It transpired at this meeting(52)that the A.S.L.E.F. had prepared a national programme for Locomen as the basis for discussion prior to starting a national movement, but the A.S.R.S. Executive had no idea that this was going to be discussed, although Fox said that he had told Bell about it,(53)which Bell denied. After some recriminations discussion did take place on a Locomen's programme. While some A.S.R.S. members like Beardsley and Taylor would have

supported a programme once preparations had been made at delegate meetings, Bell used all sorts of arguments to decry the idea - either because the programme was too costly, or because Taff Vale had made strikes difficult, or because it was against the rules of the A.S.R.S. to initiate movements from above.(54) These tactics did little to win the confidence of the A.S.L.E.F. delegates.(55) A second joint meeting in October 1904 ended in apparent harmony, because the A.S.L.E.F. members admitted that it would take time to arouse enthusiasm, and that recent meetings had not been a great success.(56) But both among A.S.L.E.F. and A.S.R.S. members a suspicion lurked that Bell had lied at the previous conference in denying knowledge about the programme of the A.S.L.E.F.(57)

Irritated at Bell's 'non-co-operation' some A.S.L.E.F. members had already written articles in their journal asking Locomen to leave the A.S.R.S. en bloc and join the A.S.L.E.F.(58) In the autumn of 1904 a number of cases of 'poaching' had come to light, including a letter from Fox himself to an A.S.R.S. engine driver.(59) While the A.S.R.S. Executive was annoyed, and thought of inserting a clause against 'poaching' in the Federation scheme, a majority of them still wished to make a national Locomen's Conference a success, and asked Bell to make plans with Fox for a programme.(60) Before anything happened in that direction, Bell's conduct in the dispute on the Metropolitan District railway immensely strengthened the position of the A.S.L.E.F. in its recruitment drive.

Bell had felt flattered when, in October 1904, C.T. Yerkes, Chairman of the Metropolitan District Railway and a parliamentary

colleague, had arranged to have a short discussion with him about the changes following electrification.(61) He had not mentioned this to Fox. Subsequently, in February and March negotiations took place over new terms, since electrification was complete. The crucial meetings with the Board of Directors were on the 13th, 20th, and 27th March, 1905. Bell had sanctioned the agitation at the beginning of March, but partly through the fault of the branch Secretary, and partly through his own fault, he had not had a proper discussion with Fox over tactics, before the meeting on the 13th. Moreover, although he had received another letter from Yerkes on 7th March, and met him on the 9th, he had kept Fox in the dark about this, and only mentioned Fox's name to Yerkes as someone whom a section of the men would also like to see at the meetings with the Directors. At the first meeting - where the bases of the settlement were drawn up - Bell did not argue strongly in favour of retaining two men in the motor cab,(62)giving the Chairman the impression that this item was only a pet idea of Fox, whom in any case he seemed to consider an interloper.(63) Though the men eventually accepted the terms they were very disappointed at the failure to protect the Firemen.

In terms of concessions the result was meagre. The following table is based on the hourly wage-rate demanded within a nine hour day by the men, and the hourly wage-rate conceded within a sixty-hour week by the Company, and shows that to all former drivers the result was a blow to their expected level of wages. The only concession which Bell had obtained had been to increase the maximum pay of the conductor from 30/- in the sixth year to 32/6 in the seventh year.

As the conductor could come from any grade, the traditional differential between locomen and other grades was slightly narrowed. (Table XXI).

Table XXI

Wages of the Metropolitan District Railway.

(Source: A.S.R.S., E.C. Minutes, Mar. 1905, p.59f. ibid. June 1905, p.62f.)

		Demands	Concessions
Motormen	First year	36/-	35/-
	Second year	40/6	36/3
	Third year	45/-	37/6
	Seventh year	-	42/6
Conductors	First year	24/9	25/-
	Second year	27/-	26/3
	Third year	29/3	27/6
	Seventh year	-	32/6

If the men had cause to complain, so had Fox. Before the settlement had been fully accepted at a men's meeting, a report appeared in the Morning Leader describing Bell as "representing the Company's employees in the negotiations," although there had been an understanding not to give press statements.(64) Against the background of Bell's failure to inform Fox of his meetings with Yerkes, and to consult Fox before the negotiations, the press interview made the A.S.L.E.F. very suspicious that Bell wished to seek recognition unilaterally, at whatever cost to the conditions of Locomen.(65)

Next month, on 11th and 12th April, the National Locomen's Conference took place.(66) The programme drawn up at this gathering became a dead letter very soon, but the proceedings served to show that a great many locomen inside the A.S.R.S. could be attracted by

the appeal of the A.S.L.E.F. for an "overloaded" programme for eight hours, Guaranteed Week, mileage clause, wages, and so forth. The handful of leading Locomen members of the A.S.R.S. who, for socialistic or realistic reasons wanted to concentrate simply on the eight hour day were heavily defeated.(67) While the A.S.L.E.F. enlisted the support of the A.S.R.S. firemen for a wages clause,(68)the actual clauses as adopted were later considered unsatisfactory by many A.S.L.E.F. members.(69)

Within a fortnight after this locomen all over the country were being told Fox's version of the Metropolitan District Railway dispute, in which he built up Bell as the "locomen's arch-enemy," but for whose previous parleying with the Directors the Drivers and Firemen would have got far better terms.(70) Bell received anxious inquiries from many locomen members, and went almost frantic with rage.(71) The A.S.L.E.F. had already arranged to have a joint meeting of the two Executives to discuss the charges of Fox against Bell.(72) Bell planned to attack Fox for sending this circular before this meeting and asked him to produce a copy.(73) At the meeting the A.S.L.E.F. delegates denied the existence of this circular - circular No.17 - (74) although afterwards, when the evidence for its existence was overwhelming,(75)the A.S.L.E.F. Executive admitted its existence.(76)

This joint meeting might have led to a detente, because only Bell, Fox, and a few others were in a belligerent mood. But even reasonable charges against Bell went by default, as the A.S.L.E.F. mishandled it badly and produced little documentary evidence - unlike Bell, who came loaded with letters and papers. The denial of the

existence of circular No.17, the admission by Fox that 'poaching' was allowed by the rules of the A.S.L.E.F.,(77)the evidence of rude letters about Bell written by Fox to other people, the attempt to evade responsibility for anti-A.S.R.S. articles written in 1904(78) - all these helped to throw away the sympathy which Fox had at first gained when the Metropolitan District Railway dispute was discussed. At the end of the discussion J.H. Thomas rallied the entire A.S.R.S. delegation in favour of a censure motion on Fox for spreading unsubstantiated charges, and opposed a conciliatory non-committal resolution proposed by a moderate A.S.L.E.F.-man.(79) The recently drawn up 'National Programme' was to "stand in abeyance" - to the relief of the A.S.R.S. members who had never liked it, and the A.S.L.E.F. members who were thinking of agitating on their own.(80)

After this the Federation scheme, though never technically repudiated, was dead. While the A.S.R.S. decided to campaign for amalgamation of all railway unions,(81)the A.S.L.E.F. started to campaign for bringing all Locomen within its fold, and advocating a federation of sectional societies if there was desire for it. Fox sent a resolution to that effect to the A.S.R.S. in December 1905, in reply to its request for amalgamation.(82) In April 1906 its Executive audaciously wrote to the A.S.R.S. asking its Locomen to consider secession seriously,(83)and its triennial delegate meeting next month invited the Locomen of the A.S.R.S. to join in an A.S.L.E.F.-sponsored National Locomen's movement.(84)

The leading Locomen in the A.S.R.S. had been critical of Bell's mishandling of the Federation scheme, but, as we have seen, they had

found Fox's conduct even more annoying, and so they remained solidly behind the campaign for amalgamation. The N.E.R. seemed to J.H.Thomas to be the living proof that only amalgamation could benefit Locomen.(85) Nevertheless, this appeal of the A.S.L.E.F. might, in the long run, have drawn away rank-and-file Locomen from the A.S.R.S. as well as prevented new recruits from joining, especially after the Metropolitan Railway dispute.

About the same time movements of Goods Guards, Shunters, and Signalmen were making futile efforts to win significant concessions on the G.W.R.,(86)Midland,(87)and the G.C.R.(88) The limited range of the grades who were active reflected the weakness of trade unionism and the propensity of sectionalism to flourish. While Locomen in Scotland were almost entirely organised by the A.S.R.S.,(89)the United Pointsmen and Signalmen's Society was making rapid strides among Scottish Signalmen - a point which delegates to the A.G.M. of 1905 noted with apprehension.(90) They might also have reflected that between 1900 and 1905 the A.S.L.E.F. had increased its membership from 10,002 to 13,000,(91)whereas the membership of the A.S.R.S. at the end of 1905 had barely passed the level reached in 1900, after a decline since then.(92)

Against this background of simmering discontent, stagnating membership, and the propensity of sectionalism to flourish, the Executive had decided to try to amalgamate all railway unions. Bell told the A.G.M. in October 1905 to postpone the idea of an all-grades movement until the amalgamation project was successful.(93) Realising that the society was "terribly behind in the matter of

organisation," the A.G.M. also decided to appoint another Organising Secretary for a start.(94) In due course J.H. Thomas was elected, with a clear majority, as the fourth Organising Secretary for England and Wales,(95)at the comparatively early age of thirty-one.

IV

At that time there were four railway unions besides the A.S.R.S. and the A.S.L.E.F. - the G.R.W.U., the United Pointsmen & Signalmen's Society (founded 1880), the Railway Telegraph Clerk's Association, and the Railway Clerks' Association. The last-named had been founded in 1897, and shortly afterwards, the A.S.R.S. had been prevented from recruiting clerks on the N.E.R., because Gibb did not approve of trade unionism among that grade.(96) While the R.C.A. extended its operations to the North-East it failed to win recognition anywhere.

With the exception of the A.S.L.E.F. all these societies attended a conference called by Bell on 3rd February, 1906 to discuss amalgamation.(97) Under the able chairmanship of Bell, the meeting accepted amalgamation as a principle, without committing their societies, although signs of differences could be seen in the desire of the G.R.W.U. to include shopmen,(98)and the "wholesale dread of a strike policy" mentioned by J.E.S. Challener, Secretary of the Railway Clerks' Association.(99) As the conference actually drew up a graduated scale of dues, and as Bell promised to employ all union officials in an amalgamated Society,(100) the A.S.R.S. Executive, in March, was optimistic about the outcome.(101) This led it to ignore a request to launch an all-grades movement, until the outcome of these

efforts was known.(102) But with a remarkable blindness to the wishes of the G.R.W.U., the A.S.R.S. refused to accept Shopmen, "as that would be an injustice to other unions who cater(-ed) for the class of skilled workers in question."(103)

Three months later the Executive Committee met to find that while the triennial delegate meeting of the A.S.L.E.F. had launched its appeal to all Locomen for a national programme, with a special appeal to Locomen members of the A.S.R.S. Executive,(104) the other societies would not amalgamate. The U.P.S.S. and the R.C.A. preferred a Federation, while the G.R.W.U. insisted on the inclusion of all railway workers.(105) The Committee then sanctioned a national all-grades movement, being within the rules as thirty branches had asked for it. But the main impulse behind taking this decision just at that time was very likely a desire to forestall the counter-attraction of the new campaign of the A.S.L.E.F. The committee passed the resolution in favour of an all-grades movement, just before discussing Fox's latest letters. In reply to these it then said that as they had just granted an all-grades movement in response to requests from branches, they could not support the national Locomen's movement, but would welcome the support of the A.S.L.E.F. for the all-grades movement.(106) At the time of taking this decision the Liberal Government had promised to alter its Trades Disputes Bill to suit the demands of the Labour Party,(107)but the Bill did not leave the House of Commons until after October.(108) Whether the House of Lords would wreck it or not could not have been foreseen. So the main factor behind the decision to start the all-grades movement was the rivalry

with the A.S.L.E.F. for winning recognition, rather than the certainty that the Taff Vale judgment was going to be more than adequately reversed.

Recognition was the main aim of Richard Bell. He told the Secretary of a local grade movement on the L. & Y. not to mind his superintendent's refusal to consider an application sent on A.S.R.S. notepaper, for on that issue the all-grades movement would test the attitude of the Companies.(109) He was aware of the need for a prolonged preliminary campaign to recruit members on the basis of a reasonable but attractive programme, before finally challenging the Companies. Having obtained the unanimous endorsement of the A.G.M. of 1906 for the national movement,(110)he started the campaign so methodically that the A.S.L.E.F. was left far behind.

The delegate conferences summoned in November for the formulation of programmes for the three kingdoms were ably managed by the careful preparation of standing orders and the fixing of an agenda in advance, so as to avoid the chaos of 1897.(111) True to the tradition of trying to secure unanimity by avoiding the wages question, the agenda placed it fifth in order of priority, after discussing hours, overtime at a daily rate, Sunday Pay, and the Guaranteed week. This was a mistake, at a time of rising prices, but it was not realised until three or four years later. While the traditional demands of the programme of 1889 were retained, an eight hour day was aimed at for trainmen and shunters. A demand for keeping two men in the motor cab was Bell's concession to the Locomen, especially as the A.S.L.E.F. would otherwise have found additional ammunition to buttress its

charges in Circular No.17.(112)

A minimum wage of 21/- was demanded by Scottish railwaymen, the Irish wished for a flat rate advance to those paid less than 19/-, and the English programme originally had a demand for an all-round advance of 2/-. Perhaps from a desire not to overload the programme the A.S.R.S. Executive, by the Chairman's casting vote, altered the wages clause of the English programme to make it applicable only to those who did not aim at the eight hour day.(113) As a result Firemen and Platelayers had no prospect for an wage advance, but the leadership probably felt that these anomalies could be ironed out after Recognition had been obtained. The importance of Recognition had been explicitly stated at all the National All-Grades Conferences, and was reaffirmed by the Executive in December.(114)

For the sake of the National Programme all existing local movements of Guards, Shunters and Signalmen had been asked to close,(115) and the programme succeeded in bringing in a great many members from the latter half of 1906 onward. But to Bell its main use lay in the extent to which it helped the publicity campaign to win recognition. There is very little new to add to what Halevy and the Webbs have described about this campaign of 1907 - the presentation of the programme to the Companies, the preparation of the Railwaymen's Charter, the publication by the Companies of the 'Red Book' in reply, Richard Bell's second pamphlet in reply to the "red book," and the brilliant stroke on Bell's part in employing the young Cambridge economist W.T. Layton to prepare a study of railway wages based on the data provided by members.(116) What is less well understood is

the way the A.S.R.S. tried to grapple with its tasks in the teeth of opposition from the Companies, and only qualified support from the other railway unions and the Government.

Among the Companies some were coming round to accept collective bargaining either departmentally - as had been customary of late on the Midland(117) - or else by meeting multigrade deputations (which were in fact A.S.R.S.-sponsored), as happened on 3rd May 1906 on the G.W.R. At this latter meeting the deputation was allowed to meet the Directors in their private clothes and the Chairmen admitted that Conciliation Boards were a good idea.(118) On the other hand, the L. & Y. had revived, in course of 1906, the anti-strike agreement of 1897, perhaps in view of the likelihood of the passage of the Trades Disputes Bill. Eventually, on 16th October, 1906, a Mutual Aid Association had been set up among some Companies.(119)

The general reaction of the Companies to the letters sent by Bell was to refuse to recognise him, but state their willingness to meet their own employees, either collectively or individually.(120) After two public appeals on the question of recognition had been rebuffed in February,(121)Bell planned to hold mass meetings on 12th May 1907 all over the country where identical 'unanimous' resolutions were to be passed.(122) While these demonstrations were successful, and the press fairly sympathetic, the Executive Committee was aware, when they met in June, that they did not have the other unions with them, and that even the sympathetic press had regarded the membership of the A.S.R.S. - which was about 70,000 at the end of 1906 - as its weakest point.(123) They decided to recall the national conferences

to sound their opinions.(124)

On 24th and 25th June the conferences assembled, to discuss Recognition immediately after Bell had read his report.(125) They obediently affirmed this principle,(126)and in July Bell wrote another series of letters to the Companies, saying that recognition would not interfere with management and discipline.(127) As the Chairmen of some Companies had characterised Recognition to mean a weakening of their control over their businesses,(128)Bell replied in a public speech in September suggesting a meeting with the Railway Companies' Association to explain his real meaning.(129)

The Executive Committee in September approved of this technique, and also decided to take a strike ballot - papers to be returned by 28th October.(130) The recalled conferences in June had increased their confidence, but the position was in fact not very different from September, 1897, except that there was greater central control.

Meanwhile, in course of the year, the other unions had become increasingly alarmed that Bell was going to steal a march on them. The last meeting held jointly with the A.S.L.E.F. on 23rd November 1906 had broken up with Bell and some A.S.L.E.F. members hurling abuse at one another. While some Locomen members of the A.S.R.S. would have preferred to rise above personalities and discuss the possibility of getting A.S.L.E.F. support for the all-grades movement,(131)and while at least one A.S.L.E.F. member was prepared to do the same,(132) Bell was really keen on putting Fox in the wrong for his public criticism of the A.S.R.S.; as the A.S.L.E.F. delegates were not prepared for that, the meeting broke up.

Afterwards, Fox organised a National Locomen's Conference in January 1907, and next month sent the Companies his programme, which had attractive clauses on mileage rates, and a wage scale advantageous to Firemen. He tried to enlist the support of the Locomen in the A.S.R.S. before sending it in, but, as was to be expected, Bell urged him to merge his programme with that of the Locomen in the A.S.R.S.(134) When he finally sent in his programme, he added a post-script saying,

"Please note Mr. Bell is <u>not</u> authorised to negotiate for us."(135)

This letter was used by the <u>Railway News</u> in February and the <u>Times</u> on 22nd May, for hostile attacks on the A.S.R.S.(136) The studied aloofness of the A.S.L.E.F. and the U.P.S.S. from the demonstrations held on 12th May, and their persistence in sending deputations to the Companies with different local programmes sponsored by their members, alarmed the A.S.R.S., lest any piece-meal concessions were to lose the A.S.R.S. the support of those grades.(137)

Shortly after these big demonstrations, S. Chorlton, the Secretary of the U.P.S.S. took the initiative in trying to arrange a meeting of all the railway unions to discuss the creation of a federation,(138)being mainly anxious to persuade the A.S.R.S. that his society had come to stay.(139) The A.S.R.S. Executive ignored the move, standing by the principle of amalgamation(140)and in his correspondence with Chorlton in July, Bell said that a federation was impossible between Societies catering for the same grades.(141) In September as the tempo of the agitation quickened, Fox wrote to Chorlton on the 11th, trying to arrange a meeting of the G.R.W.U.,

U.P.S.S., and his Society,(142)mainly with a view to building up a counter-veiling force. This was not explicit in the letter, but the verbatim record of meetings on 5th and 19th October, when Williams and Topping asked Fox to explain this letter, brings out, from the midst of evasions and half-truths, that Fox was thinking of out-smarting Bell in this way.(143) Being anxious to persuade the A.S.R.S. to accept the idea of federation, Chorlton was not keen to add to the differences between Fox and Bell, still less to make Bell think that he was sabotaging the all-grades movement. So when he heard that Fox had already persuaded T. Lowth of the G.R.W.U. to arrange a meeting in Manchester on 5th of October, he accepted this with regret, while informing Bell, and inviting him. His own idea was to make the first meeting mainly an informal occasion when the A.S.R.S. could be persuaded to accept federation in lieu of support to the all-grades movement.(144)

Bell had not foreseen that the other Societies might try to get together and insist on a Federation scheme which would imply their right to be recognised as well. On receiving Chorlton's letter on 18th September, after his Executive Committee had concluded its session, he was annoyed, but sent James Williams, assistant Secretary, with a watching brief.(145) At this meeting on 5th October, Williams realised that the other unions were very angry at the way Bell had cold-shouldered Chorlton's efforts since May. Lowth wished all societies to be represented at the meeting with the Railway Companies' Association to discuss the meaning of Recognition, which Bell had suggested recently,(146)and Fox summed up,

"That is where the difficulty comes - that everybody is to be in the fight, but only one is to be recognised."(147)

The diplomacy of Chorlton and two G.R.W.U. members overcame the hostility of the others and succeeded in adjourning the meeting till the 19th to hear the views of the A.S.R.S. on a Federation scheme.(148) Meanwhile, at the A.G.M. of the A.S.R.S., held in the same week, the leaders - especially Topping and Thomas - showed themselves anxious to get the support of the others, while being opposed to the idea of Federation. So they sent a delegation which could discuss the existing federation with the A.S.L.E.F., but no other federation scheme.(149)

Yet Locomen's support was badly needed for a successful strike. Although by October 1907 the A.S.R.S. had 25,000 Locomen members,(150) at least one-fourth of these were on the N.E.R., where recognition was not an issue. On the L. & Y. the A.S.L.E.F. leader G. Moore had been on a deputation to the Directors on 9th October and promised to keep as many locomen loyal as possible, if his programme was conceded.(151) In a speech at Cambridge on 13th October Fox gave the impression that no locomen would join if the A.S.R.S. called a strike.(152) These inter-union differences were used by the Companies to strengthen their stand.(153) On 11th October the Railway Companies' Association published its reply to Bell's request for a meeting, curtly saying that they were aware of what recognition meant.(154)

The Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. tried to help Bell by persuading Chorlton to admit to the meeting on 19th October a deputation consisting of David Shackleton, F. Chandler, and

A.H. Gill.(155) The co-operative attitude of the G.R.W.U. member who was in the chair enabled Shackleton to make a speech at the beginning, which was a passionate plea to show a united front on the question of recognition.(156) This changed the atmosphere sufficiently to let the conference discuss supporting the all-grades movement before a Federation scheme.(157) With the exception of the A.S.L.E.F. everyone favoured a resolution, proposed by Shackleton, which supported "the action of the A.S.R.S. in demanding the elementary right of Trade Unions to collective bargaining, and the consequent right of being represented in all their trade disputes by their own ... officials."(158) Because the resolution had said nothing about the exclusive right of the A.S.L.E.F. to represent Locomen, Fox and his colleagues showed obvious displeasure,(159)and remained neutral when the vote was taken.(160) Just before it was to be given to the press, Fox said, on an impulse, "so far as we are concerned, let it be unanimous."(161) But from next day his public speeches at Euston, Willesden and elsewhere reverted back to the old pattern.(162)

This disunity in the ranks probably explained the Companies' willingness to take a strong line - especially over recognition.(163) On 22nd October, the chairmen of railway Companies met, decided to issue circulars to their staff, and estimate how many would remain loyal.(164) Next day the L. & Y. issued its concessions to Locomen, as promised earlier to Moore, on condition that they dropped out from the existing agitation.(165) But already on 21st October Lloyd George, then President of the Board of Trade, decided to avert a strike and force the Companies to accept the principle of collective bargain-

ing.(166) Most of the Chairmen got a letter from him on 23rd October, asking them to meet him on the 25th, and they all agreed, having met on the 24th to co-ordinate tactics.(167)

From then until the end of the dispute Lloyd George was entirely in control, and Bell steadily retreated before his personality. Having established good relations with the Chairmen at his first meeting, Lloyd George gave them, within a few hours, a draft Conciliation scheme, which a small committee of six Chairmen were requested to discuss.(168) In its original form this scheme envisaged, for the settlement of labour disputes, the creation of elected sectional boards within each company, composed of the employees of each section or grade, with a central board in each company as a court of appeal. Probably Lloyd George was not himself responsible for drafting it; it seems to have been the work of Sam Fay, the General Manager of the G.C.R.; the chairman of this Company told his board afterwards,

> "... the idea which was adopted had emanated from Mr.Fay, who deserved every credit for it."(169)

Sir Guy Granet, General Manager of the Midland Railway, who was Secretary to the Six Chairmen's Committee, later said that during the critical discussions that followed, the question of Recognition was raised again and again, but the Companies would not concede it, choosing instead to take the big step of accepting recourse to arbitration.(170) A General Managers' Conference on 28th October amended the scheme so as to allow for arbitration in the event of a deadlock, but also to indicate clearly that "the men's representatives

on the Boards (sc. were) to be the Servants of the respective companies," that the Board should deal only with "questions of hours and wages", and that the "usual channels" of applying to superior officers must be maintained.(171)

On the same day the A.S.R.S. Executive met to count the strike ballot. Probably it was about this time that Bell told G.R. Askwith privately that he was not going to force a strike on the question of his being recognised personally, as long as trade unionists got the right of collective bargaining.(172) On 31st October Lloyd George met the six chairmen's committee to receive the Conciliation Scheme as amended. He told them he would not press the question of recognition, but there must not be a strike, and the Chairmen became agreeable to the scheme.(173) Next day the minister saw Bell, and afterwards saw the chairmen's committee, giving them the Conciliation Scheme for final ratification,(174)without having made any alterations in Bell's favour, except that the clause referring to the Central Board left a loophole through which the union official could get in.(174)

The Six Chairmen's committee accepted it, and various Boards of Directors did so as well, including the L. & N.W., despite the opposition of its Chairman and General Manager.(175) Bell had the more difficult task of persuading his Executive Committee, and the Provisional Committee running the national movement. The latter had decided to issue strike notices on 1st November, and the Executive Committee met next day to deal with the matter. Just then a letter from Lloyd George was received - which had been written the day

before when Bell had seen him; this asked Bell to bring a few committeemen with him to see the minister on the 6th. The Committee decided to defer issuing strike notices until after this interview.(176)

Even though Bell personally was perhaps by now not keen for a strike, he announced the result of the ballot on 3rd November to a cheering crowd at the Albert Hall, in London - 76,925 for a strike, 8,773 against, and neutral and spoilt 2,436.(177) Its only possible effect might have been to persuade some intransigent Boards of Directors to ratify the scheme. On 5th November Bell asked Lloyd George whether he could bring his full Executive Committee with him, possibly feeling that the famous Welsh orator would be better at persuading them than he himself. Lloyd George agreed, asking him at the same time to have a sub-committee ready to discuss details.(178)

Next morning, after having received the scheme as ratified by the Boards of Directors, Lloyd George told the Chairmen's Committee to be near at hand in the evening, in case any minor concessions were necessary. He told Lord Stallbridge,

> "he is exceedingly anxious to bring matters to a conclusion tonight, and not to allow Bell and his friends to leave the Board of Trade before he has done so."(179)

Lloyd George managed to persuade the A.S.R.S. Executive, with the hint of a threat that "he was determined to avert a strike." After the interview with the full Executive, the latter adjourned for a long discussion, and eventually agreed to leave the sub-committee, whom they had already elected, with full powers to settle the matter. Only two N.E. militants - John Brodie and E. Emblem - voted against.

By the evening the scheme was signed.(180)

The final version was not materially different from what Lloyd George and the Companies had agreed to by 31st October.(181) Indeed the loophole offered to the union official at the level of the Central Board(182)was filled by stressing that the men's side of that Board were to be "chosen from" the Sectional Boards, which had already been defined so as to exclude outsiders. Bell possibly got a private assurance that the union official would be able to act as an advocate for the men at the arbitration stage, for he stressed this in a circular issued to the branches.(183) The point was objected to at first by some Companies - the G.W.R., the L. & N.W.,(184)and the L. & Y.(185) - but eventually was accepted. In all the numerous disputes which went to arbitration Bell or Walter Hudson appeared as an advocate.

V

The rivalry among the unions to win recognition had been an important factor behind the strategy of the all-grades movement. The settlement of 6th November 1907 made no distinction between the unions,(186)but Bell took a series of decisions aimed at strengthening the position of the A.S.R.S. in all the Conciliation Boards, relative both to the other unions and to the non-unionists who were favoured by some Companies.

The offer of the G.E.R. and the L. & N.W. to pay the expenses of the men's side of the Conciliation Boards was taken by Bell as a shrewd move to get non-unionists elected.(187) As the L. & N.W. was

actively campaigning to persuade the men to accept its offer,(188) Bell objected to the Board of Trade, which agreed to take a ballot of all railwaymen on this question.(189) Meanwhile the union offered to pay the expenses wherever the Conciliation Boards were pressing an A.S.R.S. programme.(190) The ballot taken by the Board of Trade showed a majority almost everywhere in favour of rejecting the Companies' offer.(191)

The A.S.R.S. also succeeded in capturing 720 out of the 891 seats on the Conciliation Boards, for which elections were complete by February 1909.(192) But Bell failed in a subtle attempt to win recognition on the Midland, where he had acted as the advocate for the men during the Arbitration proceedings.(193) He was annoyed to find that the men's side of the Central Board, which was dominated by the A.S.R.S. and presided over by George Thaxton (ex-President of the union), did not take seriously his suggestion that they should insist on the participation of Bell, as the men's advocate, in all cases of interpreting the arbitration award. The Midland Central Board (men's side) was reluctant, possibly because Conciliation was working smoothly, but the A.S.R.S. Executive upheld Bell's point for future guidance.(194)

The sectional conciliation boards of Locomen were captured by the A.S.L.E.F. on the G.C.R., G.W.R., and S.E. & C., and partially captured on a few other lines. The U.P.S.S. controlled the Signalmen's boards on the L. & Y.and the Scottish railways.(195) To prevent locomen members of the A.S.R.S. on the Midland defecting to the A.S.L.E.F. the A.S.R.S. added a wages clause for Firemen in its

national programme before the latter was discussed by the Conciliation Board.(196) This strengthened the position of the A.S.R.S., and Bell won another victory over Fox during the arbitration proceedings on the L. & N.W. The arbitrator overruled Fox's claim to appear as an advocate for the programme of the A.S.L.E.F., because the men's side of the Central Board had selected Bell as their advocate. Bell was prepared to call A.S.L.E.F. members as witnesses, but Fox would not let them appear.(197) Since the union official's right to appear as an advocate was the nearest approach to recognition allowed by the Conciliation scheme, the A.S.L.E.F. became anxious to abolish the Central Board, which, with its majority of A.S.R.S. members, was likely to prevent the nomination of an A.S.L.E.F. official as an advocate.(198)

Relations with the U.P.S.S. were not cordial either, because, on the North British Railway, the U.P.S.S. majority on the Signalmen's board accepted the Company's offer to bear the expenses,(199) and on the L. & Y., the A.S.R.S. programme could not be pressed because, just before the settlement of 1907, an U.P.S.S. deputation had obtained concessions.(200) The A.S.R.S. issued a circular in protest, to which Chorlton published a reply.(201)

Richard Bell was temperamentally unsuited for the tact and diplomacy needed to bring about amalgamation. By invoking the altered standing orders of the T.U.C. whereby the latter could inquire into inter-union disputes,(202)he was able to get the Parliamentary Committee to administer a rebuke to the A.S.L.E.F. for hostile speeches made in public during October 1907.(203) But this

did not assist the cause of amalgamation. Delegates at the A.G.M. of 1908 showed themselves to be pessimistic, although they passed the hardy annual resolution in favour of a merger.(204) The constructive suggestion of introducing the departmental principle in the constitution of the A.S.R.S. was made by A. Law - a Fireman of Newton Heath - towards the end of 1908.(205) Before this was accepted by the A.G.M. of 1909, after a confused discussion,(206)the triennial delegate meeting of the A.S.L.E.F. in May 1909 had categorically rejected the idea of amalgamation.(207)

VI

Bell had failed in his aims of winning recognition and becoming the sole spokesman on behalf of British railwaymen. Instead his Union found that it was party to an agreement which implied the abandonment of the strike weapon. Developments on the N.E.R. brought this home to everyone.

In November 1907 the N.E.R. had been exempted from the Conciliation scheme, and by a resolution later that month the local men's committee decided that existing practices were satisfactory.(208) While they believed that they would be able to continue their time-honoured method of threatening a strike to achieve ambitious programmes, Bell was aware that the Company might abandon recognition and shelter under the Lloyd George settlement if pressed so soon after the agreement of 1906.(209) Butterworth, the General Manager, was prepared only to discuss setting up a Conciliation Board suited to the N.E.R., but not to discuss the National Programme. When an

angry local committee demanded the issue of strike notices, the Executive Committee agreed to their request - by a majority of one - and declared that the settlement of November 1907 did not affect the N.E.R.(210)

Butterworth was really anxious to avoid negotiations with committees elected by local activists, as these were prone to use the militancy of a well-organised minority to secure sweeping benefits for all grades.(211) But neither he nor Bell could persuade the local committee on 8th April to discuss setting up a Conciliation Board first, even though the manager promised that a discussion of the National programme could follow. The local committee clamoured for strike notices and issued circulars.(212)

Then the Board of Trade intervened on 14th April, declaring that the exemption granted to the N.E.R. in the previous November had been based on the assumption that existing arrangements prevented strikes. Askwith's letter to Bell, on behalf of the department, added,

> "If however this should not be the case it will be necessary for the Board of Trade to step in again and to request the North Eastern Railway Company to join the scheme put forward by the Board of Trade, and the members of the Society of which you are the Secretary ... to give their adherence."(213)

Bell held back the strike notices and summoned a special meeting of the Executive.(214) This meeting was torn between a desire to adhere to the previous decision to strike and a fear of losing the privilege of recognition if a strike occurred, and the Government

and the Company stood firm. By a majority of one the moderates declared that as long as the Lloyd George settlement lasted the A.S.R.S. could not "issue strike notice papers for any of our members upon questions of hours and wages." Members of the N.E.R. were asked to say if they would authorise the local committee to finalise a Conciliation scheme drafted by Butterworth(215) - a copy of which Bell had already obtained to show to the Executive.(216) A majority of members agreed to do so.(217)

Butterworth's Conciliation scheme had maintained the principle of union recognition by agreeing that an outsider could be a Secretary to the men's side of the "Conciliation Conference" and could "attend all meetings of the Conference and take part in the proceedings." However, in mapping out the system into regional electorates and in insisting that all questions should be discussed at the departmental level before submission to the Board, the Company showed its desire to put an end to the way the militants had forced its hands in the past. The A.S.R.S. managed, in the final draft, to exempt from this provision "general questions affecting all departments."(218) Consequently, the National Programme was discussed soon after the elections were over.

Bell's counsels of caution during this dispute showed that to him Recognition was more important than the National Programme. He was, however, surprised by the firmness with which the Board of Trade had intervened on 14th April, and blamed the local activists for publishing circulars about a strike, causing the department to know about it.(219) A.S.R.S. members never forgot "that the Board of Trade

were very strenuous in their action on that occasion when the men were beginning to get rather unruly."(220) The faith of the union in the Board of Trade henceforth depended on how firm the department was in dealing with the Companies and in securing interpretations of the Conciliation scheme which were fair to the A.S.R.S.

The Conciliation Boards had reached settlements on most railways by the end of 1909.(221) By that time the union's membership, too, had declined from the peak reached in 1907. Appendices A and B set out the geographical spread of the union in 1903 and 1909 and show that while the total membership was at a level decidedly higher in the latter year, the proportion of trade unionists to the eligible labour force had not altered a great deal. (We have compared the membership of 1903 with the Census of 1901 and that of 1909 with the Census of 1911, as the intercensual increase was likely to have occurred in 1909 after the settlements made the Companies employ additional staff.) A real organisational drive was needed to make good the claim of the union to represent all grades of British railwaymen. So the A.G.M. of 1908 decided to appoint four local organizers in addition to the six organising Secretaries.(222) Bell also persuaded the union to build its own spacious headquarters, in view of its increased volume of work, and a site was accordingly purchased near Gower Street, London.(223)

But before Bell left at the very beginning of 1910, only one organiser had been appointed(224)and the building had not been completed. Why Bell left the Society can be explained only against the background of the political work of the A.S.R.S. since 1900, when

he had been returned as an M.P. Before proceeding further with the story of the organisation or the fate of the Conciliation Boards we must therefore step back to March, 1900, when the A.S.R.S. affiliated to the Labour Representation Committee.

Appendix A.

Membership and the Labour Force, 1903 and 1909.

(Actual figures)

(Source: Column (1): Census of England and Wales, 1901 Summary tables (cd.1523 of 1903). Census of the Population of Scotland, 1901. (cd.1798 of 1903); Census of Ireland, 1901, (cd.1190 of 1902).
Column (3): Census of England & Wales, 1911 Summary Tables (cd.7929 of 1915); Census of Scotland, 1911 (cd.6896 of 1913); Census of Ireland, 1911 (cd.6663 of 1913).
Columns (2) & (4) - A.S.R.S. Report and Financial Statement for relevant years; Handbook of Stations.)

	Railway Labour Force 1901	Member-ship 1903	Railway Labour Force 1911	Member-ship 1909
United Kingdom	297,212	51,436	336,786	73,807
Scotland	31,342	3,876	36,397	4,834
Ireland	11,631	1,437	12,900	2,791
England & Wales	254,239	46,123	287,489	66,182
Bedfordshire	1,084	170	1,186	153
Berkshire	1,752	68	1,901	210
Buckinghamshire	1,570	158	1,894	264
Cambridgeshire	2,032	121	2,144	165
Cheshire	8,729	1,390	10,203	1,885
Cornwall	1,217	111	1,480	144
Cumberland	3,788	611	4,189	988
Derbyshire	7,717	1,725	8,456	2,154
Devonshire	3,802	292	4,306	452
Dorsetshire	1,225	11	1,298	35
Durham	10,629	3,485	11,475	4,519
Essex	7,869	192	9,794	739
Gloucestershire	5,379	818	5,912	1,075
Hampshire	4,130	120	4,901	246
Herefordshire	980	48	951	113
Hertfordshire	1,851	139	2,160	256
Huntingdonshire	535	26	613	29
Kent	5,559	1,507	6,174	1,139
Lancashire	32,189	5,142	35,590	7,396
Leicestershire	3,802	930	4,004	1,138
Lincolnshire	4,384	586	6,130	880
London & Middx.	33,113	4,937	37,860	8,058
Norfolk	2,930	381	3,092	492
Northamptonshire	4,654	951	7,774	1,278
Northumberland	4,337	1,656	4,820	2,338
Nottinghamshire	6,301	1,932	7,177	2,867

Appendix A. (Cont'd).

	Railway Labour Force 1901	Member-ship 1903	Railway Labour Force 1911	Member-ship 1904
Oxfordshire	1,439	13	1,275	62
Rutland	228	6	269	18
Shropshire	2,316	322	2,508	438
Somerset	2,825	331	3,313	588
Staffordshire	8,298	1,471	9,510	1,891
Suffolk	1,590	41	1,837	36
Surrey	3,713	622	4,467	674
Sussex	3,314	437	3,630	535
Warwickshire	7,335	1,727	8,088	2,263
Westmorland	779	70	740	130
Wiltshire	2,681	267	2,791	331
Worcestershire	2,635	359	3,399	506
Yorkshire	34,715	8,202	38,417	12162
South Wales & Mon.	16,375	4,751	20,182	7,070
North Wales	4,189	183	4,671	495

Appendix B.

Membership and the Labour Force: mutual ratio.

(Source: as in Appendix A.)

	1903 As % of 1901 census	1909 As % of 1911 census	Increase or Decrease
United Kingdom	17.3	21.9	+ 4.9
Scotland	12.4	13.3	+ 0.9
Ireland	12.4	21.6	+ 9.2
England & Wales	18.1	23.0	+ 4.9
Bedfordshire	15.7	12.9	- 2.8
Berkshire	3.9	11.0	+ 7.1
Buckinghamshire	10.1	13.9	+ 3.8
Cambridgeshire	6.0	7.7	+ 1.7.
Cheshire	15.9	18.5	+ 2.6
Cornwall	9.1	9.7	+ 0.6
Cumberland	16.1	23.6	+ 7.5
Derbyshire	22.4	25.5	+ 3.1
Devonshire	7.7	10.5	+ 2.8
Dorsetshire	0.9	2.7	+ 1.8
Durham	32.8	39.4	+ 7.4
Essex	2.4	7.5	+ 5.1
Gloucestershire	15.2	18.2	+ 3.0
Hampshire	2.9	5.0	+ 2.3
Herefordshire	4.9	11.9	+ 7.0
Hertfordshire	7.5	11.9	+ 4.4
Huntingdonshire	4.9	4.7	- 0.2
Kent	27.1	18.4	- 8.7
Lancashire	16.0	20.8	+ 4.8
Leicestershire	24.5	28.4	+ 4.1
Lincolnshire	13.4	13.9	+ 0.5
London & Middx.	14.9	21.3	+ 6.6
Norfolk	13.0	15.9	+ 2.9
Northamptonshire	20.4	16.4	- 4.0
Northumberland	38.2	48.5	+10.3
Nottinghamshire	30.7	40.0	+ 9.3
Oxfordshire	0.9	4.9	+ 4.0
Rutland	2.6	6.7	+ 4.1
Shropshire	13.9	17.5	+ 3.6
Somerset	11.7	17.7	+ 6.7
Staffordshire	17.7	19.9	+ 2.2
Suffolk	2.6	2.0	- 0.6
Surrey	16.8	15.1	- 1.7
Sussex	13.2	14.7	+ 1.5

Appendix B. (Cont'd)

	1903 As % of 1901 census	1909 As % of 1911 census	Increase or Decrease
Warwickshire	23.5	28.0	+ 4.5
Westmorland	9.0	17.6	+ 8.6
Wiltshire	10.0	11.9	+ 1.9
Worcestershire	13.6	14.9	+ 1.3
Yorkshire	23.6	31.7	+ 8.1
South Wales & Mon.	29.0	35.0	+ 6.0
North Wales	4.4	10.6	+ 6.2

NOTES

(1) C.D.Campbell, British Railways in Boom and Depression (1932) pp.20,24. Railway Goods traffic reached its nadir in 1905.

(2) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1904, pp.5-7.

(3) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1905, p.11.

(4) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1905, p.65.

(5) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1904, p.9.

(6) These were the L. & Y., G.C.R., N.E.R., G.E.R., and the G.W.R.; see A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1905, p.5.

(7) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1903, p.43; Midland Railway, 'Locomotive Department Minutes' No.17. pars.7625,7705,7830,7856.

(8) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1903, p.54f; ibid. Sep.1903,p.37; ibid. Mar.1904, p.45; ibid. June 1904, p.49; ibid. Dec.1904, p.36.

(9) He mentioned this in private at a discussion with representatives of the A.S.L.E.F. See A.S.R.S. and A.S.L.E.F., Special Meeting of the Joint Executive Committees, 10th May,1904,p.21.

(10) The men drew up a programme along these lines at a conference in Darlington in Dec.1903. (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1903,p.35).

(11) Under existing conditions a gap of three years was necessary before a Passed Fireman could get 30/-.

(12) See their programme of November 1902. (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1902, p.31f.)

(13) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1902, p.40; also see J.R.Bell's letter, R.R. 18 Apr. 1902, p.7.

(14) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1904, p.45f.

(15) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June, 1904, p.49.

(16) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1905, pp.36-40.

(17) R.R. 6 Oct.1905, p.3.

(18) A.S.R.S. North Eastern Railway All Grades Movement. Full Reports of Concessions, April, May, 1906, p.14f.

(19) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1905, p.50.

(20) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1906, p.60.

(21) A.S.R.S. North Eastern Railway All Grades Movement. Full Report of Concessions ... p.6.

(22) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June,1906, p.56. The two members from the N.E.R. voted against, doubtless feeling, with the N.E. negotiating committee, that they would suffer from the wrath of the rank and file if they did not do so.

(23) See A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 12th July 1906; passim; A.S.R.S. Agenda to be considered at the Annual General Meeting... Oct..1906, p.7.

(24) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M.,1906, p.12.

(25) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1906, p.43f.

(26) The sources for this paragraph are: N.E.Railway, 'Arbitration Dec.1889' (MSS held in Newcastle-on-Tyne public library).
N.E. Railway, Wages Arbitration and Award of Lord James of Hereford (1897).
A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, March 1900, pp.38-50.
A.S.R.S. North Eastern Railway All Grades Movement. Full Reports of Concessions, April, May, 1906, passim.

(27) A.S.R.S. North Eastern Railway All-Grades Movement. Full Report of Concessions ...p.4.

(28) See above. p370

(29) As late as 1911 the General Manager said that he had to refuse the overtures of a few local A.S.L.E.F. leaders because they had very few members. Railway Conciliation Scheme; R.Com. Min.of Ev. Qq 13,801-3. (Parl.Pap.,1912-13, XLV).

(30) See correspondence column in R.R. Sep.1899 generally; R.R. 1 Dec.1899, p.6. for the movement on the G.C.R.; for the joint meeting see Conference of Delegates of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants with respect to Federation... 3rd January 1900. (Leeds 1900), passim.

(31) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1900, p.2.

(32) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1901, p.16; ibid. Dec.1901,p.35f; ibid. June 1902, p.36f.

(33) ibid. Mar.1901, p.16; ibid. June 1902, p.37; ibid. Sep.1902, p.35.

(34) ibid. Mar.1901, p.17.

(35) ibid. p.16f.

(36) ibid. Sep.1902, p.36.

(37) See letters of A.Hales and John Dobson (Organising Secretary) in R.R. 7 Nov.1902, p.7; R.R. 21 Nov.1902, p.7.

(38) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the adjourned Special General Meeting held January 6th, 1903 ... p.9.

(39) He had attended the joint meeting of 1900, and afterwards travelled around at his own expense to spread the idea of federation. There was a request to the E.C. that his expenses be granted. (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1900, p.36).

(40) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1903, p.10.

(41) Conference of Delegates of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants with respect to Federation ... Leeds, 18th May, 1903, (Leeds,1903).

(42) ibid. pp.4-9 for the speeches of Bell and Fox.

(43) ibid. pp.10-12.

(44) ibid. pp.13-21 for discussion clause by clause. After that the final version is reproduced.

(45) R.R. 9 Oct. 1903, p.5.

(46) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes Mar.1904, p.40f; Circular No.G.O.183 dated 30 July 1904.

(47) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1903, p.36.

(48) ibid. Mar.1904, p.41f.

(49) ibid. p.44; also see A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1904, p.48.

(50) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1904, p.31f.

(51) ibid. Mar.1904, p.40f.

(52) A.S.R.S. and A.S.L.E.F., Special Meeting of the Joint Executive Committees held at ... London, May 10th, 1904. (40 pp.), passim.

(53) On this point see ibid. p.3f, for Thomas's speech, p.24 for Beardsley, and p.27 for Potteril.

(54) ibid. pp.6-10, 24.

(55) ibid. pp.19f. for Moore's remark, which was typical.

(56) A.S.R.S. and A.S.L.E.F. Meeting of the Joint Executive Committees held at ... Leeds, October 9th, 1904, pp.7f,36.

(57) ibid. pp.2-4.

(58) *Locomotive Journal*, XVII (1904) p321.

(59) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1904, p.30; also see A.S.R.S. and A.S.L.E.F. Joint Meeting of the Executive Committees of both sides ... July 1905, pp.136, 138f.

(60) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1904, pp.29-31.

(61) The Metropolitan District Railway dispute was discussed in detail, with all the participants on the mens' side being present, at a joint meeting. This paragraph is based on the following references to it in the verbatim proceedings of that joint meeting:
A.S.R.S. and A.S.L.E.F. Joint Meeting of the Executive Committees of both sides... July 1905.. pp.14-96; also see
A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1905, pp.59-62.
A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June, 1905, pp.62-66.

(62) Although Bell correctly denied the allegation that he did not even mention the matter, he admitted that he did not press this point vigorously. See A.S.R.S. and A.S.L.E.F. Joint meeting of the Executive Committees of both sides ... July 1905, p.64, where Bell quotes from a letter written by him to James Holmes explaining his conduct.

(63) ibid. pp.36,44,46,52-55.

(64) ibid. pp.19,30f,56,78.

(65) ibid. p.55 for Fox's dislike of the way Bell used his privileged position as an M.P. to get to know railway directors.

(66) Conference of the A.S.L.E.F. and the Locomotive members of the A.S.R.S.: a National Programme (Leeds 1905).

(67) ibid. pp.27-32, 43ff, 51-54 for contributions of Topping, Rimmer, Pickering, and Allen.

(68) ibid. pp.48-55.

(69) A.S.R.S. and A.S.L.E.F. Joint meeting of the Executive Committees of both sides ... July 1905, pp.180f, 183 for remarks of Bliss and Mabberley.

(70) ibid. p.65 letter from J.Holmes to Bell, which is quoted here. Holmes had seen the actual statement at Trowbridge (p.85).

(71) ibid. pp.63-69.

(72) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1905, p.70f.

(73) A.S.R.S. and A.S.L.E.F. Joint Meeting of the Executive Committees of both sides ... July, 1905, p.10f, letter of Bell to Fox, 6th July 1905, reproduced.

(74) ibid. p.90.

(75) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1905, pp.32-35.

(76) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1906, p.28f.

(77) A.S.R.S. and A.S.L.E.F. Joint meeting of the Executive Committees of both sides ... July 1905, p.139.

(78) ibid. p.134f.

(79) ibid. pp.168-71, 178f.

(80) ibid. pp.180-86, especially p.185f.

(81) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1905, p.35f; A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1905, p.20.

(82) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1905, p.37f.

(83) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June,1906,p.15.

(84) *Locomotive Journal, XIX, (1906) p296, col.2.*

(85) A.S.R.S. and A.S.L.E.F. Joint meeting of the Executive Committees of both sides ... July 1905. p.185.

(86) G.W.Railway, 'Traffic Committee No.11' p.20; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1905, p.57; ibid. June 1905, p.71f; ibid. Sep.1905, p.41.

(87) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1905, p.74.

(88) ibid. -.73.

(89) At the National Locomen's Conference in April 1905 almost all the Scottish Delegates were A.S.R.S. members, and they did not like the demand for an eight hour day, as their existing movements were more the more realistic aim of reducing hours from 12 to 10. (Conference of the A.S.L.E.F. and the Locomotive members of the A.S.R.S.: A National Programme, pp.22f, 33-37, 60.)

(90) R.R. 6 Oct.1905, p.11.

(91) Railway Conciliation Scheme; R.Com.; Min.of Ev.and Appendix. p.666. (Parl.Pap., 1912-13, XLV.)

(92) From 55,900 it had declined to 51,000 and now reached 56,400. (Source: calculations based on Reports and Financial Statements).

(93) R.R. 6 Oct.1905, p.11.

(94) ibid. p.5.

(95) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1906, p.69.

(96) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1899, pp.14,34f; the Executive had protested against Gibb's action, but refused to call a strike in view of low percentage of clerks organised. Earlier in January Bell had issued a manifesto to Railway Clerks (G.O. No.34), but this decision of Gibb prevented further progress.

(97) A.S.R.S., G.R.W.U., U.P.S.S., and R.C.A., Re Amalgamation Report of Conference ... Manchester ... February 1906, passim.

(98) ibid. p.5f.

(99) ibid. p.9.

(100) ibid. p.11f.

(101) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1906, p.27.

(102) ibid. p.54f.

(103) ibid. p.28.

(104) See above.

(105) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1906, p.14f.

(106) ibid. 48f.

(107) B.C.Roberts, The Trades Union Congress 1868-1922, p.201f.

(108) The third reading of the bill was on 9th November.(Parl.Deb. 4th S, CLXIV, 856).

(109) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1906, p.38f.

(110) R.R. 12 Oct.1906, p.4.

(111) A.S.R.S. National All Grades Movement (England & Wales); Conference procedure, standing orders etc. Nov.1906. passim.

(112) The programmes are in: A.S.R.S. National All-Grades Movement (England and Wales). Decisions of Conference ... Birmingham November ..1906; for Scottish and Irish programmes see A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1906, pp.55-57.

(113) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1906, p.53.

(114) ibid. p.53; also see A.S.R.S. National All Grades Movement (England and Wales) Decisions of Conference .. Nov.1906,p.5.

(115) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1906, p.36f.

(116) E.Halevy, The Rule of Democracy, 1905-1914, I.(1952 ed.) pp.110-13; S.& B.Webb, History of Trade Unionism (1920 ed.) p.526f.

(117) Midland Railway, 'Board Minute No.17', pars.9395,9428, for some recent examples.

(118) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1906, p.51.

(119) L. & Y.Railway, 'Proceedings of Directors Board'. vol.16, pp.88f, 174.

(120) G.C.Railway, 'Proceedings of Board of Directors,No.7' par.3653.; also see - A.S.R.S. National All-Grades Movement (Pamphlet No.H.O.243, dated 1st May 1907, containing the correspondence with the Companies.)

(121) ibid.; also see A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 14-15th Feb. 1907, p.7; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1907, p.62f.

(122) Circular No.H.O,240. (13th April 1907).

(123) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1907, pp.60-63.

(124) ibid. p.71f.

(125) A.S.R.S. National All-Grades Movement (England & Wales) June 1907. Second Conference ... Procedure and standing orders etc. ...p.3.

(126) A.S.R.S. National Movement, September 1907 p.1f; (it is not clear if this was unanimous.)

(127) ibid. p.5f.

(128) ibid. pp.2-4.

(129) ibid. p.5.

(130) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1907, p.42.

(131) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1906, p.36. When a meeting with the A.S.L.E.F. Executive was decided on, to discuss the all-grades movement as well as anti-A.S.R.S. and anti-Bell writings of Fox, Topping's vote against the idea was possibly due to the inclusion of personal questions.

(132) A.S.R.S. & A.S.L.E.F. Joint Meeting of the Executive Committees of both Societies, 23 Nov.1906, p.8f, for Moore's speech.

(133) ibid. pp.6f, 9. An example of the personal hostility between Fox and Bell is seen in the letter from Fox to Bell, 9th Nov.1906, "You also charge me with not confining myself to the truth. You will please here excuse me when I tell you I know of no one who would be a worse judge of the truth than yourself ..."

(134) A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 14-15th Feb.1907,pp.4-7.

(135) One copy of letter is in L. & Y.Railway, 'Proceedings of Directors' Committee. Vol.193', par.19930.

(136) A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 14-15th Feb.1907, p.10f; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1907, p.67.

(137) ibid. p.61f.

(138) Proposed Federation of Railway Trade Unions, Official Report of Conferences ... Manchester ...October 5th and 19th. 1907. (Manchester 1907) p.7. (This 122-page pamphlet, which contains all correspondence in addition to verbatim report of the meetings, is the most valuable source for a great deal of what follows).

(139) ibid. pp.6,64, indicate that he was willing to support the all-grades movement and reluctant to give the impression of sabotaging it, but was afraid that his society would be swamped by Bell's agitation.

(140) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June,1907, p.75f.

(141) Proposed Federation of Railway Trade Unions...October..1907, p.10. (letter of 19th July).

(142) ibid. p.14. (letter of 11th September.)

(143) ibid. pp.30f, 58f, when read in conjunction with the actual correspondence in pp.7,9,14.

(144) ibid. p.14f. for letters illustrating these.

(145) ibid. pp.17-19.

(146) ibid. p.41f.

(147) ibid. p.42.

(148) ibid. pp.5, 27-29,33f,37f,40f.

(149) R.R. 18 Oct.1907, p.4f. for a full report of the discussion.

(150) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1908,p.30.

(151) L. & Y.Railway, 'Proceedings of Directors' Committee,vol.194, pp.202-31, especially pp.223f,226,229.

(152) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1908,p.28.

(153) Railway News, 12 Oct.1907,p.635; ibid. 19 Oct.1907,p.673.

(154) ibid. 19 Oct.1907, p.672.

(155) Proposed Federation of Railway Trade Unions...October..1907. p.52.

(156) ibid. pp.54-56.

(157) ibid. p.62f.

(158) ibid. p.65.

(159) ibid. pp.66-77, especially pp.68-71.

(160) ibid. p.79f.

(161) ibid.p.102. This made Waterhouse (G.R.W.U.) comment, "That is worth all this morning's business."

(162) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1908, p.

(163) Lord Claud Hamilton made clear in a press statement that the fight was against the Union, not against the men. Railway News 26 Oct.1907, p.710.

(164) G.W.Railway, Board Minutes No.45, p.416.

(165) L. & Y.Railway, 'Proceedings of Directors' Board,' vol.16, p.397f.

(166) Lloyd George to William George, 21st Oct.1907, quoted in W.George, My Brother and I, (London 1958), p.212. Extracts from Lloyd George's letters to his brother, between this date and 13th Nov.1907, are in ibid.p.212f, and have been used in the following account.

(167) L. & Y.Railway, op.cit. p.394.

(168) L. & Y.Railway, op.cit. p.406ff.gives details about this meeting and the first draft of the scheme. Sydney Buxton later said, at a private discussion with Board of Trade officials and the A.S.R.S. Executive, "..it was drawn up almost in an hour or two - in a few hours at any rate.."

(A.S.R.S. and Board of Trade, Nov.10th, 1910, p.65); for Lloyd George's feeling of confidence see letter to William George on 25th October, loc.cit.

(169) G.C.Railway, 'Board Minutes', No.7, par.3887.(This was at a meeting on 8th Nov.1907.)

(170) Railway Conciliation Scheme. R.Com. Min.of Ev. Q.12912. (Parl.Pap. 1912-13, XLV). See also the decision of the G.W.R. Directors on 31st October to give their Chairman a free hand, provided "that the demand for recognition ... made by the Amalgamated Society (was) not acceded to." (G.W.Railway, 'Board Minutes No.45' p.416).

(171) L. & Y.Railway, op.cit. p.409. (their italics).

(172) G.R. (Lord) Askwith, Industrial Problems and Disputes (London 1920), p.121.

(173) L.& Y.Railway, op.cit. 410. For Lloyd George's threat that there must not be a strike, see Lloyd George to William George, 31st Oct.1907, loc.cit. For his willingness to waive the question of recognition, Askwith, op.cit. Because Lord Askwith leaves out dates in his account of these events, it is difficult to say whether the private message from Bell had come before the meeting on the 25th or this one on the 31st, but internal evidence strongly suggest that it happened between the two dates, and that consequently the minister waived the question of recognition.

(174) L.& Y.Railway, op.cit. p.411.(clause e) and p.412 for the insistence of the Company that this should be rectified. The loophole lay in not stating clearly that the representatives of the employees from each sectional board excluded outsiders.

(175) L. & N.W.Railway, 'Board Minutes', vol.21, par.22117.

(176) A.S.R.S. National Movement. Report of Special meetings of the Executive Committee on October 28th ... Nov.2nd, 6th, and 7th. Also of the Provisional Committees on Novlst, 1907. (H.O.259), hereafter Special E.C. Oct.-Nov.1907, p.8.

(177) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1908, p. 38 ; Alcock, op.cit.p.378f.

(178) A.S.R.S. Special E.C. Oct.-Nov.1907, p.8f.

(179) Lord Stallbridge to Sir George Armytage, 6th Nov.1907, reproduced in L.& Y.Railway, op.cit. p.413.

(180) A.S.R.S. Special E.C. Oct.-Nov.1907, p.9.

(181) ibid. pp.12-15 for the Conciliation scheme as adopted.

(182) See above. p394

(183) Issued on 16th Nov.1907, and reproduced in A.S.R.S. Special E.C. Oct.-Nov.1907, pp.3-5.

(184) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1909, p.42f.

(185) L. & Y.Railway, op.cit. p.446.

(186) All of them, except the Railway Clerks' Association, signed it. See Railway Conciliation scheme. Report to the Board of Trade upon ... the Agreement of the 6th November 1907, p.19f. (Parl.Pap. 1908 (cd.4534), XCVIII).

(187) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1907, p.50. The L.& Y.took the same attitude. (L.& Y. op.cit. p.466f).

(188) Company's circular reproduced in R.R. 10 Jan.1908,p.1.

(189) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1908, pp.66-68 for correspondence with G.R.Askwith.

(190) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1907, p.50.

(191) Railway Conciliation Scheme. Report to the Board of Trade ... p.9 (Parl.Pap. 1908. (cd.4534), XCVII). The Board of Trade had taken this ballot at the same time as conducting the first elections to the Conciliation Boards, as required by the settlement.

(192) ibid. p.8; A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1909, p.38f.

(193) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1909, p.44.

(194) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1909, p.92f for a full report. As Bell left the A.S.R.S. shortly after he did not benefit from this ruling.

(195) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1908, pp.91,96f,100,106.

(196) This was decided by the A.G.M. of 1908. R.R. 16 Oct.1908,p.5.

(197) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1909, p.51f for a full description.

(198) In their evidence before the Royal Commission on the Conciliation Scheme ASLEF members asked for its abolition; Railway Conciliation Scheme, Min.of Ev.Q.708.

(199) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1908, p.106f.

(200) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1908, p.53f; ibid. Mar.1909,p.67f; for the depuation of 1907 see L.& Y.Railway, 'Proceedings of Directors: Committee', vol.193, pp.248f,471.

(201) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1909,p.68; U.P.S.S. Report on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Signalmen's Wages and Hours Movement, 1905-7, ... (Manchester,1909).

(202) Roberts, Trades Union Congress, p.228

(203) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1908, pp.28-32.

(204) R.R. 9 Oct.1908, p.12.

(205) R.R. 13 Nov.1908, p.15; his subsequent letters; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1909, p.46.

(206) R.R. 8 Oct.1909, p.11f.

(207) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June,1909, p.54.

(208) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes Mar.1908, p.73f.

(209) A.S.R.S. North-Eastern Railway Movement. The General Secretary's Report ... and decisions of special Executive Committee ... May 11th ..1908 (hereafter N.E.R. Special E.C.,May 1908). p.3, where Bell says that he made this point in November, 1907, in December 1907, and again in March 1908 to the N.E. men and the Executive Committee.

(210) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1908, p.73-75 for Bell's correspondence with Butterworth and the requests of the branches. ibid. p.76 for the decision of the E.C.

(211) This seems implied in the following extract from a letter:

> "The point to which the directors attach most importance is that any board which it is proposed to form shall be adequately representative of the grades affected by the questions which may come before it." (Butterworth to Bell, 13 Apr.1908, quoted in A.S.R.S. N.E.R. Special E.C.,May 1908, p.5.)

(212) A.S.R.S. N.E.R. Special E.C. May 1908, p.3. for the meeting with Butterworth. ibid. p.10 for the issuing of circulars.

(213) G.R.Askwith to R.Bell, 14 Apr.1908, quoted in ibid. p.6.

(214) ibid. pp.8-11 for relevant correspondence.

(215) ibid. p.13.

(216) ibid. pp.11; for the first draft of the scheme, ibid. p.15f.

(217) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June,1908, p.63.

(218) ibid. p.64.

(219) R.R. 16 Oct.1908, p.4.

(220) Remark made by Ernest Edwards to Sydney Buxton, President of the Board of Trade, at an interview on 10th Nov.1910. (A.S.R.S. and Board of Trade, Nov.10th.1910, p.12 - Typescript verbatim notes of interview kept at Unity House).

(221) We have left a discussion of their achievements to Ch.XIII, as they have a direct bearing on the strike of 1911.

(222) R.R. 9 Oct.1908, p.10.

(223) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1909, p.36f.

(224) ibid. p.38, none of the others had obtained a clear majority of the votes cast by the membership.

Chapter XII. Political Dissensions, 1900-1910

Bell had entered Parliament mainly with the aim of continuing the work of the A.S.R.S. as a pressure group - an activity which had a long tradition of close co-operation with Radical and Lib-lab M.Ps. behind it. His numerous parliamentary interventions kept alive the question of railwaymen's conditions, and on occasions he made successful gestures. Early in 1902, after preliminary skirmishes during question time on the operation of the Hours Act of 1893, he balloted with a large number of Radical colleagues for a place on a private member's motion on long hours of railwaymen. With the help of the Radical M.P. who was successful in the ballot, a motion demanding an inquiry was pressed to a division, causing the Conservative government's defeat by 151 votes to 144.(1) Being a Liberal, Bell found it easy to drift towards the Radical colleagues who seemed so helpful. As the Lib-lab. M.Ps. already co-ordinated their parliamentary tactics on labour questions, Bell saw no reason to make ostentatious gestures of independence. Unlike Keir Hardie he did not always sit on the cross-benches.(2).

Yet Bell was supposed to have been returned under the auspices of the L.R.C., which had decided to form a distinct labour group in parliament, with its own whips. But how distinct this labour group was to be had not been made quite clear at the inaugural conference, although Keir Hardie's amendment had been preferred to Wilkie's resolution.(3) As we have seen, it was the agitation of an I.L.P. faction which had made the A.S.R.S. take the lead in calling for an

alliance of socialists and trade unionists, and it was they who had delivered the votes of the A.S.R.S. in favour of Hardie's amendment.(4) But just after the inaugural conference, the A.S.R.S. Executive, while affiliating to the L.R.C. had passed a significant resolution:

> "(sc. we) very much regret that the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. is not represented on the Executive Committee, but cannot believe this to be other than an oversight which should be rectified as early as practical."(5)

This resolution reflected the widely held view that the new organization should not form an independent labour party but simply strengthen the political work of the Parliamentary Committee by promoting candidatures of trade unionists. But the Socialists on the L.R.C. Executive, including its Secretary Ramsay Macdonald, were anxious to remain independent of the Parliamentary Committee, and, throughout the first year of the new organization, they were trying to avoid a close entanglement with the other parties which would reduce the L.R.C. to a mere group.(6)

Taff Vale emphasised the paramount need for remedying Trade Union laws, and increased the trade union affiliations to the L.R.C. But it still seemed to many trade union leaders, among them W.C. Steadman and R. Bell, that gestures of independence from either political party were only likely to hinder the immediate and important task of reforming the labour laws.(7) In a letter written in December 1901 Bell suggested that working-class representation

should be confined to trade union officials, who were most likely to be adopted by local party caucuses.(8) The acceptance of the two political parties, which this letter implied, differentiated him from the I.L.P-ers quite clearly.

Shackleton's unopposed victory at Clitheroe in August 1902 seemed to him to mark "an epoch"(9)mainly because it appeared to confirm his belief that good relations with the leading political parties - especially the Liberals - would promote trade union candidatures. The grand strategy of Macdonald and Hardie - of avoiding entanglements with the Liberals at the local level, and negotiating secretly with them nationally(10) - was probably never explained to him.

After the Taff Vale decision of July 1901, the A.S.R.S., which was already in favour of parliamentary representation, became convinced of the need for more workingmen in parliament. Richard Bell and the President of the Union, George Thaxton, spoke strongly in favour of this course of action, and the A.G.M. of 1901 endorsed it.(11) Non-involvement in politics was now scarcely heard as a slogan. The transformation could be seen from the attitude of Nathan Rimmer of Wigan. In 1899, while supporting the Clarion Federation scheme, he had opposed parliamentary representation, "in which politics (sc. was) naturally involved", and which was consequently likely to cause dissension.(12) Early in 1902, he joined the others in supporting an increased number of trade union M.Ps., paid out of the parliamentary fund. But his approach was that of a non-socialist empiricist, who could write that the I.L.P.

"goes too far for some of our members, many of whom are Tories or Liberals..."(13)

A poll of the membership on establishing a parliamentary fund - which was silent on whether the fund should be compulsory - got replies from less than 30% of the members, but of those who replied, the overwhelming majority were in favour of a levy.(14) The sub-committee which drafted detailed rules on how to raise this levy left it to be purely voluntary. The fund raised by it were to finance additional railwaymen candidates and pay subscriptions to the L.R.C. "so long as the A.S.R.S. (sc. remained) affiliated to such committee."(15)

The phraseology of this last clause was probably symptomatic of the misgivings felt by the Lib-labs and Socialists about the continuance of the connexion between the L.R.C. and the A.S.R.S., in view of the increasing divergence between the approaches of Hardie and Macdonald on the one hand and Bell and Steadman on the other. In course of 1902, while Bell had used his Chairmanship of the L.R.C. to encourage the alliance of Radicals and trade-unionists and isolate the I.L.Pers, Keir Hardie had been walking on a political tight-rope, wanting to have the support of the Radicals, but at the same time wishing to preserve the 'independence' of the L.R.C.(16) The Special General Meeting of the A.S.R.S., in January 1903, which strengthened Bell's authority by censuring James Holmes, passed a resolution hoping that the L.R.C. and the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. would be able to work in harmony. But by deciding to incorporate the draft rules on the parliamentary levy in the rule

book, the meeting turned the A.S.R.S. into one of the few unions which was tied by its rules not only to finance parliamentary representation, but also to support the L.R.C.(17) The next few years were to show which attitude was to prevail - loyalty to Bell (which he also took to imply loyalty to his views on labour representation) or loyalty to the L.R.C., irrespective of any changes the latter body might carry out in its structure.

II

Next month, at the L.R.C. conference at Newcastle, such a change was effected by the resolution moved by the Socialist Pete Curran. His proposal, which aimed to prevent members of the L.R.C. Executive, officials of affiliated trade unions, Members of Parliament and candidates sponsored by the L.R.C. from giving support to the Liberal and Conservative parties, was taken by Bell, during the debate to be a personal attack on himself.(18) When it was passed, Bell saw in this a repetition of the same techniques of Socialist infiltration which had been a feature of the A.S.R.S. Executive Committees in 1898 and 1899, and which was only likely to harm the task of legislation in favour of trade unions.(19) He withdrew from the L.R.C. Executive and refused to sign the new constitution, but the other members of the A.S.R.S. delegation - Brodie, Holmes, and Palin - supported the 'Newcastle amendments'. They justified them with reference to the numerous resolutions on independence passed by the A.S.R.S. in the past.(20)

The tide was just then running in favour of Bell. Many branches

had protested against the Newcastle amendments. The Executive decided that Bell had not departed from the policy of complete independence, but advised him to be more discreet in his support to parliamentary candidatures.(21) At the A.G.M. of 1903 no vote of censure was passed on Bell. Instead, the A.G.M. decided to elect delegates to the L.R.C. by a ballot of the whole membership, presumably to weaken the hold of I.L.P-ers. But the approval given to the candidatures of Holmes, Hudson, and Wardle showed that the Lib-labs were not very well-organised.(22)

Bell was so egocentric that he does not appear to have considered the possibility of allying himself with Shackleton, Arthur Henderson and Will Crooks, whose views on the function of the L.R.C. were somewhat similar, and who gravitated towards the Liberals on the Free Trade question after Chamberlain had made his views public in the summer of 1903.(23) Instead of trying to establish an ascendancy over the Socialists from within the L.R.C., he chose to fight it from outside, and became isolated.

His conduct in the Norwich bye-election of January 1904 has been described elsewhere by a Labour Party historian, with the pejorative word 'perfidy'.(24) It is only fair to add that Bell could feel justifiable annoyance at the prospect of the splitting of the progressive vote by a candidate who styled himself 'Socialist and Labour' and whose candidature was considered ill-advised by the L.R.C. national Executive. It was the local branch Secretary who was responsible for letting a garbled version of Bell's non-committal letter be leaked to the press. But of course Bell could be faulted

for giving the Liberal press the actual text of the letter when they asked for it, ostensibly for the purposes of correction, but in reality to assist the victory of the Liberal candidate. The telegram sent to the latter described his victory as a "triumph of progress against Tory reaction".(25) Such obvious partisanship alienated Bell from non-Socialist railwaymen like Nathan Rimmer, who became very anxious to make him sign the L.R.C. constitution at once.(26)

At the Bradford conference of the L.R.C. in February, Bell was severely attacked by many delegates. To him the succession of episodes like the conduct of Steels in 1898-99, Hardie's amendment of February, 1901, the Newcastle resolution of February 1903, and the unauthorised candidature at Norwich - all seemed conclusively to prove that "an effort (sc. was) being made by the I.L.P. to capture the trade unions, and the attack upon me is one of the phases of it!"(27)

But the A.S.R.S. Executive was persuaded, by a long discussion with Ramsay Macdonald and David Shackleton, that the L.R.C. was aiming to emphasise the word 'Labour' and not the word 'Socialist', and that its leaders had a vision of building up an attractive country-wide political force.(28) It was Bell's threat to resign his seat, and the consequent loss of its one direct representative in parliament, which appears to have weighed with the Executive. Consequently, a majority agreed, both in March and in June, to defer the matter to the A.G.M. and see if the rules could be so altered as to delete the clause on affiliation to the L.R.C., which would enable

Bell to receive his parliamentary expenses, without signing the L.R.C. constitution.(29)

Before the A.G.M. Bell's position was slightly strengthened both by support from the Derby Trades Council, and by the speeches made by Shackleton, Henderson, and Crooks on Free Trade platforms.(30) Until March 1904 he had justified himself on the grounds of a Socialist conspiracy. Since then his line of defence was that he was one of the few upholders of sound Burkeian constitutional principles, and that he was being singled out for persecution. These arguments sufficiently tilted the balance in his favour at the A.G.M. Tom Steels's attempt to make him sign the L.R.C. constitution was defeated, with some procedural sharp practice from Loraine, who was Chairman. Afterwards an amendment, passed by one vote, acknowledged Bell as an A.S.R.S.-sponsored M.P., supported affiliation to the L.R.C., and pleaded for amendments to the L.R.C. constitution to make it less rigid.(31) Before these decisions the rules had been altered, by 30 votes to 27, so as to delete the clause which obliged the A.S.R.S. to make payments to the L.R.C. by its very constitution.(32)

Even Lib-labs like George Loraine, who had attended the Bradford Congress of the L.R.C., were so impressed by the huge affiliated membership of the L.R.C. that they preferred reforming the L.R.C. from within rather than disaffiliating.(33) Loraine shared with Arthur Henderson the view that the L.R.C. should give a lead to the workingmen on how to vote in constituencies where there was no L.R.C. candidate.(34) When the "Caxton Hall Concordat" enabled the T.U.C., the L.R.C., and the G.F.T.U. to come to an understanding about

supporting candidates whose names appeared on the list of any one of these organisations,(35)the A.S.R.S. Executive expressed its "pleasure at the commonsense understanding".(36) Although constitutional amendments proposed by the A.S.R.S. at the L.R.C. conference in 1905 were ignored,(37)few members pressed for disaffiliation.

While peace seemed to be descending on these political controversies, the picture was complicated by the activities of W.V. Osborne, of the Walthamstow branch, who questioned the legality of a compulsory levy for political purposes.(38) Counsels' opinion to the A.S.R.S. was that a levy for parliamentary representation was consistent with the rules of the union, and payments from it to the L.R.C. were not illegal. But the insertion of the relevant clauses in the A.S.R.S. rule book in 1903 had been carried out irregularly. That had to be rectified.(39)

When the opinion of the membership was tested on the question of a compulsory levy by a poll, 50% voted, but a large majority of the voters were in its favour.(40) Richard Bell, who should have known better, attempted for a while, at the beginning of the proceedings of the A.G.M. of 1905, to hint at disaffiliation from the L.R.C. and to suggest using the parliamentary fund to finance only trade union candidatures.(41) But from the Chair he was quietly admonished by J.H. Thomas, who also threw his weight against an attempt of the I.L.P. incorruptibles to make Bell sign the ARC constitution.(42) The debate ended in the spirit of the 'concordat'. Only W.V. Osborne dropped dark hints:

> "Rather than that their members should be coerced, every resource of civilisation would be availed of, including

application for legal injunction".(43)

At the general election in the following winter Hudson and Wardle were returned on an L.R.C. ticket, and Bell on an independent ticket. Bell's vanity was hurt badly when he saw that the organisation which he had ridiculed not only boasted of 29 M.Ps., but constituted itself into a new parliamentary party, having changed its name to the Labour Party. But his fulminations were of no avail. The A.S.R.S. Executive was impressed by the new party's achievement, and welcomed the change of title.(44) Nothing succeeds like success. In the course of the six years since 1900, while Richard Bell's clumsy and isolated attempts to demonstrate the vigour of Liberal labourism and the intolerance of the Socialists had failed, the Socialist leaders of the L.R.C. had, by a combination of tact, secret diplomacy, and a willingness to play down their Socialism, succeeded in fashioning an organisation with great future possibilities.

As two A.S.R.S. members were already in the Labour Party, the A.S.R.S. Executive decided to end the anomalous situation of Bell's non-membership of that party. Although 1906 was not the year when rules could be altered on this point, the committee recommended that rules should be so amended as to oblige all A.S.R.S. candidates to become members of the Labour Party.(45) This did not mean that Bell had to join the organisation he hated, but that his parliamentary career would come to an end with the end of the present parliament.

At the A.G.M., by procedural sharp practice, the I.L.P-ers carried this amendment by 37 votes to 22.(46) With standing orders suspended, and Palin in the chair, Bell could not intervene in the

debate at the crucial moments, and the vote was taken at a moment most convenient to the Socialists. But when the I.L.P-ers pressed another resolution asking Bell to join the Labour Party at once, Bell made such a powerful speech that it was lost by 5 votes to 43. But this was a pyrrhic victory. His career as an M.P., which he enjoyed, was doomed, unless he did a volte-face in course of the next four years.(47)

III

Even in his hour of defeat Bell had been careful to stress that on no account should members refuse to pay the parliamentary levy.(48) There is no evidence of any complicity between him and W.V. Osborne, who applied for an injunction in October 1907 restraining the A.S.R.S. from using the funds to finance the Labour Party.

Osborne's initial plea was that the rules had been improperly altered in 1906, but Mr. Justice Neville rejected this on the ground that the certificate of the Registrar of Friendly Societies validated the rules.(49) When Osborne appealed, he challenged the union on a more fundamental question, to the satisfaction of his counsel. The latter now argued that the financing of parliamentary representation by a trade union was ultra vires.(50) As is well-known, the Court of Appeal upheld this contention in November 1908. Osborne hinted to the A.S.R.S. Executive that he would raise no objection to organising voluntary levies for parliamentary representation under purely trade union auspices, and suggested coming to an understanding. He added, however,

"...if you go to the House of Lords, I shall endeavour to meet you there, if I have to beg in the streets of London for funds."

But the A.S.R.S. Executive decided to appeal to the highest tribunal and rejected Osborne's offer. A co-ordinated effort was planned under the Joint Board - which was an alliance of the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C., the Labour Party, and the G.F.T.U.(51)

The House of Lords heard the appeal in July 1909,(52)but deferred judgment until the following December. Their verdict was in Osborne's favour. By strictly limiting the functions of a trade union to those enumerated in the Acts of 1871 and 1876, the judges decided that trade unions could not take part in any kind of political work. The arguments of the six judges have been subjected to scrutiny elsewhere already.(53) It is significant that the one judge, Lord James of Hereford, who rejected the view that the clause defining a trade union in the Acts of 1871 and 1876 exhaustively defined its functions, nevertheless supported the judgment on the ground that the rules of the Society obliged the member to obey the whip of the Labour Party.(54) Perhaps he was influenced by the "coercion" practised on Bell, whom he had known since the N.E.R. arbitration case of 1897, and who had, as recently as October 1909, manoeuvred himself into a position where it seemed as if the A.S.R.S. was coercing him for his political views.

IV

Since the alteration of rules in 1906, Bell had become so em-

bittered with the I.L.P-ers that he behaved rudely to Hudson and Wardle. Their parliamentary work was, consequently, not in the least harmonious.

In March 1907 Bell had moved a carefully worded resolution in the House of Commons on the working of the Hours Act of 1893, after having privately arranged with Lloyd George that this wording would be acceptable to the Government. He had disdained to explain carefully to Hudson and Wardle why a wording had been chosen which was more moderate than the recent resolutions of the A.G.M., but was likely to be a useful gesture against the Companies, as part of the campaign in favour of the All-grades movement. So these two worthies moved a more extreme amendment and pressed it to a division - with mainly Labour party members voting for it.(55) Bell saw in this just another example of the irresponsibility of the Labour Party. During the prolonged post-mortem he could not get the support of the Executive for the moderate tone of his resolution, although they agreed on the need for better co-ordination.(56)

But arrangements made in 1908 for the preparation of joint reports on parliamentary work and joint consultation on railway questions, under Bell's leadership, broke down.(57) Bell had by now convinced himself that any M.P. who obeyed a party's whip fettered his judgment, and consequently he was somewhat contemptuous of the other two. His letters to Hudson were incredibly rude - a rudeness warmly reciprocated. Genuine tete-a-tetes never seemed to have developed.(58)

This personal antipathy complicated a serious divergence of opinion on the nationalisation of railways, and it was over this,

and one other episode, that the storm broke in 1909.

With hardly any dissenting voice, resolutions in favour of nationalisation had been carried at the A.G.Ms. of 1894, 1896, 1898, 1905, and 1907.(59) In March 1908, the Executive Committee had been split almost evenly over whether to deplore a resolution passed at the Labour Party Conference which pledged the party to the ultimate aim of complete social ownership. But it was unanimous in supporting nationalisation of railways as the only lasting solution of all problems presented by recent tendencies towards amalgamation.(60)

Richard Bell, however, believed that the prospects of recognition were bright, if only he could manipulate the Conciliation scheme cleverly, and carry through his aim of merging the railway unions. Being very anxious to present an image of responsible leadership before the big railway magnates in order to hasten the day when they would accept him as the spokesman of all railwaymen, he started publicly affirming his opposition to nationalization, from October 1907 onward - when his heart was mainly in securing recognition.(61) He accepted the views of the railway managers that amalgamation of the Companies would invariably benefit both masters and men. While he believed that ad hoc safeguards for railwaymen had to be inserted into each railway amalgamation bill, he felt that using these occasions for public declarations of nationalization was unwise.(62)

In 1909, over the amalgamation bill of the G.N.R., G.C.R., and G.E.R., this strategy governed his action. At first Bell, Hudson, and Wardle all had put down motions blocking these bills, but Bell changed his mind after having received an assurance, through the

Board of Trade, that the Company were agreeable to considering provisions safeguarding the workmen's interests. He had not informed Wardle of this, and so, afterwards, during the debate the two men spoke and voted on opposite sides.(63) As Wardle remarked later,

> "That is the whole difficulty - because Mr. Bell is negotiating as General Secretary with the President of the Board of Trade... and we are left out entirely in the cold."(64)

Bell's egocentricity and vanity was even more marked over the N.E. railway bill. At the request of the Railway Clerks' Association, the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. and the Labour Party had been trying to persuade the N.E.R. to drop its objection to trade unionism among clerks, with a threat of blocking its bill in parliament otherwise. Wardle was in charge of this on behalf of the Labour Party. Piqued that the chief official of the A.S.R.S. was being ignored, Bell negotiated alternative arrangements with the N.E.R., and offered these to the R.C.A. The latter objected and insisted on blocking the bill on 15th July. After Steadman and Hudson had spoken in favour of the blocking motion, Bell got up and opposed it. For this the R.C.A. charged him at the T.U.C. in September, and he had to apologise.(65)

Meanwhile the Executive Committee had demanded an explanation of these activities. With characteristic petulance Bell refused to explain his conduct to them, on the flimsy pretext that resolutions calling for his resignation were also on the agenda of the A.G.M. Drawing the usual parallel with a criminal trial, which was his habit of doing whenever he knew himself to be vulnerable to criticism, he

said that like any ordinary defendant he could not be tried twice for the same offence. By this he alienated the sympathies of all committee members who referred the matter to the A.G.M.(66)

Bell was anxious to have the debate in public. He believed that since he was likely to be attacked by a majority at the A.G.M., he needed the moral support of the non-labour press to vindicate his work in parliament. But many delegates at the A.G.M. considered this to be an internal matter of the Society, and were reluctant to criticise in public their leader, who on the other hand, was only too pleased to play to the gallery. The decision to hold the discussion in camera made Bell refuse to say a word during its stormy course.(67)

While he maintained a stony silence, the delegates eventually debated a resolution calling for his resignation, and an amendment which simply wished to transfer the co-ordination of the entire parliamentary work of the A.S.R.S. in the hands of a parliamentary Secretary. The resolution got 25 votes, and the amendment 32.(68) Bell published his defence in the press in an extraordinarily ego-centric document, which was riddled with inconsistencies. This obliged the A.S.R.S. Executive to publish a dignified rejoinder.(69)

The passing of the amendment had meant that Bell could continue as the Secretary of the Union. But after so much bitterness, at a time when Parliament was about to be dissolved and the final judgment in the Osborne case was exacerbating feelings everywhere, it was really impossible for Bell to continue. He gave three months' notice of his resignation on 31st December 1909; it was accepted unanimously, without any attempt being made to ask him to stay.(70) Not many

branches regretted his departure. But the Exeter branch took the lead in organising a testimonial for presentation to him.(71)

Bell was an able administrator, and an expert in fostering good relations with middle-class parliamentary colleagues, government officials, and even some railway managers. But in his relations with his colleagues in the union, he revealed an innate refusal to admit his mistakes. Alcock, who sympathised with his political views, wrote,

> "His way was <u>the</u> way, and to question it was something like challenging the old divine right of kings. He had not enough velvet on his glove ... He had the touch of the autocrat."(72)

Perhaps this propensity to self-righteousness, which warped his character completely by 1909, was partly the result of his experience as the General Secretary in his first three years. He was then forced by an insubordinate organising secretary and inexperienced committee members to support the Taff Vale Strike and abandon his all-grade strategy.(73) About the same time an intransigent group of I.L.P-ers had tried blatantly to capture the union's machinery for political ends.

These events possibly made him develop a fixation about the need to assert himself whenever possible. He did a useful piece of work in strengthening the powers of the Centre by the rules alteration in January 1903. But just about the same time his relations with the L.R.C. became strained. While he could have strengthened the non-socialist element in the L.R.C. if he had exercised some discretion,

he failed to do so. His isolation from Crooks, Henderson, and Shackleton, was largely his own fault.

While it is true that the I.L.P-ers harassed him needlessly in 1906 by altering the rules once again, this was surely no excuse for not being on good terms with Hudson and Wardle in parliament. Only by overreaching himself in 1909 did he invite the wrath of most of his colleagues. Until then not many people wished to dismiss him, for everybody knew that he was a very hard worker and an expert lobbyist.

These qualities had enabled him to revolutionise the entire administration of the union headquarters, and to get the Accidents Act of 1900 passed. But these were about the sum of his positive contributions to the A.S.R.S. The creation of the Conciliation Boards, as we have seen, was more an expression of the failure of the all-grades movement rather than a victory for Bell's strategy. That strategy required for its success good relations with other railway unions. Yet Bell's egocentricity had aggravated tensions that already existed between the A.S.L.E.F. and the A.S.R.S. Consequently he started the all-grades movement severely handicapped. Leadership needs not only a capacity for hard work and a methodical approach, but also the art of holding different groups of people together, of being able to inspire affection. Bell did not possess these latter qualities.

V

Being deprived by the Osborne judgment of a regular source of

income for parliamentary representation, the A.S.R.S. had started a Railwaymen's Parliamentary Representation Association, which was not very successful in raising money. With the assistance of loans from the Labour Party, however, candidates of the A.S.R.S. fought the two general elections of 1910.(74) In both of them three were successful, Hudson, Wardle, and J.H. Thomas, who was returned for Derby, in the seat vacated by Bell. So the union continued to have three M.Ps. - all of whom belonged to the Labour Party.

As long as Bell and Osborne - each in their own way - had identified the Labour Party with the Socialists in the A.S.R.S., it had obscured a significant trend since 1907 - the shift within the Left from 'Methodism' to Marxism. This catch phrase serves to illuminate the contrast between old-time I.L.P-ers like George Wardle and James R. Bell, and the younger generation of Socialists like Cramp, Edwards, Fagg, and Henderson. While the former were proud of a non-conformist upbringing, and had moved from advanced Radicalism to support of the I.L.P.,(75)the latter had studied theoretical Socialism, and used Marxist phrases. Their influence could be measured by the agitation in favour of the Central Labour College, and for Industrial Unionist ideas. On the extreme left of these people there emerged, in the course of 1910, a group of syndicalists.

Although the A.S.R.S. had affiliated to Ruskin College in 1905, its pupils studying there in 1908-9 came under the influence of the Marxist group led by Dennis Hird, the principal of the College. Hird's activities culminated in his dismissal, and the setting up of a rival College - the Central Labour College.(76) W.W. Craik, who had been

one of the students financed by the A.S.R.S. studying at Ruskin College, took the lead in persuading the union to affiliate to the new College. On the Executive Committee in 1909, only Edwards, Fagg, and the Irish representative Murphy were strongly in favour of affiliating to the C.L.C.(77) But the stormy A.G.M. which censured Bell also decided to withdraw support from Ruskin College and to join the C.L.C.(78)

The left-wing could exert more influence on Annual General Meetings and less on Executive Committees. In 1910 only Edwards, Fagg and Henderson supported a proposal at an Executive Committee meeting for changing the motto on the medallion of the Society from "Help one another" to "Workers of the World, Unite!"(79) The closing years of the history of the A.S.R.S., after Richard Bell had left, were to show the extent to which a revolutionary industrial strategy was popular.

NOTES

(1) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1902, p.9f.

(2) Bealey & Pelling, Labour and Politics, 1900-06. pp.182,185, 187f.

(3) ibid. p.28.

(4) See above. p 352

(5) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1900, p.81.

(6) Bealey & Pelling, op.cit. pp.34-41 for a discussion of this.

(7) See Bell's statement of his position in A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1903.

(8) R.R. 27 Dec.1901, p.3f.

(9) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1902, p.12.

(10) Bealey & Pelling, op.cit. p.133f.

(11) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1901, p.14f; R.R. 4 Oct.1901, p.9; R.R. 11 Oct.1901, p.10.

(12) R.R. 7 July 1899, p.7.

(13) R.R. 24 Jan.1902, p.10.

(14) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1902, p.4.

(15) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1902,p.4f.

(16) Bealey & Pelling, op.cit. p.135f; for Keir Hardie's ambivalent attitude, ibid. p.190f.

(17) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the Adjourned Special General Meeting.. Jan.1903. pp.7-9.

(18) L.R.C. - Report of Third Annual Conference, 1903, pp.25,28-31.

(19) See his long discourse in A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1903, pp.14-18.

(20) ibid. p.13.

(21) ibid. p.20f.

(22) A.S.R.S. Supplementary Agenda of the A.G.M. 1903, p.5f. Decisions of the A.G.M. 1903, pp.6-8.

(23) Bealey & Pelling, op.cit. p.206f.

(24) ibid. p.195.

(25) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1903, pp.87f, 90f for the Norwich Candidature; pp.118-21 for Bell's letters and telegram.

(26) For Rimmer's views see ibid. p.135f, 144f.

(27) ibid. p.115.

(28) ibid. pp.85-103.

(29) ibid. p.18; ibid. June 1904, pp.38-40.

(30) Bealey & Pelling, op.cit. pp.195f, 201f.

(31) R.R. 7 Oct.1904, pp.7,10f.

(32) ibid. p.6; A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M. 1904, p.8.

(33) For Loraine's views see A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1904,p.16; Decisions of the A.G.M. 1904, p.22.

(34) Bealey & Pelling, op.cit. p.208 for Henderson's views.

(35) ibid. p.210.

(36) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1905, p.16.

(37) ibid. pp.16-19.

(38) ibid. p.20.

(39) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1905, p.26f.

(40) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep. 1905, p.7-10.

(41) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1905, p.33; R.R. 6 Oct.1905, p.6.

(42) R.R. 6 Oct.1905, p.7.

(43) ibid. p.10.

(44) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1906, pp.17-20, 24.

(45) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1906, p.13.

(46) A.S.R.S. Agenda ... A.G.M. 1906, p.2; Decisions of the A.G.M. 1906, p.9.

(47) R.R. 5 Oct. 1906, p.6.

(48) Ibid. p.7.

(49) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1908, pp.22-28.

(50) A.S.R.S. Osborne v. A.S.R.S. p.5.

(51) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1908, p.52f. (Letter from Osborne reproduced).

(52) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1909, p.24.

(53) Webb, History of Trade Unionism (1920 ed.) pp.608-631.

(54) [1910] A.C. at p.99.

(55) Parl.Deb., 4th S. CLXX, 890-923,

(56) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1907, pp.8-12; ibid. June 1907, p.10; ibid. Dec.1907, pp.6-9.

(57) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1908, p.21; ibid. Sep.1908,pp.7-10.

(58) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1908, p.9; also see letter of Bell quoted in Decisions of the A.G.M.... 1909. p.38f.

(59) Source:- Decisions of the A.G.M. for the respective years. R.R. for debates.

(60) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1908, pp.12,21.

(61) R.R. 18 Oct. 1907, p.1f.

(62) See his speeches and writings in A.S.R.S. Annual Report 1908 pp.33-7; ibid. 1909,pp.17-21, esp.p.20. His conduct in connexion with the bill promoting the amalgamation of the G.N.R., G.C.R., and G.E.R., lends support to this characterization.

(63) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1909, p.9; ibid. June 1909, pp.8-18; Parl.Deb. 1909, III, 842ff.

(64) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M. 1909, p.42.

(65) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1909, p.6; Parl.Deb. 1909, VII, 2378-2411; T.U.C. Annual Report 1909, pp.111-19; A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M. 1909, pp.88-90, for Bell's account.

(66) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes Sep.1909, p.9; A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M.1909,p.35 for Bell's point of view; ibid. pp.48-50 for what happened at the E.C.

(67) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M. 1909 p.42, 47f; R.R. 8 Oct. 1909, p.10f.

(68) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M. 1909, p.70.

(69) ibid. pp.85-94.

(70) A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, Dec.-Jan.1909,-10, p.5.

(71) R.R. for branch reports. R.R. 11 Feb.1910, p.6; R.R.27 May 1910, p.9.

(72) Alcock, op.cit. p.403.

(73) See above p.255ff

(74) A.S.R.S. 'Railwaymen's Parliamentary Representation Association. Debate at Annual Meeting, Oct.4th 1911'. pp.5,12.

(75) Biography of Wardle in Labour Annual (1899), p.166; of Bell in Reformers' Year Book (1907) p.236; also see Walter Hudson's biography and lecture in Hardie, Keir (& others), Labour and Religion(1910) p.41 et.sq.

(76) H.Pelling, America and the British Left(1956) p.100f.

(77) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1909, p.124f.

(78) R.R. 15 Oct.1909, p.4f.

(79) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1910, p.89.

Chapter XIII. Strife and Fusion, 1909-1913

Richard Bell was succeeded by a fellow Welshman, James Williams (b.1856), who had been assistant Secretary since 1900, and who defeated Walter Hudson by 24,567 votes to 17,970.(1) He had been connected with the A.S.R.S. since 1875, when he had joined the Pontypool branch. Having been orphaned at an early age, he always took a keen interest in the work of the A.S.R.S. as a friendly society. In the eighteen-eighties and eighteen-nineties his influence at A.G.Ms. and Executive Committees had been on the side of a strict management of the finances of the society. Until he became a union official in 1900, he worked as a Signalman on the G.W.R. In spite of a serious accident in 1877 - which cost him a leg - he was active both in union work and on his local Board of Guardian, where he had been elected in 1893. In politics he was a Lib-lab, but he believed in the nationalization of railways.

Williams's election, then, did not mark a break with the previous tradition, and showed that Bell's unpopularity was due as much to his personal arrogance, as to his political views.(2) J.H. Thomas, who was a personal friend of Williams, retired from the contest for the post of the General Secretary,(3)and was afterwards elected to the Assistant Secretaryship. In the latter contest not only did he have a clear majority, but the very left-wing Socialist G.W. Brown got only 5,710 votes to the 20,113 polled by Thomas, and the 10,411 polled by W. Hart, chief clerk of the Financial department.(4)

The elections for the posts of responsible officers, who had

to get elected by a clear majority, showed that the membership as a whole preferred moderate and experienced men. The more extreme left-wingers made their influence felt at Executive Committees and annual meetings, because many of them were lucky to get elected on minority votes - there being a great many candidates for those latter bodies.(5) Although Williams was in favour of introducing the method of proportional representation by the single transferable vote, it was successfully opposed on the Executive Committee by Edwards, Fagg, and Henderson,(6)all of whom, incidentally, were left-wing.

Within the first six months of Williams's term of office, four local organisers were appointed, additional organisers were planned,(7)and the building of the union's own headquarters was completed. Unity House - as the new building came to be known - was opened by Sidney Webb on 18th September 1910.(8) The speech delivered by Webb was so critical of the railway companies that Lord Claud Hamilton threatened to withdraw from the Board of Governors of the London School of Economics, and, along with other railway directors, cease to finance the study of railway economics at that institution!(9)

When invitations had been sent out for the opening ceremony of Unity House, C.A. Henderson, J.P., the militant N.E. leader, had proposed that the A.S.L.E.F. officials should not be invited! This piece of pettiness was decisively rejected,(10)but the A.S.R.S. made little progress in 1910 with its long-cherished desire to promote a merger of all railway unions. One of the last acts of Richard Bell as General Secretary had been to arrange a conference in

December 1909 between the G.R.W.U. and the A.S.R.S.(11) At this meeting the A.S.R.S. was persuaded to drop its objections to the enrolment of shopmen, partly because the delegates of the G.R.W.U. persuasively argued that some society ought to organize semi-skilled workers in railway shops who could not join a craft union, as they had not served an apprenticeship.(12) The problem of paying donation benefit to casual employees no longer seemed a great obstacle, possibly because, since 1904, the A.S.R.S. had been paying this benefit only for unemployment caused by industrial disputes.(13) On its part the G.R.W.U. dropped its aim of recruiting the workmen of various private railways and ship canals, as long as existing branches were not interfered with.(14) After merger the union was to enrol people "permanently employed on any railway or in railway shops" who were not eligible for skilled workers' craft unions.(15) Yet, in spite of this successful compromise, and the drafting of a detailed scheme of amalgamation, which specified benefits payable during the transition period and promised to employ or compensate all G.R.W.U. officials, the merger could not take place. The poll taken by the G.R.W.U. in accordance with the Trade Union laws, did not show the required two-thirds majority.(16)

The disappointment following this futile effort gave a deceptive appearance of unity among the leaders, not all of whom were in favour of a merger on identical grounds. So it was possible for C. Watkins, a Syndicalist, to carry a unanimous resolution at the A.G.M. of 1910 advocating, as a general principle, a diminution in the number of unions to offset the concentration of capital in

fewer hands.(17) Edwards and Henderson drew special attention to this at the Executive Committee in December.(18) Yet not only did George Wardle have his doubts about the extension of this principle on a general scale(19) - as opposed to the railways - but when some railwaymen working on the London Underground wished to recruit fitters and fitters' mates in the summer of 1911, only C.T. Cramp supported it.(20) Only 273 branches out of a total of 729 replied to the questionnaire on Industrial unionism issued by the A.S.R.S. at the behest of the T.U.C., and of these 261 were in favour of the idea.(21)

Reluctance to join the Transport Workers' Federation (T.W.F.) underlined the fact that in the inner counsels of the Society the influence of the supporters of sympathetic strikes was insufficient. This federation was founded in the autumn of 1910 by Ben Tillett, Harry Gosling, Havelock Wilson and others to strengthen their unions, and Tom Mann took a leading part as well, hoping to use its machinery to organise workingmen along syndicalist lines.(22) At the conference of the T.W.F. on 22nd and 23rd September 1910, the only railway union which was represented was the A.S.R.S., whose delegate - the moderate Socialist C. Layton(23) - came with a watching brief only. His report was purely factual; he might have made some critical remarks in presenting it, for the Executive Committee inserted his report in the agenda of the A.G.M. without any recommendation.(24) At a secret session the A.G.M. decided not to affiliate until more information was available, to the disappointment of Edwards and Henderson, who had been rather enthusiastic for it.(25) Subsequent events during 1911 and 1912 revealed the divergences between the dominant mood in

favour of a successful merger of railwaymen's unions to redress railwaymen's grievances, and the less powerful mood in favour of a more all-embracing alliance.

II

Because the Conciliation scheme of November 1907 was "a hastily improvised method for ending a critical dispute,"(26)nearly the whole of 1908 had been spent in triangular arguments between the A.S.R.S., the Board of Trade, and the Companies in trying to find satisfactory interpretations on procedural details. The delay caused by the insistence of the Companies on meeting deputations of men prior to a reference to the Conciliation Boards was prolonged by the further insistence of a number of them that a deputation could be met only after petitions signed by a great many men had been sent to the officials. This was a retrograde step on some railways, but Bell failed to persuade G.R. Askwith to force the Companies to waive this point and speed up the machinery. Askwith found it an insuperable task to lay down a norm, as the "usual course" of ventilating grievances had varied widely from one Company to another.(27) Consequently only the Midland Goods Guards had reached a settlement by November 1908 - one year after the scheme had been adopted.(28)

In the latter half of 1908 and the first quarter of 1909, the rigid adherence of the A.S.R.S. to the National Programme made discussion at the level of the Sectional and Central Boards almost a formality.(29) After the further delay caused by the arbitration proceedings, most Companies reached settlements by September 1909.(30)

By December 1909, only the Irish Great Southern & Western (G.S. & W.) and the English S.E. & C. had not done so. While the latter did not delay beyond February 1910,(31)the G.S. & W. remained unusually obstructive, raising various procedural objections, which even the Board of Trade considered "very extreme on their part."(32)

Afterwards, with an element of hindsight, the Railway Review admitted that the A.S.R.S. had a share in aggravating the delay by simply re-submitting the National Programmes to all the sectional Conciliation Boards without a careful elimination of "some portions which were superfluous for some grades and unsuitable for others."(33) Nevertheless, what the men remembered most from 1908 were the reluctance of many officials even to discuss procedure with the men;(34) the submission of reduction proposals to the Conciliation Boards without notice;(35) the strange behaviour of the G.W.R. in arguing that the demand for overtime at a daily rate could not be discussed by the Conciliation Boards as it did not concern "hours and wages";(36) the sudden dismissal of a number of hands on the Midland,(37)and an equally sudden suspension of the Guaranteed Week's Pay on the L. & Y.,(38)both of which were justified by the Companies on the ground of the severe depression of 1908.

In their awards, given in 1909, the Arbitrators took this depression into account,(39)as well as the fixed rates of the Companies, and so, after all this delay, the awards fell far short of what the men had expected when they joined in large numbers in 1906 and 1907. While higher rates of overtime and Sunday pay had been obtained almost everywhere for all grades,wage increases were rare,

and the Guaranteed Week's Pay was not extended to any new grade on any Company.(40) The demand of an advance of 2/- for the low-paid grades had "not been generally conceded."(41)

Nor did Locomen and Signalmen - who had been resentful of changes in the method of work(42) - gain much. Only those working on very big engines on the L. & N.W., Midland, and the G.E.R., got an extra allowance of 1/6; on the L. & Y. Firemen obtained nothing, although the Driver's minimum went up by 3/-. The men's side of the Locomen's Sectional Boards on the G.C.R., G.W.R., and G.N.R. withdrew their programmes, perhaps because, being members of the A.S.L.E.F. they were unwilling to let it be discussed at the level of the Central Board. Many Signalmen still worked in twelve-hour boxes. Wage increases were given to them only on the G.W.R. and the G.N.R. On the latter railway, advances of 1/- to those earning between 18/- and 21/- did little to offset the rise in prices since the end of the Great Depression.

Even in an area of strong trade unionism, like the N.E.R., concessions were meagre. The arbitration award of 1909 did little to alter the wages from what they were in 1906, except to make the annual increments of the Fireman more favourable. The award remained binding till 1913. The N.E. Conciliation Conference, elected at the end of 1908, was composed of A.S.R.S. members only.(43) After Bell's resignation Walter Hudson acted as the Secretary to the men's side,(44) and both sides met at regular intervals. But in the absence of fresh concessions,(45)revolts against irksome management and procedural delays could easily become the focus of general grievances,

especially among lower grades. Such factors lay behind the sudden strike at Newcastle in sympathy with Shunter Goodchild in July 1910, which spread rapidly.(46) The overtime ban imposed by Goods workers at Hull in June 1910 because they were unwilling to wait till the next meeting of the Conciliation Conference,(47)and the strike of fish porters at Hull in February 1911(48) - these were symptomatic of the gradual growth of militancy among railway goods staff, few of whom had obtained better conditions outside Newcastle.

This militancy on the N.E.R. was sustained by the left-wing views of many local leaders, like G.W. Brown of Hull(49)and C.A. Henderson of Tyne Dock.(50) Butterworth, the General Manager of the railway, afterwards said that while the Executive Committees of the A.S.R.S. had "always been on the side of bringing the men in and bringing them to reason, ... an army of branch secretaries (sc. kept) railway officials rather more alive than they (sc -wished) to be kept ... in matters that should be left ... to discuss with the individual men concerned."(51) One sign of this increasing radicalism and an encroachment in the sphere of discipline was the attempt to recruit railway policemen early in 1911 - to which Butterworth strongly objected.(52) In spite of the willingness of the Executive Committee to put up a fight on this ~~issue~~ question, the firmness of the Company and Williams's reluctance to make this an issue led to the abandonment of this attempt.(53) But during the discussion, when the matter was first raised, the form of words, in the resolution preferred by a minority led by C.T. Cramp and Ernest Edwards, showed that they were converts to the doctrine that industrial unionism was

justified by the class struggle: "this fundamental principle of the working class, as ... the economic power of Capitalism can only in the last resort be met by the force of numbers."(54)

Nearly all the awards and settlements were to last until 1913 - most of them until the end of that year.(55) The railway men of the L. & Y. - which was to be come a storm centre - had to wait till November 1914. Yet between 1909 and 1913 the economy took an upward turn reaching a peak in 1913.(56) While signs of the increased receipts of the Companies were evident to rank-and-file leaders by the beginning of 1910,(57) they could not help contrasting this with the continuous rise in prices which made the wage-packet of 1910 9% less valuable than it had been in 1898, and diminish by a further 2% by the end of 1911.(58) Further alterations of working arrangements introduced by some railways had an adverse effect on earnings. On the Midland the introduction of a centralised traffic control system in 1909 "led to a remarkable reduction of overtime paid to train crews," while improving the punctuality of all train services.(59) It possibly had some connexion with the system prevalent in America;(60) certainly the Railway Review interpreted the appointment of C.W. Paget as General Superintendent in charge of traffic control, as an example of the introduction of high-powered American methods(61) - thus reflecting an uneasiness shared by other trade unionists.(62) As Paget's methods of management were somewhat autocratic and contemptuous of the Conciliation Scheme, a general sense of alarm spread on that railway, which had, until then, a very good record of collective bargaining.(63)

In a similar manner, grievances concerning actual terms of services became linked with doubts about the sincerity of the Companies in fostering the spirit of conciliation on other railways - especially the G.N.R. and the G.E.R. - in 1910. The attempt of the G.E.R. to make individual railwaymen contract out of the arbitration award was thwarted, when, after nine months' efforts by the A.S.R.S., the Board of Trade declared that "the whole idea of the scheme" (i.e. Conciliation Scheme) was "based on the principle of collective bargaining."(64) The victory of the union on this point was outweighed by the unfavourable interpretation given by the arbitrator himself on controversial questions of Sunday duty and overtime pay, when both sides had referred the matter back to him.(65) In the case of the G.N.R. it took eight months before the Company would agree to refer controversial points of the award back to the arbitrator, and four additional months before the interpretations were to hand.(66) Then these interpretations - which related mainly to overtime payment - was seen to be unfavourable!(67)

Indeed the absence of a clause on interpretations made some Companies refuse to convene the Conciliation Boards after the Arbitration awards.(68) The G.W.R. had stopped the usual annual increments of some grades who had been given a wage increase by the arbitrator. Only by blocking a private bill of that Company in Parliament, were Thomas, Hudson, and Wardle able to make the Company agree, on 10th March 1910, to refer the matter back to the arbitrator. Until then the Company had said that with the arbitration the Central Conciliation Board had ceased to exist.(69)

By using their free hand on management and discipline the G.W.R. and the Midland changed the names of some grades in some areas - making shunters into assistant guards for example - soon after the awards, and thus deprived the men of their concessions.(70) As Thomas remarked to Sydney Buxton, President of the Board of Trade,

> "If by that they can get out of it you can imagine our difficulty in telling the men what a wonderful scheme it is."(71)

If the scheme could be reformed the leadership was anxious to maintain it. In articles on the 'Future of the A.S.R.S.' the Railway Review said that the Conciliation Boards were better "than the old methods of deputation, agitation or strike ...", but at the time of renewal the "Trade Unions should be more frankly recognised than ... at present."(72) Bell's decision to bear the costs of the men's side had accumulated an enormous load of expenses,(73)without either concessions or recognition to show for it. Williams also wished to introduce a clause on interpretations.(74) At the A.G.M. of 1910 J. Cuthbertson carried a resolution demanding that when the scheme came up for renewal they should insist on "a more frequent revision" of agreements, because, as at present constituted, the Boards were "preventing them taking advantage of the changes in methods that (sc. were) continuously being introduced by the railway Companies.(75) If questions on the recognition of the union, and the interpretation and duration of agreements could be satisfactorily solved, most union leaders were willing to maintain some sort of a Conciliation Scheme. Only one syndicalist, C. Watkins, repudiated the idea

altogether, as Conciliation schemes implied an acceptance of the Capitalist system.(76)

In the summer of 1910, mass meetings on the G.N.R. and the N.B.R. in protest against delays in interpretations, and on the G.E.R. in protest against contracting out, made the situation look really ugly for a while.(77) As these followed hard on the heel of the strike at Newcastle in July,(78)the Union Executive, which had already decided to tabulate a list of grievances about the scheme for submission to the Board of Trade,(79)passed a resolution in September, declaring,

> "we take this opportunity to explain to the public that unless the spirit as well as the letter of the aforementioned agreement is observed more fully in the future than it has been in the past, this committee will have to seriously consider the ... repudiating the scheme agreed to in 1907."(80)

At the A.G.M. of 1910 Williams urged the men "not to be in too great a hurry to get rid of the Conciliation idea" but to organise the union so well that, at the time of the renewal of the scheme in November, 1914, the union could effectively insist on improvements.(81)

To see whether many of the accumulated grievances could be solved, the union officials and a few Executive committee men had an interview with the President and officials of the Board of Trade on 10th November 1910.(82) This first face-to-face talk since Lloyd George forced the A.S.R.S. to accept the Conciliation scheme, served to ventilate some grievances, but did not give the railwaymen the impression that the department was aware of the urgency of the

situation. Sir H.L. Smith appeared to be reluctant to press the important point that the Companies should be obliged to give at least two months' notice of any reduction proposals, so that they could be discussed at the Conciliation Boards. He thought that it might well be an interference with the management of railways, but he would try to get each Company to negotiate future settlements before the expiry of the current ones.(83) Sydney Buxton said that his aim was to get a "moral supplementary agreement in regard to the various points still open", without reopening the whole question formally.(84)

It was made quite clear to Sir H.L. Smith that the railwaymen thought that the Board of Trade had not acted "quite so strongly with the Companies' sides of the Boards as with the men's sides.."(85) and again and again the department's intervention in the N.E. dispute of 1908 was brought up.(86) But the last words of Sir H.L. Smith, in answer to a general inquiry by Edwards as to whether the defects would be eliminated at the time of renewing the scheme, was,

> "We shall render you all the assistance that we can, but we cannot govern the Companies."(87)

The lasting impression on the A.S.R.S. Executive was that the Board was far too complacent. This scepticism was reflected in an editorial in the Railway Review, whose tone contrasted with earlier articles. It said that while the A.S.R.S. was still prepared to test the sincerity of the department and the Companies, the union would consider "repudiating the scheme" and "using ... own discretion in remedying future grievances" if they found that the two other sides were "simply time killing ... for their own interests."(88)

III

In the summer of 1911 the A.S.R.S. leadership had no plans for a campaign - let alone a strike - to remedy the longstanding grievances over the work of the Conciliation Boards. The willingness of the Midland railway to have the same man - an A.S.R.S. member - as Secretary to all the Sectional and Central Boards was a welcome development, making co-ordinated action possible.(89) J.H. Thomas formed good relations with Glover - the chief labour officer of the G.W.R. - and from the end of 1910 all questions of interpreting the arbitration award were settled by these two men.(90) Williams planned in detail how to promote the candidature of A.S.R.S. members for the next round of elections to the Conciliation Boards.(91) These occurred early in 1911, and on this occasion the Companies did not campaign for non-unionists.(92)

Why, then, did the railway strike of 1911 occur in August? To understand this, a close scrutiny is necessary of the unofficial stoppages that preceded it, and the actual course of the strike.

Signs of a desire to kick over the traces and come out on strike were most strong in two grades only - the Goods staff (porters, loaders, etc.) and the Draymen. Of the Draymen G.R. Askwith wrote, "a very difficult set of men, who were very angry and who, at that period could not obtain anything."(93)

Appendix A shows that these grades had obtained little pecuniary advantage from the arbitration awards and Conciliation settlements, although they were bound by these to wait till 1913 or longer. Without a wage increase, these men staked a great deal on the hope of

getting overtime at a daily rate, and the Guaranteed week's pay. Neither of this was obtained - in Liverpool the Carters of the L. & N.W. did not even have 'time and a quarter' for overtime above the weekly hours of work. The weekly hours were expressed in the Arbitration awards of the Midland, L. & N.W., and the G.W.R. in such an involved phraseology that the average workman could not make out if he worked a 72 hour week or a 54 hour week exclusive of 18 hours meal breaks. The draymen of the L. & N.W. were disappointed to find, after a reference back to the arbitrator, that overtime pay began, only after 72 hours had been worked, although they were entitled to 18 hours unpaid leisure for taking their meals.(94) A similar situation arose in course of 1910 on the G.N.R.(95)

The bulk of the men earned less than 20/- per week. Those who earned between 20/- and 23/- saw their standard of living going down visibly below the poverty line, as prices rose. If 21/8 was the level at which, according to Rowntree's survey of York in 1900, a person with a family could just keep his head above misery,(96)how much worse it was in 1911, with no wage increases and prices 7% higher? Draymen in 1911 were defensive and desperate, and their mood was unlike that of the movement of 1896-98.(97) Since they did not have the guaranteed week's pay, there was little to differentiate these railway employees from carters and dock porters of other private firms. Bonds of sympathy naturally developed between the T.W.F. and these people.

The following table of representation at the A.G.Ms. of the A.S.R.S. shows that when in 1909 and 1910 the A.G.M. had voiced the need to reform the Conciliation Boards, it had done so from the point

of view of middle and upper grades, who could, unlike Goods staff and Draymen, afford to wait.

Table XXII.

Grades of A.G.M. delegates

(Source: A.S.R.S. Decisions of A.G.M.1909,p.2; ibid. 1910. p.2.).

Grades	1909	1910
Drivers	9	8
Firemen	7	4
Guards	18	17
Shunters	2	4
Signalmen	13	12
Permanent-Way	5	4
Draymen	3	3
Goods Staff	1	3
Miscellaneous	2	3

This absence of close contact with the draymen and Goods staff was characteristic of the L. & Y. Central Conciliation Board, whose work, in other respects, had been free from interference by the Company.(98) Yet beneath the placid surface the discontent of these grades was noted by George Loraine - now an Organising Secretary - while he was recruiting members in Lancashire, as early as February 1910.(99) With the appointment of A.J. Williams as a local organiser for Liverpool in the spring of 1910 more members of these grades joined.(100) A year later, at a time when the seamen and dockers of Liverpool were being organised by the T.W.F., the recruiting drive of the A.S.R.S. was increasingly successful.(101)

But these recruits wanted results - tangible gains like an advance of 2/-, the guaranteed week's pay, overtime at a daily rate. During June and July, 1911, the Chairman and Secretary of the men's

side of the Central Board as well as G.R. Askwith failed to persuade the Company to give straightforward concessions.(102) Afterwards, throughout July, the Liverpool No.3 branch came steadily under the influence of the T.W.F. While dockers and seamen had just obtained concessions at a number of ports, the railway goods staff were "robbed of their hard-earned overtime," their appeals took "three and more months to get an answer, and then not satisfactory."(103) Eventually, on 6th August 1911, the Goods Staff of the L. & Y. at Liverpool came out on strike.(104)

The Goods workers of London became affected after the strike of 30,000 men in the Port of London on the 8th. Even after the London strike had been settled on the 11th,(105)the Carmen at Paddington, Victoria, and Marylebone stayed out, because the Companies had refused to depart from the settlements arrived at under the Conciliation Scheme. On the 14th the London leaders of the T.W.F. took command and control of this strike.(106)

A similar loss of initiative by the A.S.R.S. had already occurred in Liverpool since 6th August. The strike was under the control of the Liverpool Strike Committee, whose Chairman was Tom Mann.(107) When James Williams, J.H. Thomas, and George Lorraine came to Liverpool on 10th August, they found that the whole conduct of the strike was vested in Tom Mann's committee, and they were admitted "for negotiation purposes, and negotiation purposes only."(108) Evidently, they could advise on conditions of service, but had no voice in the duration of the strike or in any other aim Mann might have had.

As the Liverpool strike became protracted, with the L. & Y. trying to get blacklegs from other lines, demands for an all-grades strike on the L. & Y., or at least for a refusal to work with blacklegs, were voiced by a number of grades in Southport, Manchester, and Stockport by the week-end of 12th and 13th.(109) On the 13th T. Lowth, the secretary of the G.R.W.U., was under strong pressure at a mass meeting in Manchester to declare a general strike.(110) On the same day, at a meeting in Liverpool, which ended in riots after the police had intervened, it was evident that Tom Mann was the leading figure, although Williams was present.(111)

Until the week-end of the 12th and 13th the strike had spread mainly among Goods Staff in Bristol, Paddington and Hull, where the electric train drivers had joined in.(112) But by that time the situation was serious enough for Williams and Thomas to decide to summon the Executive Committees, co-ordinate efforts with the other railway Societies - who were also meeting at Liverpool - and make the simple demand for recognition.(113) Thomas booked a hall large enough for holding simultaneous meetings of the railway unions.(115)

But when the Executive Committees met on Tuesday, 15th August, the L. & Y. 'all-grades' strike had already begun on the previous day, with 12,000 men out, against Loraine's advice of waiting until the meeting of the Executive Committee. About 6,400 men of other Companies and agents in that area had also threatened to come out.(116) To regain the initiative the Union Executive had to do something drastic, and at once. Two moderate committee members moved and carried one resolution repeating their recent criticisms of the

Conciliation Boards, and another one demanding that within twenty-four hours the representatives of the Companies should meet representatives of the A.S.R.S. "to negotiate a basis of settlement of the matters in dispute affecting the various grades." Otherwise there would be a national strike.(117)

Afterwards, at 2 p.m. on the same day, the Executive Committees met together, elected Albert Bellamy of the A.S.R.S. as Chairman, and from then on this "Joint Conference" controlled the first national railway strike and its aftermath.(118) Thomas "outlined a probable policy of action." Then the resolution just passed by the A.S.R.S., giving the twenty-four hours' notice, was amended to make it applicable to all unions. When Fox moved it, it was unanimously carried, and afterwards sent to the Government, the Companies, and the Press. The covering letter stressed Recognition as being the only solution of the present unrest. Immediately afterwards, by another unanimous resolution, the Liverpool Strike Committee was thanked for its services, but informed that henceforth the joint conference would conduct all further negotiations.(119) In this way, the meeting on 15th August aimed at killing two birds with one stone - winning recognition nationally, and regaining the initiative on the L. & Y.

Now for a while the initiative within the joint conference passed to the left-wing, who were prepared to fight for recognition and also for support to the other strikers at Liverpool. On Wednesday morning, 16th August, Thomas informed them that the four General Secretaries were on their way to London, in response to an invitation from Sydney Buxton. Edwards and Henderson persuaded the

rest to wire to them not to come to any settlement without the consent of "this joint meeting composed of actual railway workingmen, elected by the rank-and-file"; this was necessary "in view of... our experience of governmental intervention in the past."(120) But they were not really sure how widespread would be the response for a strike call. While they alerted branches by a telegram saying, "Be prepared for Signal", they passed a secret resolution extending the time for the expiry of the strike notice to midnight on Thursday, i.e. thirty-six hours after it was due to expire! Possibly some of them had hopes of a settlement in the meantime. Afterwards Tom Mann talked to them about the need not to settle the railway strike without considering other men locked out at Liverpool for their support to the railwaymen.(121)

In London meanwhile the Government had seen the General Managers before the union officials. The Companies had been promised official protection in the event of a strike so that they could "give an effective though restricted service." While the union officials were actually in Whitehall, Sir Guy Granet released this to the press. Publicising this assurance at that juncture appears to have annoyed Buxton.(122) The union officials had explained the defects of the Conciliation scheme to the Board of Trade, but felt obliged to wire to Liverpool asking the Joint Conference to come and take decisions. Arriving at Euston early in the morning of Thursday, 17th August, the members of the Joint Conference saw Williams, decided not to settle the dispute until the lock-out at Liverpool was settled, and wired this message to Tom Mann.(123)

The dramatic interview between the Joint Conference and H.H. Asquith, the Prime Minister, has often been quoted from G.R. Askwith's account of it.(124) The union's records bring out that while they expected negotiations to take place - after putting forward their maximum demand for recognition - the firmness of the Government provoked them to strike, especially as Sir Guy Granet's statement had already aroused the suspicion of many members about the impartiality of the Government.

After Bellamy had told Buxton that peace was possible if the Companies met the union's representatives,(125)the Prime Minister walked in, and read out a written statement. He promised a Royal Commission to inquire into the Conciliation Scheme, and to "report what amendments, if any, (sc. were) desirable." His lack of awareness of the urgency of the men's grievances annoyed the men, and when he ended with a verbal threat that the government would "take steps" to keep the traffic moving the men felt that the Government was on the side of the Companies.

This feeling was strengthened by Asquith's reply to further questions. He was asked,

> "whether he has done, is doing, or intends doing anything to bring the representatives of the railway Companies and employees together today."

He replied, "The answer is in the negative. The step immediately contemplated by the Government is the appointment of the Royal Commission (sc. which will suggest) the amendments (if any) which are desirable." When Buxton replied in the affirmative to a further

question whether everyone else in the Cabinet were of the same opinion as the Prime Minister, the die was cast.(126) Telegrams calling on the men to strike at once went out at three o'clock. By Saturday morning it was evident that for twenty-four hours a vast quadrilateral bounded by Hull, Newcastle, Liverpool, and Nottingham had been paralysed.(127)

The preceding account shows that rank-and-file pressure, as expressed by the strike on the L. & Y., and the determined militancy of the Edwards-Henderson group on the A.S.R.S. Executive, had led the union officials to a position whence they could not retreat. By being un-co-operative, the Government forced them to use the weapon they had been keeping only as a strategic reserve. T. Lowth, Secretary of the G.R.W.U., probably spoke not only for himself but for other officials when he told a closed session of the A.G.M. of the A.S.R.S. next year,

> "Well, now, I suppose nobody, not even those who were negotiating, carefully weighed the responsibilities we were taking upon our shoulders when we acted as we did .... we had no alternative. There were 14,000 men who must be got back, and that forced us into the position that we had to appeal to the country.(128)

At the same time it is important to note that before the telegram was actually sent, an all-grades strike outside the L. & Y. had occurred only in Bradford, although goods staff and draymen had come out at a number of other centres.(129) There was no widespread revolt against the union's authority.

Everyone in the "joint conference" was bent on securing at least the immediate convening of all Conciliation Boards to settle accumulated grievances, and a meeting with the representatives of the railway Companies as a symbol that something had been gained from the discussions in Whitehall. On these two points negotiations dragged on till Saturday, although these had been started on Thursday evening, with the leaders of the Parliamentary Labour Party - Ramsay Macdonald and Arthur Henderson - acting as go-betweens.

The union leaders had seen Macdonald after the declaration of the strike, after which, in the House of Commons, the latter suggested a resumption of negotiations with the mediation of the Board of Trade.(130) Lloyd George, who had been annoyed both at Sir Guy Granet's press statement,(131)and at Asquith's handling of the situation,(132)stressed that the Royal Commission would start inquiry at once, and the Government would, if necessary, take additional powers to implement its recommendations.(133) Late at night the 'joint Conference' decided to resume negotiations, without calling the strike off.(134) On Friday, while Winston Churchill was sending troops all over the country,(135)the negotiations were inconclusive, because the only terms additional to what Lloyd George had already said were the reinstatement of everybody, and an attempt to settle the lock-out at Liverpool. The men wanted a meeting with representative railway officials "to settle the matters now in dispute."(136)

Lord Askwith says that the danger of foreign war was used as a bargaining counter.(137) This might have been mentioned to the

unions on Friday evening - their records refer to the "serious nature of the communication ... " and a personal invitation from Lloyd George to see him.(138) But the 'joint conference' postponed seeing him till midday on Saturday. By that time Thomas had privately told the minister to mention the danger of war to the Companies as well.(139) He strengthened his hand by persuading the joint conference to submit formally to Lloyd George the argument that unless a meeting with the Companies' representatives took place, the rank-and-file would not go back.(140)

As both Lord Askwith and Arthur Henderson have recorded, the war-scare was effective in bringing the spokesmen of the Companies to meet the union leaders.(141) Sir Guy Granet and G.H. Claughton met a sub-committee of the 'joint conference', composed only of Albert Bellamy and the union officials. Additional concessions which were secured consisted of promises to summon all Conciliation Boards within ten days, to meet deputations of railwaymen who were outside the Conciliation Scheme, and to extend the promise of reinstatement to casuals. The insistence of Cramp and Henderson on "extracting the maximum of our demands"(142)must have been for full recognition of the unions, as on Saturday evening Lloyd George complained that the men were "sticking out for Recognition before the strike ended."(143) When Granet and Claughton promised to accept the findings of the Commission "even though they be adverse to the contention of the Company on any question of representation", the moderate union leaders compromised. The joint conference authorised the Secretaries to sign the settlement - probably not unanimously.(144)

Four days afterwards Tom Mann came and complained that the settlement on Saturday had been reached without consulting him, although the tramwaymen at Liverpool were still locked out. The joint conference assured Mann that Williams was correct in having told him already that, fifteen minutes before signing, he had received a telegram at the Board of Trade, saying that the lock-out at Liverpool had ended with the reinstatement of everyone.(145) While Williams was thus absolved from blame, the authorship of this obviously untruthful telegram is not known. From subsequent references we learn that Ramsay Macdonald was asked about this, but there is no trace of what he actually said in the two letters he sent in reply.(146)

By Wednesday, 23rd August, the influence of Edwards and Henderson had ebbed so much that their proposal to continue in session until the Liverpool dispute was settled won only nine votes. Assurances of effective settlement from G.R. Askwith and his appeal for non-interference were favourably received.(147) In this way, out of the national railway strike, the immediate victors were J.H. Thomas and the other union officials, who succeeded in regaining the initiative, curbing the Edwards-Henderson group, making the government retreat, and securing a review of the Conciliation Scheme three years be-fore it was due.

Before the Commission the A.S.R.S. representatives insisted on one board for each railway with a national board representative of all railway Companies and men's unions, to which unsettled problems could be referred. Williams was convinced of winning "complete

recognition", but was sorry to see that the A.S.L.E.F. and the U.P.S.S. had advocated the abolition of the Central Board and the retention of the sectional boards only.(148)

IV

The main value of the Royal Commission's report to the trade unions lay in its detailed codification, in Annexe No.1, of a procedure to avoid the pin-pricks and vexations of the previous four years.(149) The "usual course" of receiving deputations for hearing grievances was maintained, but if these could not meet and settle within four weeks, the matter had to be referred to the Conciliation Boards. The Companies had to give at least four weeks' notice of any proposal to alter conditions for the worse, to the secretary of the men's side, who, however, had to organise protest petitions. Recognition of trade union officials was accorded only indirectly, in the following way. The men's side of each board could choose its secretary by a majority vote "from any source they please" (clause 29), and he could "take part in discussion and act as advocate if desired" (clause 27). The abolition of the Central Board strengthened the position of the A.S.L.E.F., whose officials could easily capture the secretaryship of a number of sectional boards.

From a panel of members not connected with the railways, each Conciliation board had to elect a Chairman, whose main function was to mediate in the event of a deadlock, and, if necessary, act as umpire. Interpretations of agreements had to be considered by the secretaries of the two sides, with provisions for reference to the

conciliation board and eventually to the chairman, with the least possible delay.

The unions considered the report in a 'joint conference' in the first week of November. The G.R.W.U. was optimistic about the prospects of another strike over full-scale recognition and a national programme,(150)and so were the left-wing members of the A.S.R.S., who were also thinking of an alliance with the miners.(151) But the A.S.L.E.F. was now far less reliable than before in supporting the other unions. At the beginning of the meeting, Fox said that, unlike the other unions, he had not consulted his members about whether to reject the Royal commission's report.(152) Later two A.S.L.E.F. representatives obtained thirteen votes for a resolution which was favourable to acceptance of the report, as "the sectional boards" now had "the power to have their union officially recognised."(153) (Thirteen was the exact number of A.S.L.E.F. representatives present!).

In any case they were all sufficiently united in favour of the reasonable demand that another meeting should be held with the representatives of the Companies to clear up knotty points of the report - if only to avoid a recurrence of the innumerable disputes over interpreting the Scheme of 1907. A letter to Asquith threatened a strike unless such a meeting took place, adding, however, that the scheme provided "a basis of agreement" and needed only some modifications.(154) While the Government was busy trying to get the representatives of the Companies to agree to this, the deliberations of the joint conference revealed differences over the re-introduction of

the central board, and even over a decision to issue a press statement denying internal differences!(155) Asquith's reply, saying that the Companies were prepared only to accept the report as it stood, annoyed the men. But their discussions on whether and how to fight for recognition, and how to organise a strike ballot revealed further differences - six resolutions and amendments being discussed on each question.(156) In the end, while the public was simply told that a strike ballot was in progress, the A.S.L.E.F. won its point of leaving to each society the best way of organising the ballot. Williams was *merely* to print the ballot papers.

These signs of disunity help to explain the reluctance of the A.S.R.S. leadership to force the issue of recognition by another strike. But they won their desired meeting with the Companies' representatives after the House of Commons on 22nd November passed a resolution asking the Board of Trade to bring the two sides together.(157) The letter of the Board of Trade to the Companies and the unions emphasised that the meeting was arranged "on the understanding that the findings of the Royal Commission (sc.were) accepted in principle and in substance."(158) When the joint conference met again on 1st December, Edwards and Cramp would have liked to haggle over this phraseology, but two A.S.L.E.F. representatives carried the acceptance of the invitation by 32 votes to 14.(159)

At this meeting, while full recognition was not achieved, doubtful points were cleared up. On the vexed question of reductions proposed by the Companies, the amended procedure dispensed with the need to organise protest petitions; they had all to be notified and

discussed. Conciliation Boards which had been elected before the strike could start negotiations by the following May.(160) In spite of Lord Askwith's statement in his memoirs, the union's records show that the right of the union official to be present at the deputation stage was not granted.(161) With those amendments the scheme was adopted by 28 votes to 5,(162)and the joint conference decided not to disclose the result of the strike ballot.

The syndicalists, who had become active in course of the strike and had been criticising the Settlement of August and the report of the Royal Commission through their organ the Syndicalist Railwaymen,(163)also denounced this December settlement as a betrayal. Organised groups of hecklers spent the first few weeks of next year disturbing meetings at which the union officials spoke, and passed identical resolutions demanding the resignation of the officials and of the Executive Committee.(164) Inspired perhaps by the plans of the Miners' Federation for a national strike ballot in December 1911,(165)and the influence of syndicalism among the South Wales miners,(166)the Swansea branch led 101 other branches to demand a special general meeting to discuss the recent events and the action of the officials. But until the projected merger with all railway unions was completed (see below), even left-wing Industrial unionists like Cramp, Edwards, and Henderson were not prepared to encourage the extreme demands of the syndicalists. By a substantial majority, the Executive Committee in March 1912 rejected the idea of a special general meeting as it would "tend to destroy the solidarity of our people..."(167) To pleas for active support in the Miners' strike,

the Executive decided on noninterference, as requested by the leaders of the M.F.G.B., it gave only a guarded support to the idea of not transporting "black" coal, if it was proved to be intended as an alternative to coal mined by those on strike.(168)

At the A.G.M. of 1912, Watkins secured 19 votes against 37 for a resolution couched in Syndicalist jargon which attacked the whole principle of Conciliation, and called for "a closer unity of all workers, in order that the class struggle may be waged more scientifically."(169) The large minority was indicative more of a sense of disappointment at not winning recognition than of a conversion to syndicalist principles. Another resolution demanding workers' control and ownership was passed by the large majority of 40 votes to 8,(170) but the debate preceding it was rather vague, and its supporters included left-wing socialists like G.W. Brown who also believed in political action.(171) The acceptance of this resolution but the rejection of the other indicated, as Dr. Pribicevic has shown, that Watkins succeeded in committing the A.S.R.S. to a revolutionary doctrine, but not to a revolutionary policy.(172) Four months later when the rules of the proposed National Union of Railwaymen were discussed, the anarcho-syndicalist approach of Watkins got another rebuff, in the rejection of his proposal to place industrial movements under the guidance of a series of vigilance committees with an authority parallel to the Executive.(173)

The influence of those who were opposed to the sympathetic strike prevailed until the formation of the N.U.R. In 1912 the Executive Committee sternly rebuked branches which had joined local

bodies of the T.W.F.(174) When the latter body called a strike in London in June and July, appeals for sympathetic action(175)were rejected by Williams, who pointed out that, in the first place, it was called without consulting other unions, and, in the second place, a systematic application of the doctrine in railway transport would create chaos.(176) The Executive Committee emphatically supported Williams, and ignored the appeals for affiliation to the T.W.F., reminding branches that it had already been before two Annual General Meetings.(177) In the summer of 1912, all the conciliation boards were meeting and effecting settlements, which took the edge off the discontent of the previous year.(178) Not surprisingly, no unofficial sympathetic strike took place when the dockers were out. At the A.G.M. Watkins felt it prudent not to move a resolution for affiliation to the T.W.F., after the rejection of his motion criticising industrial conciliation.(179)

V

The immediate effect of the national strike lay not in making the A.S.R.S. accept revolutionary doctrines, but in increasing its strength substantially, and facilitating its merger with the G.R.W.U. and the U.P.S.S.

The comparative survey of the incidence of trade unionism in 1910, 1911, and 1912, made in Appendix B shows that the success of the strike in effecting a revision of the Conciliation Scheme strengthened the union in the well-organised areas of the north of England and South Wales. Lancashire was no longer a stagnant back-

water as it had been since Taff Vale. Membership rose to more than 50% on the N.E.R. By the end of 1912 the acceptance of the new Conciliation Scheme by the Companies, and the visible power of the unions, helped to increase the proportion of trade unionists in the West Country. Our inability to exclude labourers from the Scottish census prevents us making an estimate of the incidence of trade unionism there, but the increase of nearly 4,000 members between 1910 and 1912 was a big step forward indeed. A great many Signalmen in Scotland were organised by the U.P.S.S.(180) These were brought over to the A.S.R.S. with the fusion of the three unions.

The doctrine of Industrial Unionism was not a parent of this fusion but a midwife. The efforts at amalgamation initiated by Bell in 1906 had, as we have seen, remained at a deadlock in 1909-10. The experience of joint activity in August 1911, however, had almost an traumatic effect on many leaders of the U.P.S.S. One of them remarked that as he returned to work in Manchester after the strike, he looked around and felt that sectionalism on the old basis was no longer possible.(181) Only the A.S.L.E.F. remained unconverted.

While differences had arisen over the attitude to adopt to the Royal Commission's report in November and December 1911, two left-wing A.S.R.S. members - Law and Hooton - had been successful, on 7th November, in persuading almost all members of the 'joint conference' to form a sub-committee to discuss "fusion of forces of a permanent character."(182) But at a further meeting from 28th to 30th December,(183)the A.S.L.E.F. would not agree to Williams's proposal for amalgamation on the departmental principle. A verbatim record

of this meeting was apparently taken, and even printed to the stage of galley proofs,(184)but it has not survived. But the printed minutes indicate that Fox had a plan for a Federation for industrial movements only, before whose formation all Locomen were to secede from the A.S.R.S. and the G.R.W.U.!(185) After some discussion he appears to have withdrawn this. But being unwilling to discuss amalgamation, even on the departmental principle, the A.S.L.E.F. delegation withdrew, when they found that a majority was in favour of using Williams's proposal as a basis for discussion.(186)

Williams's scheme had provisions for safeguarding the interests of different grades in its clauses establishing four electoral departments - Locomotive, Traffic, Permanent Way, and Goods and Cartage - and in having a twenty four member Executive Committee, with six representatives from each department. While departmental sub-committees of the Executive could conduct business incidental to movements, any movement for a grade or department required the sanction of the full Executive Committee.(187) Possibly this subjection of Locomen's interests to other grades made Fox refuse to attend an adjourned meeting in the middle of January, 1912, saying that his union could only discuss federation.(188)

Being unwilling to let the mood of co-operation that had developed among the rank-and-file in the three other unions be frittered away, the adjourned meeting accepted Williams's scheme, while keeping the door open for the A.S.L.E.F. by saying that other railway unions could join the National Union of Railwaymen at a later date. The A.S.R.S. willingly agreed to the proposal of the G.R.W.U.

that people for whom skilled trade unions existed should not be excluded.(189) In 1909 the G.R.W.U. had to consent to their exclusion because of the aversion of the A.S.R.S. to 'poaching' craftsmen.(190) On this occasion the ease with which the A.S.R.S. conceded this point was possibly due as much to a reluctance not to give any excuse for the A.S.L.E.F. to stay out, as a conversion to industrial unionist doctrine.

This important victory of the G.R.W.U. was clinched dramatically a year later at the special General meetings held simultaneously to pass the final version of the rules of the N.U.R. Being anxious not to annoy Craftsmen J.H. Thomas had remarked in his speeches that the rules did not really mean that skilled Craftsmen like Carpenters, Plumbers, etc., would be enrolled, and had stressed this in an interview with the Daily Citizen.(191) This made the G.R.W.U. send an ultimatum asking the A.S.R.S. to disavow Thomas and to state unequivocally how it interpreted the rules on eligibility; otherwise the general meeting of the G.R.W.U. stood adjourned.(192) The delegates were so anxious not to have any last minute hitch that, in spite of the misgivings of some, they passed by 45 votes to 11 a resolution moved by Watkins, saying,

> "that all workers employed on or in connexion with any railway shall be eligible."(193)

Such a public affirmation of 'employmental unionism' - occasioned by Thomas's indiscretion - strengthened the radical element, and showed that in many ways the new union was going to be different from the old.

The lapse of one year between the meeting of January 1912, which had accepted the merger proposal, and these Special General Meetings, was due to the difficulty of the A.S.R.S. in getting the two-thirds majority required by law. The date of returning the ballot papers had to be extended from 15th April to 31st May, 1912.(194) Even then, the scrutineers, meeting in the first week of June obtained the required majority by counting papers received on 1st June, 3rd June, and sent by mistake with other papers concerning elections for the A.G.M.! The Executive Committee declared all of them to be valid.(195)

With this rather dubious vote, major difficulties were removed. Administrative details were completed by the new year. On midnight, 28th March, 1913, the A.S.R.S. completed a life of 41 years, and a new trade union was born.

Appendix A.

Conditions of Goods Staff & Draymen.

Table I.

	Midland, Midland (1)	L. & N.W., & G.C.R. L. & N.W. (2)	G.C.R. (3)
Wages	18/-...21/- Porters 20/-...23/- Draymen	-	-
Daily rate of overtime	Vanmen only	Weekly	Weekly
Hours per week	72 less 18 for meals	72 less 18 for meals	60
Guaranteed week	No	No	No, but Guaranteed day

Table II.

	L. & Y., G.W.R. & G.N.R. L. & Y. (4)	G.W.R. (5)	G.N.R. (6)
Wages	18/-...24/6	-	1/- advance to a few
Daily rate of overtime	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly
Hours per week	varied	72	60
Guaranteed week	No, but Guaranteed day.	No	-

Notes to Appendix A.

(1) No wage increases were granted in 1909. The Wages as given are those obtaining in 1898. (Midland Railway, Traffic Committee Minutes, No.25, par.39393); Board of Trade, Railway Conciliation Scheme. Statements regarding ... Wages and Hours of Labour of Railway Employees ... under the Scheme for Conciliation and Arbitration ... (Cd. 5332 of 1910). p.46f.

(2) Cd. 5332 of 1910. p.32.

(3) ibid. p.16.

(4) ibid. p.29f.

(5) ibid. p.24.

(6) ibid. p.20.

Appendix B.

Incidence of Trade Unionism in England & Wales, 1910 - 1912. (including Draymen)

(Sources: Report and Finsancial Statements of the A.S.R.S.; Handbook of Stations and Depots; Census of England & Wales,1911 (cd.7929 of 1915); ibid. (cd. 7018 of 1914) p.630f.).

Region	Total Eligible	Member-ship 1910	%	Member-ship 1912	%
Northern(1) Northumb: Cumberlnd: Westmorlnd:	10,058	3,595	35.7	5,849	58.2
Northern(2) Durham	11,826	5,186	43.9	8,312	70.3
Yorkshire	41,812	12,284	29.4	20,197	48.3
Lancashire	40,515	7,566	18.7	14,229	35.1
Cheshire	10,734	1,992	18.6	3,760	35.0
North & West Midlands.					
(1) Derby) Notts.) Leics.)	20,964	5,835	27.8	8,439	40.3
(2) Warwick) Worcs.)	13,593	2,634	19.4	5,275	38.8
(3) Staffs.)	10,534	1,878	17.8	3,744	35.5

Appendix B. (Cont'd)

Region	Total Eligible	Member-ship 1910	%	Member-ship 1912	%
(4)Salop) Hereford) Glos.)	10,111	1,590	15.7	3,478	34.4
(5)Lincolns) Rutland)	6,574	872	13.3	1,946	29.6
Sth.Midland & Eastern					
(1)Northants, Oxon,Bucks, Beds,Hants, Cambs.	15,434	1,887	12.2	3,335	21.6
(2)Norfolk) Suffolk)	5,221	486	9.3	759	14.5
(3)Essex	10,497	711	6.8	1,595	15.2
London area London Middx. Herts.	44,930	8,168	18.2	14,495	32.3
South-Eastern					
(1)Kent,Surrey	10,998	1,812	16.5	3,412	31.0
(2)Sussex) Berks.) Hants.)	10,834	1,063	9.8	1,935	17.9
South-Western Wilts,Dorset Devon,Soms: Cornwall.	13,733	1,537	11.2	3,614	26.3
Sth.Wales & Mon.	20,729	7,339	35.4	13,099	63.2
Nth.Wales	4,765	464	9.7	1,495	31.4

NOTES

(1) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1910, p.107.

(2) Biography of James Williams based on private information from his son Mr.A.J.Williams; R.R. 11 Nov.1898; Alcock, op.cit. p.404f; for his views on railway nationalization see A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1912,p.27. For his Liberal-Labourism see above pp.

(3) His name appeared among those nominated for the post at first (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, 1910, p.112).

(4) Alcock, op.cit. p.415.

(5) Many branches began to protest about this at this time. See A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1909. p.128; A.S.R.S. Agenda ... A.G.M. 1910, p.18; At the A.G.M. of 1909 21 delegates were returned on a minority vote, 34 on a majority vote, and 5 unopposed. (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1909, p.109-11). In 1910 the position was Minority Vote 25, Majority Vote 25, and unopposed 8. (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1910).

(6) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1910, p.213f; ibid. June 1910, pp.127-29.

(7) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1910, p.104f.

(8) R.R. 23 Sep.1910, p.9f. With the exception of the Marxist Ernest Edwards, everybody on the Executive Committee had wanted to invite Webb to perform the opening ceremony. (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1910, p.106).

(9) R.R. 21 Oct.1910, p.7; Beatrice Webb, Our Partnership. (London 1948), p.463; [illegible]

(10) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June, 1910, p.106.

(11) A.S.R.S. & G.R.W.U., Re Amalgamation. Report of Conference held at the head offices of the A.S.R.S. ... Dec.12th and 13th 1909. (hereafter Re Amalgamation, 1909).

(12) ibid. p.7.

(13) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1908, p.78, where this policy was reaffirmed.

(14) Re Amalgamation, 1909, p.21.

(15) ibid. p.16.

(16) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1910, p.19.

(17) R.R. 14 Oct.1910, p.4.

(18) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1910, p.16.

(19) R.R. 4 Nov.1910, p.1.

(20) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1911, p.115.

(21) ibid. p.13. Cramp was very disappointed at this. For the number of branches see Report and Financial Statement ...1910 The T.U.C. in September 1910 had been persuaded to issue this questionnaire on the motion of Tom Ring, a syndicalist from Sheffield. (Roberts, Trades Union Congress, p.243).

(22) Roberts, op.cit. p.238.

(23) Layton had opposed disaffiliation from the Ruskin College (R.R. 15 Oct.1909, p.4f), but had been sharply critical of Bell's refusal to join the L.R.C. (A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M. ... 1909, pp.48-50.)

(24) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1910, p.89.

(25) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Nov.1910, p.5; also see ibid. June 1910, p.19, where Edwards and Henderson persuaded the Executive by a majority vote to support a federation of Transport Workers.

(26) R.R. 25 Mar.1910, p.1; this was how Wardle described it in course of a series of articles on the 'Future of the A.S.R.S.'.

(27) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1908, pp.66-70, for correspondence between Bell and Askwith.

(28) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1908, p.103.

(29) Railway Conciliation Scheme. R. Com.Rep. p.7. (Parl.Pap.1911, (cd.5922), XXIX). This point, made by the Companies and accepted by the Commission, was justified.

(30) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1909, pp.39-42.

(31) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1910, p.69f.

(32) 'A.S.R.S. and the Board of Trade, 10th Nov.1910' (typescript verbatim report of interview), p.31.

(33) R.R. 1 Apr.1910, p.1.

(34) Like the G.N.R. and the G.E.R., (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1908, pp.90,95f,98f.)

(35) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1908, pp.67,71; all reports on Conciliation Boards in the minutes of the December E.C. show the same problem. The L. & N.W. positively refused to give notice before any reduction proposals. (A.S.R.C. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1908, p.102.)

(36) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1908, pp.70f, 76f; Under the agreement of November 1907, one could appeal to the Master of the Rolls for interpretations of the scheme. The G.W.R. took this objection to that stage and got a well-deserved snub.

(37) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1908, pp.71-78 for full details.

(38) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1908, p.78; ibid. Mar.1909, p.60f.

(39) A.S.R.S. Annual Report,1909, p.42. Giving a resume of his advocacy on behalf of the men, Bell made this point.

(40) The source for all data on this is Board of Trade, Railway Conciliation Scheme. Statement ... as to ... Wages and Hours ... of Railway Employees... (cd.5332 of 1910).

(41) This was said in his presidential address by E.Charles at the A.G.M. of 1910. (A.S.R.S. Agenda and Decisions of the A.G.M... Oct.1910, p.7.)

(42) See above pp. 367ff

(43) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1909, p.75.

(44) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1910, p.90.

(45) Except the nine-hour day for some trainmen.

(46) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1910, p.60; R.R. 22 July 1910,p.9; R.R. 29 July 1910, p.8; also see comments of J.Holmes and George Loraine in ibid. p.14. As an ex-employee of the N.E.R. Loraine remarked that an autocratic mentality among railway officials anachronistically survived and occasioned these outbursts.

(47) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June, 1910, p.92.

(48) ibid. Mar.1911, pp.68-70.

(49) For his biography see R.R. 4 Aug.1911, p.12.

(50) See above p.356

(51) Railway Conciliation Scheme; R.Com.min.of ev. Q.13479. (Parl. Pap. 1912-13, XLV.)

(52) A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 14th May, 1911, p.4.

(53) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June,1911, p.101.

(54) A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 14th May 1911, p.4; for a lucid exposition of Industrial Unionism from this point of view see G.D.H.Cole, as quoted in W.Milne-Bailey, Trade Union Documents, (London 1929), p.124f.

(55) The L. & N.W. award expired in January 1913, and the G.W.R. in June 1913; only the passenger porters of the G.N.R. and the Goods Guards and Shunters of the Midland had settlements of a shorter duration.

(56) W.H. Beveridge, Full Employment in a Free Society (London 1944), p.281.

(57) Survey of railway receipts, R.R. 18 Feb.1910, p.8. This of course concealed the basic economic problems of the industry - overcapitalization and fixed rates.

(58) E.H.Phelps Brown and S.Hopkins, 'The Course of Wage Rates in Five Countries,' Oxford Economic Papers, NS, II. (June 1950), p.276.

(59) C.E.R. Sherrington, The Economics of Rail Transport in Great Britain, II (London 1928), p.207.

(60) ibid. p.206ff.

(61) R.R. 21 Jan.1910, p.8.

(62) H.Pelling, America and the British Left (London 1956),p.94ff.

(63) Full details are in 'A.S.R.S. and the Board of Trade, 10th Nov.1910', pp.59-62; should be read in conjunction with A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, 8th - 11th Nov.1910, p.3. Although Paget's name was not mentioned in the verbatim record, but only hinted at and given "off the record", the E.C.Minutes as well as inuendoes by Thomas in the verbatim record make it clear that he is referred to.

(64) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1910, p.57; for the prolonged effort see ibid. June 1910, p.57f.

(65) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1910, pp.68-70.

(66) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1910, p.64; ibid. June 1910,p.58; ibid. Sep.1910, p.57; ibid. Dec.1910, p.71; R.R. 15 Apr.1910, p.9; R.R. 30 Dec.1910, p.8.

(67) R.R. 30 Dec.1910, p.8; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1911,p.64f.

(68) Like the N.B.R. and the North Staffordshire Railway. (A.S.R.S., E.C.Minutes, Sep.1910, p.64; A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1910, p.42f.)

(69) On this see 'A.S.R.S. and the Board of Trade 10th Nov.1910' p.21f, for the initial attitude of the G.W.R.; ibid. 45-7 for the actual grievance; also see A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1910 p.59; in the end the men got their wages back. (A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1910, p.58f.)

(70) 'A.S.R.S. and the Board of Trade, 10th Nov.1907', pp.43-5.

(71) ibid. p.45.

(72) R.R. 25 Mar.1910, p.1.

(73) Railway Conciliation Scheme; R.Com. Appendix II (3) at p.628 gives details. (Parl.Pap. 1912-13, XLV).

(74) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1910, p.46.

(75) R.R. 14 Oct.1910, p.1.

(76) Letter in R.R. 10 June 1910, p.6; he repeated this point at the A.G.M. of 1910.

(77) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1910, p.45; also see R.R. 26 Aug. 1910, p.10. Thomas's speech.

(78) See above p.452

(79) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1910, p.73.

(80) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1910, p.75.

(81) R.R. 14 Oct.1910, p.1.

(82) A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 8th-11th Nov.1910, passim; 'A.S.R.S. and the Board of Trade, 10th Nov.1910', (typescript copy of verbatim record kept at Unity House).

(83) 'A.S.R.S. and the Board of Trade, 10th Nov.1910', p.72.

(84) ibid. p.65.

(85) ibid. p.77.

(86) ibid. pp.10-13.

(87) ibid. p.76.

(88) R.R. 25 Nov.1910, p.8.

(89) R.R. 2 June 1911, p.4.

(90) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1910, p.72; ibid. Mar.1911,p.67.

(91) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Dec.1910, p.66f.

(92) A.S.R.S. Annual Report, 1911, p.37f.

(93) G.R.Askwith, Industrial Problems and Disputes (London 1920) p.153.

(94) For the award and interpretations see A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1909, pp.56-9; ibid. Dec.1909, p.84; ibid. Mar.1910, p.88f.

(95) R.R. 15 Apr.1910, p.9; A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1911, p.64f.

(96) B. S. Rowntree, Poverty, a Study of Town Life (2nd ed. 1902). p 110. For a married couple with three children this was the subsistence wage.

(97) See above. p237

(98) R.R. 12 Aug.1910, p.9. The L. & Y. was listed as one of the good companies where there had been no trouble over interpretation.

(99) R.R. 11 Feb.1910, p.5.

(100) R.R. 29 Apr.1910, p.14. and subsequent reports of A.J.Williams, who was James Williams's son.

(101) R.R. 19 May, 1911, p.14 for A.J. Williams's report describing rapid rise in Liverpool and Birkenhead in May.

(102) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1911, pp.68-71 for a full account.

(103) R.R. 14 July 1911, p.13; also see R.R. 28 July 1911, p.12.

(104) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1911, p.72.

(105) Askwith, Industrial Problems and disputes, p.154f.

(106) Birmingham Gazette, 14 Aug.1911; Globe 15th Aug.1911. All references to provincial papers hereafter are based on volumes of press cuttings at Unity House relating to the strike of 1911. The destruction of the files at the British Museum at Colindale for this year has made these press cuttings the only and invaluable source.

(107) Press cuttings from Liverpool Daily Post and Liverpool Courier for this week.

(108) Manchester Guardian 11th Aug.1911.

(109) A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 15th Aug.1911, p.4; Railway News 12th Aug.1911; Manchester Guardian 11th Aug. 1911;

(110) Manchester Guardian, 14th Aug.1911.

(111) Liverpool Post 14th Aug.1911.

(112) A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 15th Aug.1911, p.4.

(113) ibid. p.5; also see press statements referring to the wide-spread and all-grades character of the discontent, given over the week-end, which suggest that the officials were thinking of some kind of a national struggle. (Western Evening Herald 12th Aug.1911; Yorkshire Post, 14th Aug.1911).

(115) See Thomas's account in his preface to Alcock, op.cit. p.vii.

(116) Liverpool Post, 15th Aug.1911;

(117) A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes,15th Aug.1911, p.5f.

(118) A.S.R.S.,A.S.L.E.F.,G.R.W.U., and U.P.S.S. Report and Decisions of the Joint Conference of the Executive Committees... Liverpool ...August 15th and 16th ... and..London ..17th (sc.to) 24th August, 1911" (hereafter Joint Conference, Aug.1911) p.2. (This thirty-two page pamphlet, printed for circulation among E.C.members, is the principal source for what follows. It is a detailed chronicle of daily events as they occurred, and so I have given further page-references only when an extract is quoted.).

(119) ibid. p.5.

(120) ibid. p.6.

(121) ibid. p.6f. What Mann actually said is not recorded, but in the light of subsequent resolutions, it is evident that this was the topic of discussion.

(122) Daily News, 17 Aug.1911, p.1.

(123) Joint Conference, Aug.1911, p.7f.

(124) Askwith, op.cit. p.163f.

(125) Joint Conference, Aug.1911, p.8.

(126) ibid. p.9.

(127) Lucy Masterman, C.F.G.Masterman. A.Biography (London 1939)p.207.

(128) A.S.R.S. 'Discussion on the Fusion of Forces at the Annual General Meeting ... Dublin, October 10th, 1912.' p.10. (Typescript kept in tin box marked "Verbatim reports, 1911-1916').

(129) Evening Standard, 17 Aug.1911.

(130) Parl.Deb.,1911,XXIX, 2199-2201.

(131) Reply to George Wardle on 16th Aug, ibid. 2045-9.

(132) Masterman, op.cit. p.204 (remark to Rufus Isaacs and C.F.G. Masterman).

(133) Parl.Deb.1911, XXIX, 2202.

(134) Joint Conference, Aug,1911, p.12; Askwith thought that their decision to continue the strike in spite of Lloyd George's statement was uncompromising (op.cit. p.164f.).

(135) Masterman, op.cit. pp.205-7; also see Railway Strike (Employment of Military) Parl. Pap. 1911 (323). XLVII, which reproduces all official correspondence.

(136) Joint Conference, Aug.1911, p.12f.

(137) Askwith, op.cit. p.166.

(138) Joint Conference, Aug.1911, p.14.

(139) See Thomas's account in his preface to Alcock, op.cit.p.viii.

(140) Joint Conference, Aug.1911, p.15.

(141) Askwith, op.cit.; letter from Henderson to his son, quoted in Mary Agnes Hamilton, Arthur Henderson (London 1938)p.87f. (There is an obvious misprint in this edition. The date of the letter is given as 11th August, which is absurd, for the strike occurred on 17th August. It was possibly written on 21st August, as the internal evidence indicates it was written after the 19th.)

(142) Joint Conference, Aug.1911, p.16.

(143) Remark to C.F.G. Masterman, Masterman, op.cit. p.207.

(144) Joint Conference Aug.1911, p.17. (Usually it is stated if a resolution was unanimous or not. On this resolution there is no such statement).

(145) ibid. p.29f.

(146) A.S.R.S.,A.S.L.E.F.,G.R.W.U., & U.P.S.S. Report and Decisions of the Joint Conference of the Executive Committees ... 1st. (sc.to) 6th November 1911 (hereafter Joint Conference, Nov. 1911. p.4. Also see the typescript on which these printed minutes are based. These are kept in tin box marked 118/119 "Strikes", and are enclosed with letters from F.C.Fagg (minute-taker) to J.E.Williams. He typed these out in two lots, on 14th and 15th November, 1911. Hereafter they are referred to as "Fagg's Mss. 14th Nov.1911" or "Fagg's Mss. 15th Nov.1911". The references to Macdonald's reply are in "Fagg's Mss. 14th Nov.1911" pp.1,2,10.

(147) Joint Conference Aug.1911. pp.29-31.

(148) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Sep.1911, p.65f.

(149) Railway Conciliation & Arbitration Scheme of 1907; R.Com. Rep.pp.15-21. (Parl.Pap. 1911 (cd.5922), XXIX, part 1). The following paragraph is a summary.

(150) See Lowth's remark, Fagg's Mss.14th Nov.1911, p.2.

(151) A.S.R.S. Special Minutes, 31st.Oct. & 7th Nov.1911, p.4. (This was supported by Cramp, Henderson, etc.)

(152) Fagg's Mss. 14th Nov.1911, p.1f.

(153) Joint Conference, Nov.1911, p.31.

(154) ibid. p.31f.

(155) ibid. pp.27f,30; also see Fagg's Mss.15th Nov.1911, p.1f.

(156) Joint Conference, Nov.1911, pp.33-35; Fagg's Mss.14th Nov. 1911, pp.4-7.

(157) Parl.Deb. 1911, XXXII, 1209-1527. The debate was initiated on the motion of the Parliamentary Labour Party, but a moderately worded amendment of Lloyd George was carried.

(158) A.S.R.S.,A.S.L.E.F.,G.R.W.U., & U.P.S.S., Report and Decisions of the Joint Conference of the Executive Committees .. 1st, 8th & 11th Dec.1911. (hereafter Joint Conference, Dec. 1911) p.3.

(159) ibid. p.4.

(160) ibid. p.8.

(161) Askwith, op.cit. p.169.

(162) Joint Conference, Dec.1911, p.6.

(163) Syndicalist Railwaymen, Sep.1911, p.1; ibid. Nov.1911,p.2. This was edited by C.Watkins of Clay Cross branch. After four issues between September and December, the paper changed its name to the Syndicalist.

(164) See reports of Swansea and Doncaster, R.R. 5 Jan.1912, p.8f. of Sheffield, R.R. 19 Jan.1912, p.9.

(165) Phelps Brown, Growth of British Industrial Relations, p.324.

(166) In 1912 they published the celebrated pamphlet, The Miners' Next Step. (Webb, History of Trade Unionism, p.657).

(167) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1912, p.96.

(168) ibid. p.4.

(169) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M. ...1912, p.21; A.S.R.S. Agenda ... of the A.G.M. 1912, p.12.

(170) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M. 1912, p.34f.

(171) R.R. 18 Oct.1912, p.

(172) B. Pribicevic, 'Demand for Workers' Control in the Railway, Mining and Engineering Industry, 1910-1922'. (unpublished D. Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1957). p.154.

(173) R.R. 21 Feb.1913, p.4.

(174) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, Mar.1912, p.125.

(175) R.R. 31 May,1912, p.5; R.R. 7 June 1912, pp.1,4.

(176) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1912, p.62f.

(177) ibid. p.63.

(178) The Concessions are given in A.S.R.S. Annual Report,1912, pp.

(179) A.S.R.S. Decisions of the A.G.M...1912, p.2.

(180) Of the total funds of £6870 possessed by the U.P.S.S., £1873 was held by Scottish branches and £2490 by branches in Lancashire and Cheshire. (see U.P.S.S.,"Thirty-second Annual Report and Balance Sheet for the Year 1912. (Manchester 1914) p.6f.

(181) Speech of Fitzgerald, R.R. 21 Feb.1913, p.2.

(182) Joint Conference, Nov.1911, p.38; Fagg's Mss.14th Nov.1911, p.12.

(183) A.S.R.S.,A.S.L.E.F.,G.R.W.U. & U.P.S.S. Report and Recommendations of the Joint Conference of the Sub-committee re. Fusion of Forces, Manchester ...Dec.28th... 30th, 1911," (hereafter Fusion, Dec.1911.)

(184) T.Lowth to A.Fox, 13th Jan.1912, in p.16 of A.S.R.S.,G.R.W.U., U.P.S.S., Report and Decisions of the Joint Conference of the Executive Committees re Sub-committees report on fusion of forces ... London 16th & 17th January, 1912. (hereafter Fusion, Jan.1912); also see correspondence reproduced in ibid. pp.12.15.

(185) Fusion, Dec.1911, p.4.

(186) ibid. p.5.

(187) ibid. p.5f.

(188) Prolonged correspondence showing Fox's reluctance to attend this meeting, and refusal to name alternative dates is in Fusion, Jan.1912, pp.8-14.

(189) ibid. p.3f.

(190) See above, p.

(191) A.S.R.S. 'Special General Meeting'. J.H.Thomas, M.P., Assistant General Secretary, and the Interview with the Daily Citizen, 10th Feb.13th Feb. 1913' (Typescript verbatim report) pp.4,24f.

(192) ibid. p.3.

(193) ibid. p.29; for the debate, pp.30-42; for the vote, p.46.

(194) A.S.R.S. Special E.C.Minutes, 15th,-17th.Apr.1912, p.3f.

(195) A.S.R.S. E.C.Minutes, June 1912, p.8.

Chapter XIV. Conclusion

The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants gave place to the National Union of Railway men. The change in nomenclature was symptomatic of the tremendous change in the character of railway trade unionism in the course of forty years. Forty years previously a band of railwaymen, with divergent aims and aspirations, had gathered within a national society, with the assistance of a middle-class philanthropist. It had soon become apparent that to a great many the Society was no more than a friendly Society. Forty years later a group of experienced trade union leaders, leading a vast army of railwaymen, carefully drew up a constitution with a centralised structure, whose Executive organ had powers to initiate conduct and settle industrial movements, supported by strike action if necessary.(1)

As no detailed narrative of the story of these forty years had hitherto been in existence, a simpliste view of this transition to militancy had been perpetuated in some standard academic works. J.W.F. Rowe, for example, accepted the myth, spread by Webb, that the foundation of the G.R.W.U. in 1889 was the first definite indication of trade unionism,(2)and remarked that the second all-grades movement marked the completion of the evolution of railway trade unionism from the old friendly society type to the modern conception of a militant industrial organization.(3)

This is incorrect, firstly because the distinction between a trade friendly Society and a purely trade Society is in some ways an artificial one. The "old" unions of skilled artisans sub-ordinated their friendly benefits to the needs of finding the wherewithal for

industrial struggles,(4)and the "new" unions of 1889 soon realised the uses of friendly benefits to keep recruits and for maintaining discipline.(5)

Neither militancy nor friendly benefits was a crucial feature distinguishing the "new" unionism from the old. The main differences lay more in the occupations and industries of the people whom the new unions organised. The new unions tried to establish as thorough an organisation as possible among workmen whom the old unions would not recruit because of fears of dilution, industries to which the entry was open, and occupations hitherto untouched by trade unionism. Under the influence of socialist leaders some of these unions supported collectivist ideas.

The growth of the A.S.R.S. on the N.E.R. in the early 'eighties among a number of grades, and the alteration of rules in 1888 after the experience of the Midland strike of the previous year - these were the principal landmarks in the transition to militancy. The open character of the entrance to the railway service never made the union reluctant to organise vertically down the hierarchy within a department. In spite of the formation of the A.S.L.E.F., at a time when sectionalism dominated the trade union world, the hard core of members who remained in the A.S.R.S. developed a vested interest in maintaining inter-grade loyalty. This feeling was strengthened by the failure of the isolated strike of the Locomen on the Midland in 1887, and the quality of the leadership on the N.E.R. from 1883 onward. Practical necessity, rather than socialist theory was the parent of this early tendency towards industrial unionism.

The New Unionist upsurge made the A.S.R.S. realise the possibilities of recruitment among porters and platelayers, for whose sake the dues were lowered. At the same time it marked itself off from the 'general' unions in its reluctance to recruit casual labourers. The industrial aims of the union remained characterized by the desire to provide as much security to all grades of the permanent staff as possible, with demands like a guaranteed day, a guaranteed week, promotion by seniority, and a higher rate of pay for temporary duty in a higher grade.

Before the socialists definitely established their position in the eighteen-nineties, the industrial aims of Foreman and Harford were characterised by the acceptance of capitalism but the desire to use an upswing in the economy to press for aggressive demands. The militancy of Edward Harford's industrial strategy certainly had a ring of the "old unionism" about it, in so far as his wages programme of 1887 was pegged "as high as the state of the labour market (sc. would) justify".(6)

The all-grade character of the union might have similarities with certain aspects of the "new unions", but it was precisely this which, in the conditions of work operating in the railway service, made it reluctant to support another "new unionist" demand, the legal eight-hour day. Being unable to work out a satisfactory wages policy in 1889, the union gave priority to hours and overtime payment. Consequently, not only was its support to the legal eight hours agitation lukewarm, but, during national movements organised for the purpose of winning recognition, the wages question took a secondary place in

the union's programme. As we have seen, this did not always prove to be satisfactory.

II

Yet in areas where the A.S.R.S. gained a foothold, as on the N.E.R., the programmes adopted by delegate conferences increasingly showed a tendency to narrow differentials, by supporting flat rate wage increases for the lower paid grades. Labour relations on the N.E.R. illustrated a central problem of wage negotiations with an all-grade union whose local activists were no longer influenced by the doctrine of supply and demand.

Even a monopolistic and prosperous company like the N.E.R. shared, with other companies, the problems of having a high proportion of fixed costs(7)and the inability to raise rates and charges easily. The consequent reluctance of the company to meet the demands of the men, and the desire of Bell not to press the more radical demands in order to give a good advertisement for union recognition - these explain a great deal of the rank-and-file militancy on that railway in the first decade of this century. Not surprisingly, opinion hardened, even on that railway, in favour of nationalisation, although the N.E. men were far better off than railwaymen elsewhere, thanks to the concessions won in the course of three major settlements.

Other companies continued to maintain an attitude of hostility, although some of them had come to accept the principle of collective bargaining with deputations of those grades whom the A.S.R.S. had

already organised well, like the Goods Guards. This hostility was rooted partly in the authoritarian tradition existing among railway managers, and partly in the situation created by the ill-considered Act of 1894. By an irony of fate, exactly when the membership of the A.S.R.S. had obtained an accession of strength outside the N.E. area, and when the union was getting ready to fight for national programmes for the Signalmen and the Goods Guards, the Companies were crippled by this law.

It needed the threat of a strike in the second all-grades movement and the intervention of the Board of Trade, to make most of the Companies accept collective bargaining. The scheme set up on that occasion was adapted in a direction favourable to the union on the G.W.R. and the Midland by 1911, but it needed an actual railway strike to grant some kind of union recognition.

III

Accounts of the all-grades movements have hitherto obscured the point that they were a favourite and characteristic strategy of Richard Bell - a strategy he had been advocating since 1896.(8) The narrative of the second all-grades movement in a recent work even suggests that a reluctant Richard Bell was pushed into leading this movement!(9) As we have seen, in 1906-7 Richard Bell simply resumed a fight which he had been forced to hold in abeyance since 1901. On this occasion his timing and strategy was guided also by the rivalry with the A.S.L.E.F. - the desire to seek recognition unilaterally. This point has also been obscured in previous accounts of 1906-7.

To threaten a railway strike - especially on a national scale - was to use a formidable weapon, liable to misfire in the hands of the person wielding it. Consequently the union officials had been guided for a long time by the policy of using it only as a strategic weapon, after inter-grade solidarity had been established, for major demands only - a national standard rate or union recognition. As this strategy demanded the retention of public sympathy, rules offering arbitration, before any strike action was contemplated, survived in the rule book of the union throughout its history.

The N.U.R. decided to give the Executive committee an absolutely free hand as regards the tactics of a dispute and deleted the reference to artbitration. The disappointment with the numerous arbitration awards between 1908 and 1910 was doubtless a factor behind this; so, possibly, was the feeling that with an increasing membership the strike weapon would now be more tactically effective.

IV

The N.U.R. carried on the tradition of narrowing differentials, but marked a break with the past in showing a greater willingness, in its early years, to support sympathetic strikes than the A.S.R.S. had ever been inclined to do.

The impact of the 'new unionism' had been most marked in bringing home to the A.S.R.S. the problem of sympathetic action with workmen in other transport trades. Being guided by the need to give priority to the prospects of recognition and the interests of the permanent staff, the union leaders had remained averse to the encouragement of

the exceptionally aggressive militancy associated with sympathetic strikes or a federation of trade unions. As we have seen, there was a strong minority movement in favour of such action, but they exerted effective influence only after 1913.

In 1911 the rank-and-file unrest which had sparked off the national strike had originated in the bonds of sympathy that developed between the goods porters and carters employed by railways and by other private firms. By 1921 all grades of railwaymen had got the guaranteed day and the guaranteed week.(10) Whether this had any effect in weakening the bonds of sympathy at the rank-and-file level, and undermining the Triple Alliance, is a point which the historian of the N.U.R. might well consider.

V

The N.U.R. improved on the A.S.R.S. by embodying in its constitution all the lessons learnt in the course of forty years. Most of the structural alterations made to the A.S.R.S. were the result of a series of empirical adjustments. Looking back, one may well consider that this empiricism often prevented the union from making the most of its opportunities.

A non-recognised union facing an autocratic management needed less emphasis on democracy and more on centralism. But, in the early 'eighties, when membership was just beginning to increase, Harford had realised the need to encourage active members to participate in the government of the Society as much as possible. Later on, on the eve of the national grade movements, Harford had plans for establishing

a balance between central control and the movements desired by the rank-and-file. But hasty decisions and unfortunate accidents made the A.S.R.S. drift from crisis to crisis between 1897 and 1900. Although central control was re-established in 1903, Bell was unable to use it effectively because, while industrial activity was crippled by the Taff Vale judgment, his political views were needlessly rigid.

The N.U.R. kept the democratic forms established by the A.S.R.S., but strengthened a sense of responsibility by adding qualifications for eligibility for Executive committees and annual conferences.(11) It restored the right of the Executive to call a strike without taking a ballot - a policy adopted by the A.S.R.S. in 1888, but partially abandoned, in a fit of panic, in 1898. The most useful innovation was to recognise that the interests of the different grades could differ in some respects, and therefore to introduce the departmental principle.

The prolonged delay in accepting this had killed whatever chances the A.S.R.S. might have had in winning over at least a section of A.S.L.E.F. members. In the period before 1900 the increase in membership among all grades had made the leadership overlook the need for constitutional alterations. After 1900, when, against the background of technical changes, the A.S.L.E.F. and the U.P.S.S. were gaining ground at the expense of the A.S.R.S., the introduction of this principle was urgent.

VI

In spite of not being recognised anywhere except on the N.E.R., the A.S.R.S. survived and continued to grow from 1883 onward, except for a short period of stagnation between 1901 and 1904, and a couple of years of decline in 1908-9.

Railway trade unionism followed the incidence of trade unionism generally. Until the success of the national strike of 1911, outlying areas and agricultural districts were not effectively touched by the spread of unionism. But if the deep sleep of Southern England lay heavily on the railwaymen in these areas,(12)elsewhere, in the mining valleys of South Wales, in the cotton towns of Lancashire, and in the heavily industrialised districts of Northumberland, Durham, and West Riding, social pressure was effective in inducing railwaymen to join a union.

Here the friendly benefits came in useful. People who worked in a dangerous trade valued the orphan fund, the legal assistance given to obtain compensation, and the assurance of being defended when faced with many, possibly unjust, charges of infringing the rules of service. In an industry where the Companies deliberately encouraged inter-grade prejudice, the sense of common participation in a useful task of mutual aid was fostered by the A.S.R.S. branch meeting.

VII

In its work as a pressure group the A.S.R.S. could claim some notable successes. In three of the preceding chapters we have seen how the union tried to extend the control of the Board of Trade over

the railway Companies - a control hitherto exercised mainly in the interests of traders, manufacturers, and the travelling public. Until the eighteen-nineties the campaigns of the union did not produce results commensurate with the effort made, mainly because the Board of Trade officials were not in the habit of consulting the A.S.R.S. Only the goodwill of certain Radical ministers, and a discreet use of electoral pressure, made the union achieve successes before 1889. It needed the Scottish strike and a vigorous electoral campaign to pass the Hours Act of 1893. Afterwards the practice of consultation developed so well that the Accidents Act of 1900 could be passed in spite of the strong opposition of the Companies.

There remained nevertheless limits to the usefulness of this type of consultation. The Board of Trade was very hesitant about intervening in labour disputes, although it was made aware, from 1898 onwards, of the union's belief in compulsory arbitration. It needed Lloyd George's intervention in 1907 to set up a Conciliation Scheme, but, as we have seen, on that occasion the real victors were those Companies which had already moved towards accepting collective bargaining. Opinion hardened against the Board of Trade as the Conciliation Scheme failed to prove satisfactory. In spite of Richard Bell's opposition, complete state ownership came to be considered the only solution which would provide security from the adverse effects of amalgamation, and would make the abjuration of strikes worth while.

One by-product of the increasing interest of the A.S.R.S. in supplementing its pressure group work by direct representation was

the foundation of the Labour Party. Hitherto historians of the origins of the Labour Party have not adequately explained exactly how this alliance of socialists and trade unionists came to be promoted at a time when the former were declining in strength. Dr. A.E.P. Duffy has suggested that the foundation of the L.R.C. was the culmination of a collectivist trend within the trade union movement, which was independent of the Socialist movement.(13) This does not explain why the Socialists were invited in the resolution sponsored by the A.S.R.S. in 1899, and takes no account of the very clear evidence of a tussle between Socialists and Lib-labs inside the A.S.R.S. in the eighteen-nineties.

There was an older tradition of collectivist Liberal-Labourism which had found its political expression earlier in Threlfall's L.E.A., and later in the attitude of Wilkie and Bell. This tradition struggled with the Socialists' vision of an independent party after the L.R.C. was founded. But those who took the initiative in making the A.S.R.S. call for the foundation of the L.R.C. were a band of socialist railwaymen, who effectively used the democratic machinery of the union to make their influence felt. Peacock, Steels, Chappell and their other friends were both Socialists and trade unionists, and so they wished to lay the basis of an alliance between the two wings of the labour movement. This alliance, despite many strains and stresses, has survived ever since.

NOTES

(1) First Rules of the N.U.R. (Rule XIII. Sect.iii)

(2) J.W.F.Rowe, Wages in Practice and Theory (1928) p.139; for the origin of this myth see S.Webb & H.Cox, The Eight Hour Day (1891), p.26f.

(3) Op.cit.

(4) Webb, Industrial Democracy (1920 ed.) p.158

(5) Webb, History of Trade Unionism (1920 ed.). p.420.

(6) See above p.39

(7) Sherrington, Economics of Rail transport, II, p.46ff.

(8) See above pp 198, 255f

(9) Phelps Brown, Growth of British Industrial Relations,(1959), p.300ff. On p.298f.Professor Phelps Brown has correctly indicated some of the underlying causes of unrest on the railways, but he is hardly correct in interpreting the origin and strategy of the all-grades movement.

(10) K.G.J.C. Knowles, Strikes - A Study in Industrial Conflict (Oxford 1952), p.177.

(11) Rule II, of 2; Rule III, of 1. (Three years' membership for the Executive; two years' for the A.G.M.).

(12) Kent is an exception. (see above pp.253,277).

(13) A.E.P. Duffy, 'The Growth of Trade Unionism in England from 1867 to 1906 in its Political aspects'. (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, London 1956). p.985, where the extraordinary statement is made; "it was Liberal labourism, in the person of James Holmes... which was primarily responsible for the resolution at the 1899 T.U.C. .."; also see his very unfair review article on F. Bealey & H. Pelling, Labour and Politics (1958) in New Reasoner No.8 (1959), p.142f.

Note on the way the Census reports have been used to study the incidence of trade unionism in the appendices to Chapters VII, VIII, XI, and XIII

Shopmen, labourers, and supervisory staff have been excluded from all surveys relating to Great Britain. As Irish census returns are more imprecise we have had to include the entire labour force. That does not really affect the study of Ireland, because, as we saw in Chapter VI (Harford's Challenge) railway trade unionism included clerks and stationmasters in Ireland in its heyday, i.e. 1894 to 1897.

Draymen pose a more difficult problem. Only the England & Wales census of 1911, for the first time, made a special count of draymen and allied grades employed by railway companies. Until then, in the usual census classification of railway employees (order VI sub-order i) draymen were not included even among 'other grades'. A comparison of the bases of classification in the censuses of 1901 and 1911, and a study of the special supplementary table in the latter census (Table 66 in p.281 of cd.7929 of 1915); also see ibid, pp.146,249, 286f) brings this out. As a result, while we have been able, for Chapter XIII, to study the incidence of trade unionism between 1910 and 1912 by taking into account this very militant grade, which played a major part in the 'labour unrest', we have not been able to do so for the other appendices in the other chapters.

Does this inability seriously affect our study of regional variations at different periods? As we saw in Chapter VII, after the collapse of the strikes at Leeds and Sheffield trade unionism among this grade became very weak. The growth of membership after 1893 was largely a growth among other grades. So the relevant appendix

to Chapter VIII can throw light on regional variations in 1898, 1900, and 1903, without a wide margin of error. The same point applies with greater force for the appendices to Chapter XI, which are an attempt to compare 1903 and 1909 to see to what extent the formation of the conciliation boards altered the geographical spread of trade unionism. As both of those two years were years when the membership touched a low point - one before and one after the Lloyd George settlement - the number of draymen was possibly very little. Even in July 1898, Draymen were 4,003 in number out of a membership of 62,764 (A.S.R.S. Addendum to the Supplementary Agenda...A.G.M. at Leeds, 1898, p.7). By September 1904 their strength was 2,396 out of a total of 62,168. (Charts appended to A.S.R.S. 'Proceedings and Reports, 1906').

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Introduction ..... Page 508

II. Manuscript Sources ..... Page 512

III. Printed Sources ..... Page 517

I. Introduction

The main problem of writing trade union history is the general absence of manuscript material relating to leading members of the working-class movement. In course of a search for such material, I corresponded with the descendants of Charles Bassett-Vincent, Richard Bell, Albert Bellamy, George Wardle, and James Williams. In every case I was told that no letters or papers have survived, although the eldest son of James Williams, Mr. A.J. Williams of Cardiff, gave me the benefit of his very vivid memory of his father's activities. Middle-class politicians who wereclosely connected with the A.S.R.S. had left few papers either. A hunt for the papers of Bass, Channing, Jenkins, Langley, Macliver, and Samuel Morley proved equally unrewarding.

Consequently I had to depend a great deal on the official records of various institutions - the A.S.R.S., the Board of Trade, the various railway companies, Trades Councils, etc. Any assessment of personalities had to be based on the evidence of the public activity of various trade union leaders, although some of them reveal their personalities very effectively in the verbatim reports of various important and confidential meetings which have been kept for the period after 1897.

So far as the A.S.R.S. is concerned, the institutional history is quite adequately documented from the beginning; towards the end of the period surveyed, there is almost an embarras des riches. The files of the Railway Service Gazette from February 1872 till June 1881, and of the Railway Review from July 1880, provide a valuable source of information, which supplements the minutes of the Executive Committees of the A.S.R.S., the Annual Reports, and other union documents. The Union documents are all kept at Unity House, headquarters of the National Union of Railwaymen.

The union documents exist in an almost complete series from 1872. Until 1879 the Railway Service Gazette printed full reports of discussions at various Executive Committee meetings. From 1876 Executive Committee minutes began also to be printed separately, in limited copies, for private circulation to union officials. While the practice of printing full reports in the weekly journal was discontinued, the practice of printing, for private circulation, a full minute of the quarterly report of the General Secretary and the decisions of the Executive Committee has been maintained since then.

The bulk of the original sources related to my thesis consist, therefore, of a private collection of printed papers. Although they are printed, this does not detract from their value. In the first place, whenever I have been able to check a printed record kept in Unity House, with its original - among the Board of Trade documents, for example - the two have tallied. In the second place, the very fact of communicating all resolutions and amendments, together with the votes of individual committeemembers, to the branch secretaries

enabled the partisans, in any controversial question, to plan their tactics every quarter. When read in the light of each quarterly minute of the Executive Committee, the significance of many branch reports and letters published in the Railway Review, and of items inserted by branches in the agenda of the Annual General meeting become evident. One thus gets a rounded picture of the process in which decisions were arrived at on all controversial questions.

Some of the sources at Unity House exist only in manuscript form. In the following bibliography, they have been mentioned in the section marked manuscript sources.

A word about the Railway Service Gazette and the Railway Review is necessary. Until the late 'eighties speakers at Annual General meetings or Executive Committee meetings were referred to by their branches, lest they were victimised by the Companies if names were mentioned. We can, however, identify almost everyone by a reference to the lists of delegates and committee members kept with each printed E.C. Minutes or Decisions of the A.G.M.

As the smallest piece of supplementary agenda or circular has often given a lot of information, I have specified each separate printed document in the following bibliography, except in the case of publications that appeared periodically at regular intervals. Of the latter the Annual Reports and Reports and Financial Statements have been almost uniform in their titles and manner of publication; they are usually available, after 1889, in repositories other than Unity House. But the Executive Committee minutes have been styled differently at different times. While they have been referred to

as E.C. Minutes in all the notes in the preceding Chapters, in the following bibliography I have indicated the changes in their precise title that occurred at different periods. But Special Executive Committee meetings, Circulars, Agendas, Addendums to Agendas, and various other verbatim reports and publications have been listed separately, in a chronological order.

The location of the printed minutes and papers of the A.S.R.S. pose a problem. Leather-bound volumes marked "A.S.R.S. Proceedings and Reports", 1872, 1873, etc., are kept at Unity House. Normally each of them contains all the printed material for that particular year. Occasionally, a document has strayed into another volume, or into a tin box. Where that has happened, I have indicated in which tin box or "Proc & Rep." it is to be found.

In the following bibliography the manuscript collections are enumerated under the name of each repository: British Library of Political and Economic Science; British Museum; British Transport Commission; Newcastle-on-Tyne central library; Public Record office; Unity House. After that comes a list of unpublished theses which have been consulted.

The printed sources contain seven sections:

(i) Specially devoted to publications of the A.S.R.S. and joint publications of the A.S.R.S. and other unions. Nearly all of these are only available at Unity House.

(ii) Other contemporary pamphlets and tracts.

(iii) State Papers.

(iv) Newspapers and Periodicals.

(v) Biographies and Memoirs.

(vi) Directories and Manuals.

(vii) Secondary authorities (including both books and articles.).

II. Manuscript Sources

BRITISH LIBRARY OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SCIENCE.

Webb. Trade Union Collection. Coll.E.-A.

(Section A of Coll.E. contains MSS. notes taken by the Webbs on trade union history. Of these, the following volumes have been consulted:-

III Birmingham Trades Council

V p.170 et.seq. Arbitration of Dr. Spence Watson, on the N.E.R. in 1889.

XLI Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants.)

BRITISH MUSEUM.

Gladstone Manuscripts. (B.M. Add. Mss.)

BRITISH TRANSPORT COMMISSION.

(All papers relating to the N.E. Railway are held at York. The rest are at Royal Oak, London. The fifty-year rule operates here, too, with all manuscripts).

Barry Railway, Directors' Minutes, (1890 on.).

Brecon & Merthyr Railway, Board Minute Book, V, (1899-1900).

Bute Docks Company, Minute Book, I (1890-91).
(afterwards it became the Cardiff railway).

Cardiff Railway, Minute Book. (1897 on).

Great Central Railway, Board Minutes, (1897 on).
--- Locomotive, Carriage & Wagon Committee Minute Book. (1897 on).
--- Traffic Committee Minute Book.

Great Northern Railway, Board Minute Book. (1896 on).
--- Locomotive Committee Minute Book (1900 on).
--- Traffic Committee Minute Book, (1896 on).

Great Western Railway, Board Minutes (1896 on).
--- Traffic Committee Minutes (1894 on).

Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway,
Proceedings of Directors: Committee (1896 on).
--- Proceedings of Directors: Board (1896 on).

London & North Western Railway,
Minutes of Special Committee.
Board Minutes. (1896 on).

Manchester, Sheffield, & Lincolnshire Railway,
(afterwards Great Central).
Board Minutes (1896-7).

Midland Railway, Board Minutes.
--- Locomotive Department Minutes
--- Traffic Committee Minutes.
(all volumes from 1872 on).

North Eastern Railway, Board Minutes (1880 on).
--- Locomotive Committee Minutes (1880 on).
--- Railwaymen's Strike, 1897. Notes of Meeting between the Strike Committee and the Manager of the N.E.R. (N.E.R.4/89)
--- Staff Records, 1866. (N.E.R.15/6). (contains papers relating to the Eighteen-Seventies and Eighteen-eighties).
--- Staff Records. 1881 (N.E.R.15/7).
--- Staff Records. 1882-83. (N.E.R.15/13).
--- Traffic Committee Minutes. (1880 on).
--- Wages Arbitration and Award of Lord James of Hereford (1897). (referred in the preceding Chapters as N.E.R., Arbitration. 1897.)

Port Talbot Railway & Docks,
Directors' Minute Book, (1899 on).

Railway Companies' Association, Minutes. (1880 on).
(This is a series of privately printed minutes of each meeting, bound in more than one volume).

Rhymney Railway, Directors' Minutes. (1890 on).

Taff Vale Railway, Directors' Minutes (1890 on).
--- Traffic Committee Minutes.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE CENTRAL LIBRARY.

N.E.R. Co. : Arbitration, Dec. 1889.
(Manuscript collection of letters and notes of proceedings.)

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

The files of the Railway Department of the Board of Trade are open to inspection up to 1908, and kept in various boxes in the series M.T.6. The exact location of each file can be found from a

search of the indexes listed in M.T.7. The indexes show how a number of files were gradually annexed to a file of a subsequent year. That ultimate file can be unearthed by a reference to its box number as listed in M.T.6. In the box, amidst a number of bundles, this'ultimate file' would top one containing many files, of different years, dealing with railway labour.

In the following bibliography, for easy reference, I am putting against each box, the number of the file which tops the bundle containing material on railway labour. In the footnotes I have already given, with reference to each file cited, the box where it is to be found. So it has not been thought necessary to list <u>all</u> the files consulted. Instead, all the boxes which have been of use have been listed, with an indication as to which bundle to look for in each box.

M.T.6./808	bundle	headed	13907	of 1897.
" /837	"	"	9052	of 1898.
" /911	"	"	13525	of 1899.
	and	bundle	13437	of 1899.
" /935	bundle	headed	2617	of 1900.
" /966	"	"	11450	of 1900.

UNITY HOUSE.

The following manuscripts are classified in two groups -

(i) Verbatim reports. (ii) Odd collection of letters, minutes, etc.

In each group the arrangement is alphabetical.

(i) Verbatim Reports:-

'A.S.R.S. and the Board of Trade, Thursday, Nov.10th.1910."

"Case of Brothers Charles and Brown. Discussion at the Carlisle A.G.M., 5th Oct. 1911."

"Discussion on Fusion of Forces at the Annual General Meeting... October 10th, 1912".

"J.H. Thomas M.P., Assistant General Secretary and the interview with the Daily Citizen 10th & 13th Feb.1913."

"Railwaymen's Parliamentary Representation Association; Debate at Annual Meeting Oct.4th, 1911."

(With the exception of the first, all the others are in a tin box marked 'Verbatim Reports, 1911-16').

(ii) Odd Collection of letters, minutes, etc.

Executive Committee Minutes, 1881.
(kept in "Proc.& Rep.1881").
--- Feb.1891 to Aug.1895.
(kept in strong room).

First Delegate Meeting, 1872. - manuscript notes
(kept in "Proc.& Rep.1872).

F.C. Fagg to J.E. Williams, November 1911, enclosing minutes of Joint Conference, 1st. to 7th Nov.1911. (kept in tin box marked 118/119 "Strikes".).

F.W. Evans to John Abbott, 1st Oct. 1880.
(kept in "Proc.& Rep.1880").

Parliamentary Representation, Circulars and records of votes on; 1885 and 1886
(kept in "Proc.& Rep.1885").

Unpublished Theses.

Coltham, S.W. 'George Potter and the Bee-Hive Newspaper' (D.Phil. Oxford 1957).

Duffey, A.E.P. 'The Growth of Trade Unionism in England from 1867 to 1906 in its Political Aspects'. (Ph.D. Econ.London 1956).

Halverson, G.C. 'Development of Labour Relations in the British Railways since 1860'. (Ph.D. London 1952).

Kingsford, P.W. 'Railway Labour, 1830-1870'. (Ph.D. London, 1951).

Pribicevic, B. 'Demand for Workers' Control in the Railway, Mining, and Engineering Industries, 1910-22' (D.Phil. Oxford 1957).

III. Printed Sources.

(i) Publications of the A.S.R.S.

(A) Regular periodicals.

(B) Special publications.

(C) Joint publications with other unions.

(A). Regular periodicals.

Rules (kept in Registry of Friendly Societies)

Annual Reports. Styled as

The First Annual Report of the Amal.Socy.of Rly. Servants ... 1872.

None published separately till 1878. From that year it is styled
General Secretary's Report to the Annual General Meeting.
(The volume for 1879 is kept in 'Proc.& Rep. 1878'; the volumes for 1883 and 1890 are missing).

Reports and Financial Statement. (Annual since 1875. The volume for 1875 is kept in an envelope in a tin box marked 117. The volume for 1879 is missing).

Decisions of the Annual General Meeting. (Annual since 1878. Styled, for that year as Resolutions Passed at the first Annual General Meeting; styled, in 1879 as Minutes of the Annual General Meeting. The latter volume is kept in "Proc.& Rep.1878'; the volume for 1890 is kept in "Proc.& Rep.1889', bound in black, not in the other 'Proc.& Rep.1889' which is bound in red. The following years are missing: 1883, 1886, and 1895.

The volume for 1902 includes in pp.17-80, the Taff Vale Case and the Injunction, and the comments of the E.C. representatives on that. The volume for 1909 contains, in pp.33-94, a verbatim report on the debate whether to dismiss Bell.)

Executive Committee Minutes. Styled as
Half-yearly meeting of Executive Council of the Society for 1876-78.
Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee for 1878-80.
Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting for 1882-88.
General Secretary's Report to the Executive Committee. Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting for 1889-1901.
General Secretary's Report to and Decisions of the Executive Committee for 1902-1913.

(B). Special publications. (arranged chronologically: verbatim reports and Circulars are specially indicated).

EDWIN PHILLIPS, Full Report of the First General Delegate Meeting of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, together with a concise history of the Union from its commencement. (London 1872)

A.S.R.S. Programme of the Second Delegate Meeting...Manchester... June 25th, 1873.

--- Delegate Meeting... Manchester ... 1873.

--- No.4. West Central Manchester District. First Annual Financial Report..(Manchester 1874) (Kept in 'Proc &

--- The Railwaymen's Catechism (Sep.1875) (kept in 'Proc.& Rep. 1876'). on January 30th, 1877.

--- Extract from the General Secretary's half-yearly Report... Feb.1877.

--- Delegate Meeting to be held at ... Birmingham... October 1877. Agenda of Proceedings.

--- Great Delegate Meeting...Birmingham...October...1877. A list of Delegates... and also Resolutions passed...

--- Shall a Delegate Meeting be held in 1877? (Circular dated Sep.1876, kept in 'Proc.& Rep.' 1877.)

--- Agenda of Proceedings of the Annual General Meeting... October...1878.

--- Railway Servants. An Appeal to Parliament and the Public. (London 1878).

--- The Financial Position of the Society. Important Consideration for Members. Ordered to be printed and issued by the Annual General Meeting, 1879.

--- Annual General Meeting, 1879 ... Agenda of Proceedings.

--- The Proposed future policy of the Society with draft of rules of a Protection Fund. (1879)

--- Copy of Resolutions passed at the Quarterly Meeting of the Executive Committee...Feb..1880.

--- Minutes of the Executive Committee...Special Meeting held on Dec.31st, 1880... and also... an Ordinary Meeting held on Feb.16th, 1881. (kept in 'Proc.& Rep. 1880')

--- Agenda of Annual General Meeting, 1880, Proposed Amended Rules.

--- Annual General Meeting, 1880. Agenda of Proceedings.

--- Proposed Amendments to Rules to be submitted to the Annual General Meeting (1884).

--- Supplementary Agenda... Annual General Meeting... October 1884.

--- Proposed Amendments to Rules to be submitted to the Annual General Meeting. (1885).

--- Supplementary Agenda to be considered at the Annual General Meeting ... 1885.

--- Minutes of the Special Executive Committee Meeting, Re Midland Strike ... Aug.30th & 31st. 1887.

--- Proposed Amendments to Rules to be submitted to the Annual General Meeting, 1887.

--- Supplementary Agenda to be considered at the Annual General Meeting...1887.

--- Supplementary Agenda to be considered at the Annual General Meeting...1889.

--- Conference of the Delegates of the Irish branches... Dublin...April 15th, 1890.

--- Proposed Amendments to Rules to be submitted to the Annual General Meeting. (1890).

--- Supplementary Agenda to be considered at the Annual General Meeting... 1891.

--- Supplementary Agenda to be Considered at the Annual General Meeting...1892.

--- Standing Orders to be observed at the Annual General Meetings of the Society, (Sep.1892).

--- Supplementary Agenda to be Considered at the Annual General Meeting...1894.

--- Manifesto to the Railway Signalmen of the United Kingdom (1894).

--- Report of the .. National Conference of Signalmen ... Birmingham..July 9th, 1895.

--- Supplementary Agenda to be considered at the Annual General Meeting...1895.

--- Stiff Shackles and Standard pattern Couplings (1895).

--- Proposed Amendments to Rules to be submitted to the Annual General Meeting, 1896.

--- Signalmen's Hours of Duty: verbatim report of an Interview of a Deputation from the National Conference of Signalmen, with the Rt. Hon'ble Charles T.Ritchie.(1896).

--- Conference of National Committees of Signalmen, Goods Guards, Brakesmen, Shunters, Draymen...at Birmingham, Jan.5th, 1897.

--- Interview between officials of the North-Eastern Railway Company and the representatives of the Guards, Shunters, and Brakesmen... Dec.21st, 1896. (verbatim report kept in 'Proc.& Rep.1897').

--- Agenda to be considered at the National Conference of Enginemen and Firemen. (16th Feb.1897).

--- Minutes of Locomotive Engine Drivers and Firemen's Conference held at...Birmingham. (1897).

--- Minutes of the Conference of Goods Workers held at... Birmingham, (1897).

--- Minutes of the Conference of Passenger Staff held at... Birmingham (1897).

--- Minutes of the National Conference of Carriage and Wagon Examiners, carriage Washers, Greasers, and others.(1897).

--- Minutes of the Platelayers' Conference... April..1897.

--- Supplementary Agenda to be considered at the Annual General Meeting...1897.

--- Report on Mr. Edward Harford's Case at the Annual General Meeting. (verbatim report, 1897).

--- Minutes of the Birmingham Conference for revising national programmes, held on... October 11th and 12th, 1897.

--- Minutes of the Adjourned National Conference of all grades united, held at...Birmingham (Nov.1897).

--- To the Locomotive men of the United Kingdom: An exposure of Associated Tactics.(1897).

--- The Executive Committee and Mr. Maddison, M.P. (1897).

--- Lord James' Award. (Circular dated 25 Mar. 1898).

--- The Strike of the Midland Draymen and Goods Workers at Leeds and Sheffield: Special meeting of the Executive Committee (verbatim report.) (1898).

--- Supplementary Agenda to be considered at the Annual General Meeting...1898.

--- Addendum to the Supplementary Agenda, A.G.M. ..1898.

--- Railway Companies and their employees; statement of cases of victimisation, and correspondence with the Board of Trade thereon. (January 1899)
(Kept in tin box marked 117.)

--- Memorandum upon the use of Automatic Couplers on Railway Stock in the United States of America.(1899).

--- Supplementary Agenda to be considered at the Annual General Meeting, 1899.

--- Addendum to the Supplementary Agenda, A.G.M. 1899.

--- Manifesto to the Railwaymen of the United Kingdom. (Circular G.O.No.63, dated Oct.1899).

--- To the Secretary and members. (Circular G.O.No.64 dated 28 Oct.1899).

--- North-Eastern Hours & Wages - Settlement at York... Result of Conference between Mr.Gibb and Mr.Bell... Apr.1900 (G.O.No.86).

--- The General Secretary's report to the Special Meeting of the Executive Committee...July 15th, 1900. Minutes of the Special Executive Committee Meeting.

--- The General Secretary's Report to the Special Meeting of the Executive Committee...Aug.19th,1900. Minutes of the Special Executive Committee Meeting.

--- Proposed Amendments to Rules, to be submitted to the Annual General Meeting, 1900.

--- Taff Vale Railway Strike: August 1900. Copies of correspondence and terms of settlement.

--- Important suggestions to the Members, (Circular G.O.No.107 dated Jan.1901.).

--- The General Secretary's Report to the Special Meeting of the Executive Committee...May 26th, 1901.

--- The General Secretary's Report to and Decisions of SPECIAL Meeting of Executive Committee, June 22nd. 1902.

--- Annual General Meeting, 1902: Agenda. Rules as amended by the Revision Committee.

--- Supplementary Agenda to be considered at the Annual General Meeting...1902.

--- Agenda to be Considered at the Adjourned Special General Meeting...January 6th, 1903.

--- Decisions of the adjourned Special General Meeting... January 6th, 1903.

--- The General Secretary's Report to and Decisions of SPECIAL Meeting of Executive Committee, 1st Feb.1903.

--- Supplementary Agenda to be considered at the Annual General Meeting...Oct..1903.

--- Circular G.O.No.183,dated 30th July 1904.

--- Agenda to be considered at the Annual General Meeting, 1904.

--- Proposed Alteration of Rules by the Executive Committee.. Annual General Meeting...1904.

--- North Eastern Railway All-Grades Movement. Full Report of Concessions. April-May 1906.

--- Special Meeting, July 12th, 1906. The General Secretary's Report to and decisions of Executive Committee on N.E.R. dispute.

--- National All-Grades Movement (England & Wales); Conference procedure, standing Orders, etc. Nov.1906.

--- National All-Grades Movement (England & Wales). Decisions of Conference... November 26th..28th, 1906.

--- The Attack upon the Amal.Scy. of Rly.Serv.by the Assoc. of Loc.Eng. & Firemen: The A.S.R.S. reply.(1906).

--- The General Secretary's Report to and decisions of the Special Meeting of the Executive Committee Re National All-Grades Movement...Feb.14th-15th, 1907.

--- National All-Grades Movement (1st May 1907. Pamphlet No. H.O.243).

R. BELL. The Railwaymen's Charter. Reply to Criticisms.(May 1907).

A.S.R.S. Summary of Hours, Wages, etc. of the Men, and a Map, showing where our members are located.(1907).

--- National All-Grades Movement (England & Wales)...Second Conference...June 24th and 25th 1907.

--- National Movement. Sep.1907.

--- National Movement. Report of SPECIAL meetings of the Executive Committee on October 28th...Nov.2nd,6th & 7th.. together with the Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme.... agreed on Nov.6th 1907.

--- North Eastern Railway Movement. The General Secretary's Report to and decisions of SPECIAL Executive Committee Meeting...May 11th, 1908.

--- Osborne v. the A.S.R.S. (Dec.1908).

--- General Secretary's Resignation. (Circular dated 31st Dec.1909).

--- The General Secretary's Report to and decisions of the Executive Committee at a Special Meeting..on January 1st and 2nd, 1910.

--- The General Secretary's Report to and decisions of Executive Committee at a special meeting on Nov.8th-11th, 1910.

--- Report and Decisions of Special Meeting...Liverpool, Aug.15th, and London, Aug.23rd & 24th, 1911.

--- Report and Decisions of Special Meeting of the Executive Committee...Oct.31st and Nov.7th,1911.

--- Agenda and Decisions of the Special General Meeting... London,..Feb.10th, 1913.

(C). Joint publications with other unions (arranged chronologically).

Conference of Delegates of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants with respect to Federation,... 3rd Jan.1900. (Leeds 1900).

Conference of Delegates etc. (as above)...18th May,1903. (Leeds 1903).

A.S.R.S. & A.S.L.E.F. Special Meeting of the Joint Executive Committees held at..London, May 10th, 1904.

--- Meeting of the Joint Executive Committees held at... Leeds, Oct.9th, 1904. (Leeds 1904).

--- Conference of the A.S.L.E.F. and the Locomotive Members of the A.S.R.S. A National Programme, April 1905, (Leeds 1905).

--- Joint Meeting of the Executive Committee of both sides... July 1905. (verbatim report).

A.S.R.S., G.R.W.U., U.P.S.S. & R.C.A., Re Amalgamation. Report of Conference...Manchester...February 1906.

A.S.R.S. & A.S.L.E.F. Joint Meeting of the Executive Committees of both Societies...November 23rd. 1906.

A.S.R.S., G.R.W.U., A.S.L.E.F., U.P.S.S. & R.C.A. Proposed Federation of Railway Trade Unions. Official Report of Conferences...Manchester...October..1907. (Manchester 1907). (kept by accident in 'Proc.& Rep. 1908').

A.S.R.S. & G.R.W.U. Re Amalgamation. Report of Conference held at the head offices of the A.S.R.S. ...Dec...1909.

A.S.R.S., A.S.L.E.F., G.R.W.U. & U.P.S.S. Report and Decisions of the Joint Conference of the Executive Committees... Liverpool...August 15th & 16th... and London...17th (sc. to) 24th August, 1911.

--- Report and Decisions of the Joint Conference of the Executive Committees ... 1st (sc. to) 6th November,1911.

--- Report and Decisions of the Joint Conference of the Executive Committees... 1st, 8th and 11th Dec. 1911.

--- Report and Recommendations of the Joint Conference of the Sub-committee re Fusion of Forces ...Dec.28th-30th, 1911.

A.S.R.S., G.R.W.U.,& U.P.S.S., Report and Decisions of the Joint Conference of the Executive Committees re Sub-committee's report on fusion of forces...16th & 17th Jan. 1912.

(ii) Other printed contemporary tracts. (arranged, wherever possible, after the name of the author or the organization sponsoring the publication).

Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants for Scotland, Financial Report for the Half-year ending June 1890. (Glasgow 1890) (kept in one of the two tin boxes at Unity House marked 117).

Anonymous, A Brief Biography of J.Baxter Langley, Esq.M.R.C.S. London 1867). (kept in the Bishopsgate Institute, 283/8).

Anonymous, Report of Conference on Proposed Federation(Cardiff 1891). (kept in the Webb.T.U.Coll.E-B.,XV at British Library of Political and Economic Science).

Brassey, Lord.
Loring, A.H.(editor), Papers and Addresses of Lord Brassey; Political and Miscellaneous,1861-94.(London 1895).

Eighty Club, Labour Questions. Speeches by Mr.H.Pickard M.P., Mr.E.Harford...May 23rd.1894, (London 1894) (kept in the Bishopsgate Institute, 385/26).

Foreman,William, Workingmen and Politics (London 1889). (kept in 'Proc.& Rep.1889' - the one bound in red - at Unity House).

General Railway Workers' Union, Balance Sheets of Branches and Financial Statements. (Manchester, Annual) (The publications for 1910 to 1912 have survived in Unity House: tin box marked 117.).

--- Rule Books (for 1909-1912). (survived in tin box 117).

King, P.J. & Blatchford, R. Trades Federation.(1898,revised ed.)

King, P.J. Good and Bad Federation. (1898)

--- Federation in a Nutshell.(1899)

--- Trades Federation: Official Scheme: a crushing criticism (1899). (Some of these Federation pamphlets are in the Webb Collection at the British Library of Political and Economic Science. Others are in the Burns Collection at Congress House).

Labour Electoral Association, Report of the Labour Electoral Congress. (Annual, 1888-1895). (kept in British Library of Political and Economic Science).

Labour Representation Committee, Report of Annual Conference, (Annual, 1900-1906).

Leicester Trades Council, Annual Report. (Leicester, Annual, 1894-99).

Northampton Trades Council, Annual Report for year ending June 30th... (Northampton, Annual, 1895 and 1896).

Sunderland Trades Council, First Annual Report (Sunderland 1885). (all the trades Council reports are in the British Library of Political and Economic Science).

Trades Union Congress, Annual Report. (Annual since 1873).

United Pointsmen & Signalmen's Society, Report on the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Signalmen's Wages and Hours Movement, 1905-7... (Manchester 1909).

---- Annual Report and Balance Sheet for the year 1912 (Manchester 1914).

(Both U.P.S.G. publications are kept in Unity House tin box marked 117).

(iii) State Papers:- (a) Statutes. (b) Bills. (c) Parliamentary Debates. (d) Official Accounts and Papers. (e) Reports of Royal Commissions and Select Committees of Parliament.

(a) Statutes:

Employers' Liability Act, 1880.
(43 & 44 Vic. C.42)
Regulation of Railways Act, 1889.
(52 & 53 Vic. C.57)
Railway Servants(Hours of Labour)Act,1893.
(56 & 57 Vic. C.29)
Railways(Prevention of Accidents)Act,1900.
(63 & 64 Vic. C.27)

(b) Bills. (Arranged chronologically)

Compensation for Accidents to Workpeople Bill, 1875.
(Parl.Pap.,1875,I, 375)
Employers' Liability Bill, 1876,
(Parl.Pap,1876,II, 353)
Employers' Liability Bills of 1879.
(Parl.Pap. 1878-9,III,113,117,121)
Masters and Workmen-Workmen's Compensation Bill,1879.
((H.4.) Parl.Pap.,1878-9,VI, 647)
Employers' Liability Bills of 1880.
(Parl.Pap. 1880,III,123,127)
Railway Regulation Act Amendment Bill,1884.
(Parl.Pap. 1884,VI,333)
Regulation of Railways Bill, 1889.
(Parl.Pap. 1889,VII,221)
Railway Servants(Hours of Labour)Bill,1891.
(Parl.Pap.1890-91,VIII,459)
Railway Servants(Hours of Labour)Bills of 1893.
(Parl.Pap.1893-4,III; ibid. vol.VII)
Railways(Prevention of Accidents)Bill, 1900.
(Parl.Pap.1900, IV, 267)

(c) Parliamentary Debates.

Hansards Parliamentary Debates.
Railway Servants(Hours of Labour)Bill, 1893.
Report from Standing Committee on Trade, with Proceedings (Parl.Pap.1893-4,XV).

Railways(Prevention of Accidents)Bill,1900
Report from the Standing Committee ...
(Parl.Pap. 1900,VIII, 279).
Truck Bill, 1896. Report from the Standing Committee...(Parl.Pap. 1896,XIV).

(d) Official Accounts and Papers. (arranged chronologically).

Board of Trade, Railway Servants. Return of Number Employed... on 31st March 1884.(Parl.Pap.1884,LXX 307).

--- Wages. General Report on the Wages of the Manual Labour Classes in the United Kingdom in 1886 and 1891. (Parl.Pap. 1893-4 (C.6889),LXXXIII, part ii,1.)

--- Report ...under the Railway Regulation Act,1893... during theyear ended 27 July 1894, (An annual publication since 1894).

--- Railway Accidents Returns. Report of the Committee.. 9th Apr.1894. (Parl.Pap.1895,(cd.7603),LXXV,695).

--- Return (in pursuance of the Railway Returns(Continuous Brakes) Act, 1878, by the Railway Companies for the six months ending the 31st Dec.1897.
(Parl.Pap. 1898,(C.8864),LXXII,1).

--- Railways (Shunting) Accidents: Return...during the ten years ending 1897.(Parl.Pap.1898.(378),LXXII,251).

--- Automatic Couplings on Railway Stock. Memorandum upon the use of Automatic Couplings...with special reference to American Experience. (ParlPap. 1899,(C.9183),LXXV,695)

--- Departmental Committee on Railway Rates (Preferential Treatment) (Parl.Pap. 1906,(Cd.2959 & 2960), LV.)

--- Railway Conciliation Scheme. Report...upon matters connected with the Establishment and Working of Railway Conciliation Boards ... (Cd.4534 of 1909).

--- Railway Conference (Parl.Pap. 1909.(cd.4677),LXXVII,135).

--- Railway Conciliation Scheme. Statement of settlements regarding Questions as to Rates of Wages and Hours of

Labour of Railway Employees that have been effected under the Scheme for Conciliation and Arbitration arranged in accordance with the Agreement of the 6th November, 1907...(cd.5332 of 1910).

--- Earnings and Hours of Labour of Railway Service in 1907. (Parl.Pap.1912-13. (cd.6053),CVIII,1).

Railway Strike. (Employment of Military)
(Parl.Pap. 1911.(323),XLVII).

(e) Reports of Royal Commissions and Select Committees of Parliament (arranged chronologically)

Railway Accidents, P.Com. Reports. Minutes of Evidence and Appendices. (Parl.Pap.1877,(C.1637),XLVIII,1).

Employers' Liability for Injuries to their Servants.
Sel.Cttee. Proceedings & Minutes of Evidence.
(Parl.Pap.1876. (372),IX, 669).

Employers' Liability etc., Se;.Cttee. Report.
(Parl.Pap.1877,(285), X, 551).

Employers' Liability Act (1880) Amendment Bill. Sel.Cttee.
Reports. Minutes of Evidence.
(Parl.Pap.1886, VIII, 1.).

Railway Servants(Hours of Labour). Sel.Cttee. Minutes of Evidence.
(Parl.Pap.1890-91, XVI.).

Railway Servants(Hours of Labour). Sel.Cttee.
Special Report. Minutes of Evidence, etc.
(ParlPap.,1892, XVI, 1.).

Railway Servants(Hours of Labour). Sel.Cttee.
Report, Minutes of Evidence, etc.
(Parl.Pap.1892 (246),XVI, 123).

Labour. Royal Com. Group B., vol.III.
(Parl.Pap.1893-4 (C.6894-VIII(XXXIII).

Accidents to Railway Servants. Royal Com. Report.
(Parl.Pap.1900 (Cd.41), XXVII).

Accidents to Railway Servants. Royal Com. Minutes of Evidence & Appendices.Parl.Pap.1900 (Cd.42),XXVII).

Trades Disputes and Trade Combinations. Royal Com. Minutes of Evidence and Appendice.
(Parl.Pap.1906 (Cd.2826),LVI, 137).

Railway Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme of 1907. Royal Com. Report. (Parl.Pap. 1911.(Cd.5922),XXIX part i).

Railway Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme of 1907. Royal Com. Minutes of Evidence and Appendices. (Parl.Pap. 1912-13(cd.6014),XLV.).

(iv) Newspapers and Periodicals. (This list does not include learned journals like the Economic History Review; all articles cited from such journals are referred to in section (vii) below.)

Accrington Observer and Times

Bee-Hive

Birmingham Daily Post

Blackburn Times

Cardiff Labour Pioneer

Chester Chronicle

Clarion

Commonwealth

Daily Chronicle

Daily Mail

Daily News

Darlington and Stockton Times

Derby Mercury

Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal

Doncaster Chronicle

Doncaster Gazette

Doncaster Reporter

Durham Chronicle

Durham County Advertiser

Echo

Evening Standard

Great Western Railway Magazine

Half-penny Weekly News

Herpath's Railway (& Commercial) Journal

Justice

Labour Elector

Labour Leader

Labour Standard

Leicester Daily Mercury

Locomotive Journal

Manchester Guardian

Newcastle Daily Chronicle

Northampton Daily Reporter

Northampton Mercury

Northern Echo

Pall Mall Gazette

Peterborough Advertiser

Railway Express (Kept only in John Burns Collection, Congress House)

Railway Herald

Railway News

Railway Review

Railway Service Gazette

Railway Times

Reynolds' Newspaper

Sheffield and Rotherham Independent

South Wales Daily News

Syndicalist Railwaymen (Kept in Nuffield College Library, Oxford)

Times

Trade Unionist

Western Daily Press

Western Mail

Western Times

West Ham Herald

Workman's Times

Yorkshire Factory Times

Yorkshire Herald

(v) Biographies and Memoirs. (arranged after the name of the person with whose life the book is concerned).

N.B. - London is the place of publication, unless otherwise stated.

ASKWITH, G.R. (Lord)

Askwith, G.R. Industrial Problems and Disputes (1920)

BASSETT-VINCENT, Charles.

Bassett-Vincent, C. An Authentic History of Railway Trade Unionism (Derby 1902) (Kept at Unity House).

CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Sir Henry
Spender J.A. The Life of the Right Honourable Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, vol.I.(1923).

CHAMBERLAIN, Joseph.
Garvin, J.L. Life of Joseph Chamberlain, vol.I. (1932).

CHANNING, F.A.
Channing, F.A. Memories of Midland Politics,1885-1910.(1918).

DILKE, Sir Charles
Gwynn, S.L. & Tuckwell, G.M. Life of Sir Charles Dilke, Vol.II. (1917).

LLOYD GEORGE, David.
George, William. My Brother and I. (1958).

GLADSTONE, W.E.
Magnus, P. Gladstone (1954).

HENDERSON, Arthur.
Hamilton, Mary Agnes. Arthur Henderson (1938).

HOLYOAKE, G.J.
MacCabe, J. Life and Letters of George Jacob Holyoake, I, (1908).

MASTERMAN, C.F.G.
Masterman, Lucy. C.F.G. Masterman, A Biography.(1939).

MORLEY, Samuel.
Hodder, Edwin. Life of S.Morley. (1889).

MUNDELLA, A.J.
Armytage, W,H.G. A.J. Mundella. (1951).

SNOWDEN, Philip (Viscount)
Snowden, Philip. An Autobiography, I, (1934).

WEBB, Beatrice.
Webb, Beatrice. Our Partnership (1948).

WILSON, Joseph Havelock.
Wilson, J.H. My Stormy Voyage Through Life, vol.I.(1925).

(vi) Directories and Manuals.

(Place of Publication: London, unless otherwise stated)

Bradshaw's Railway Manual, Shareholders' guide and official Directory. (Annual).

Dictionary of National Biography.

Dod's Parliamentary Companion. (Annual).

Handbook of Stations and Depots, etc. (various dates; kept at British Transport Commission Archives).

Newspaper Press Directory.

Reformers' Year Book, (1895-1909) (formerly, Labour Annual) (Wallasey).

Who was Who, vol.I, 1897-1915
vol.II, 1916-1928
vol.III, 1929-1940.

(vii) Secondary Authorities. (unless otherwise stated the place of publication of these books and periodicals is London).

ALCOCK, G.W. Fifty Years of Railway Trade Unionism. (1922).

ALLEN, V.L. Power in the Trade Unions (1954).

ARNOT, R.Page. The Miners. (1949).

--- The Miners: Years of Struggle. (1953).

BAGWELL, P.S. Early attempts at National Organisation of the Railwaymen, 1865-7.
Journal of Transport History (Leicester), III, (1957).

BAROU, N. British Trade Unions (1947).

BEALES, H.L. 'Great Depression in Industry and Trade.'
Economic History Review, V, (October 1934).

BEALEY, F. & PELLING, H. Labour and Politics, 1900-1906. (1958).

BEVERIDGE, W.H. Full Employment in a Free Society (1944).

BRIGGS, A.& SAVILLE, J. (editors) Essays in Labour History. (1960).

CAMPBELL, C. Douglas British Railways in Boom and Depression. (1932).

CHALONER, W.H. The Social and Economic Development of Crewe, 1780-1923. (Manchester 1950).

CITRINE, N.A. Trade Union Law. (1950).

CLAPHAM, J.H. Economic History of Modern Britain, vols.II. (Cambridge 1932) and III. (Cambridge 1938).

COLE, G.D.H. 'Some Notes on British Trade Unionism in the Third Quarter of the Nineteenth Century', International Review for Social History. (Amsterdam), II. (1937).

--- British Working Class Politics, 1832-1914. (1941).

--- A Short History of the British Working Class Movement, 1789-1947. (Revised Edition 1948).

EDWARDS, C. 'Labour Federation'. Economic Journal, III.(1893).

ELLIS, Hamilton British Railway History, 1830-1876. (1954).

ENSOR, R.C.K. England, 1870-1914 (Oxford 1936).

EVERSLEY, D.E.C. 'The Great Western Railway and the Swindon Works in the Great Depression'. University of Birmingham Historical Journal. (Birmingham), V.

FLANDERS, A. & CLEGG, H.A. (editors) The System of Industrial Relations in Great Britain (Oxford 1954).

FOX, Alan. History of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives, 1874-1957. (Oxford 1958).

GILLESPIE, F.E. Labour and Politics in England, 1850-67. (Durham, N.Carolina, 1927).

HALEVY, E. Imperialism and the Rise of Labour (1951 edition).

--- The Rule of Democracy, 1905-1914. (1952 edition).

HANHAM, H.J. Elections and Party Management: Politics in the time of Disraeli and Gladstone. (1959).

HARRISON, R. 'Practical, Capable Men'. New Reasoner No.6.(1958).

HASLAM, A.L. The Law relating to Trade Combinations. (1931).

HOBSBAWM, E.J. (editor) Labour's Turning Point, 1880-1900. (1948).

--- 'General Labour Unions in Britain, 1889-1914', Economic History Review, 2nd S, I.(1949).

JEFFERYS, J.B. Story of the Engineers. (1945).

KENNEY, Rowland Men and Rails. (1913).

KNOWLES, K.G.J.C. Strikes - A Study in Industrial Conflict. (Oxford 1952).

KNOWLES, K.G.J.C. & ROBERTSON, D.J. 'Difference between Wages of Skilled and Unskilled workers, 1880-1950'. Bulletin of the Oxford University Institute of Statistics, XIII. (1951).

MACCOBY, S. English Radicalism, 1853-1886. (1938).

MALLALIEU, W.C. 'Joseph Chamberlain and Workmen's Compensation'. Journal of Economic History, (New York) X,(1950).

McCREADY, H.W. 'British Labour and the Royal Commission on Trade Unions, 1867-9'. University of Toronto Quarterly, XXIV, (1954-5).

--- 'British Labour's Lobby, 1867-75'. Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science(Toronto), XXII (1956).

MASON, E. The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway in the Twentieth Century. (1954).

MILNE-BAILEY,W. (editor) Trade Union Documents. (1929).

MOODY, T.W. 'Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement, 1882-1906'. Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th Ser, III.

MUNKMAN, J. Employers' Liability at Common Law.(3rd.edition, 1955).

PAGE, William. Commerce and Industry, II. (1919).

PELLING, H. The Origins of the Labour Party. (1954).

--- America and the British Left: from Bright to Bevan. (1956).

PHELPS BROWN,E.H. The Growth of British Industrial Relations.(1959).

PHELPS BROWN,E.H. & HOPKINS, S. 'Course of Wage Rates in Five Countries, 1860-1939' Oxford Economic Papers, vol.II. (1950). NS

ROBERTS, B.C. The Trades Union Congress, 1868-1921. (1958).

ROSTOW, W.W. British Economy of the Nineteenth Century.(Oxford) (1948).

ROWE, J.W.F. Wages in Practice and Theory. (1928).

ROWNTREE, B.S. Poverty, a study of Town Life. (1902).

RYAN, W.P. — The Irish Labour Movement (Dublin 1919).

SAVAGE, Christopher I. — An Economic History of Transport. (1959).

SAVILLE, J. — Ernest Jones' Chartist. (1952).

---(editor) — Democracy and the Labour Movement. (1954).

--- — Rural Depopulation in England and Wales, 1851-1951. (1957).

SHARP, I.G. — Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration in Great Britain. (1950).

SHERRINGTON, C.E.R. — The Economics of Rail Transport in Great Britain, Two.vol.s.(1928).

SMITH, H.L.(Sir) — The Board of Trade (1928).

STRETTON, C.E. — Safe Railway Working (1st ed.1887; 3rd.ed.1893).

TOMLINSON, W.W. — The North Eastern Railway (Newcastle 1914).

WEBB, Sidney & Beatrice. — History of Trade Unionism. (1920 edition).

--- — Industrial Democracy. (1920 edition) [published by the authors for the Seaham Div. Labour Party].

WEBB, Sidney, & COX, Harold. — The Eight Hour Day. (1891).

WILLIAMS, F. — Magnificent Journey: the rise of the trade unions. (1954).