

Chapter 8

Renegades, Rivals and Errant Members: Asserting Union Interests and Authority among Workers

Unions may have expended much of their energy in the struggle against the boss, but looking after members' workplace interests also meant maintaining constant vigilance for threats from other quarters. First, and as already indicated in the previous chapter, unions expressed open antipathy towards and directed strenuous efforts against those workers who, for various reasons, refused to join an appropriate union or who worked as 'scabs' during strikes. They also protected their members from outsiders who sought membership while existing unionists were out of work. Second, while a combined union front gave additional strength in confronting employers at times of crisis, unions also had to exert their power against other unions, when necessary, to maximise and protect work opportunities for their own members in a competitive industrial environment. Third, where unity and solidarity underpinned both their philosophy and strength, unions had to maintain rigid control over their own members. Any deviation from accepted principles, policies and actions in pursuit of individual interests endangered the welfare and reputation of the union as a whole.

Outside the Union

A few months after the FCDIU secured its first wages board determination in 1912, the secretary enquired of the regular union meeting whether, besides ensuring all union members secured the new terms and conditions, he was to assist non-members to 'obtain

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their just dues under the award'. The meeting resolutely declared that the secretary's duty was to protect the workplace interests of members of the FCDIU only and not those of any carters who refused to join the ranks of the organised.¹ By 1920, the union had gained its first state award but it was one which lacked the desired preference clause for unionists. To overcome this deficiency, the FCDIU adopted a policy of coercing non-unionists into taking out tickets by having members use 'their efforts in getting them to join the union and refraining from assisting or conversing with them' until they did.² Just what these efforts were to include was not specified. In any case, the following 1921 carting award included a preference clause which reduced the problem of non-union carters significantly.³

Despite the inclusion of preference into an award, some renegades were still prepared to work without a union ticket, as the previous chapter indicated. Unions therefore had to flex their muscle against fellow workers who defied the principle of union-labour-only as well as against the bosses who employed them. Some workers claimed they did not have the money for a ticket while others simply waited until chased up by the union; however, occasionally there were conscientious objectors. At Burns and Twigg, for example, the non-unionist employee whom William Burns so vehemently defended in 1929 claimed it was 'against his beliefs and conscience for him to join a union or any worldly organisation'. Anti-union religious conviction was no reason for evading the award in the opinion of both the union and the Industrial Inspector, and the worker eventually secured a ticket. Who paid for it, though, is debatable.⁴

The continued presence of some 250 free-labour workers or 'scabs' at Lakes Creek meatworks in the wake of the 1946 strike posed the greatest threat to unionism in Rockhampton in decades. More than a few of the scabs were from the AMIEU itself and had already betrayed their union by working during the strike. The AMIEU promptly terminated their membership for this ultimate act of disloyalty.⁵ Opposition to scab labour

1. Carters and Storemen's Union Minutes, 14 Oct. 1912. CCQC P16/1952 1

2. FCDIU Minutes, 21 Jan. 1920. CCQC P16/1952 4

3. Carters' Award—Southern and Central, Judgment, *QGG*, 1921, Vol. 116, No. 81, 8 Mar., p. 769.

4. *AEU Monthly Journal*, June, 1929, p. 15.

5. *MB*, 27 July 1946, p. 1.

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9 took two forms: official union action and unofficial acts of harassment undertaken by unionists themselves. In the first form, the AMIEU successfully opposed the Industrial Court's registration of the 'company union', the Central Queensland Meat Employees' Union (CQMEU). It also instructed union members not to converse with non-union workers or assist them in any way, whether inside or outside the workplace.⁶ In an appeal against the court's rejection of its registration application, the CQMEU representative claimed that the treatment meted out to free-labourers by rank-and-file unionists was part of a wider campaign of victimisation instigated by the AMIEU.⁷

The secretary of the bogus union, Gordon Snowdon, was still making allegations of ostracism and victimisation a year after the strike. He claimed this latter behaviour included interference with lockers and damage to clothing and tea billies; spitting at non-unionists, dropping dilute acid and phenyl on them, locking them in the freezers and inflicting other minor 'accidental' injuries; and, on one occasion at least, planting stolen meat in a 'scab' car.⁸ In April 1947, free-labour numbers had been reduced to about 120 and the Central District Council resolved that these workers be 'harassed and generally opposed in every way possible' to get rid of them. By June, their ranks had thinned to 94.⁹ The following year, the union still maintained an official policy of 'ousting scabs from the works'¹⁰ and continued its objection to any association between unionists and remaining scabs as occurred, for example, with 'free-labour girls' sharing the same lunch room as union girls.¹¹

The validity of all the claims made by Snowdon is difficult to establish. AMIEU state secretary Jim Neumann vehemently denied there was any foundation for the original claims of victimisation. Despite the official policy of harassment, state president Bert

6. *ibid.*, 9 July 1946, p. 1 and 27 July 1946, p. 1.

7. *ibid.*, 3 Sept. 1946, p. 1.

8. *ibid.*, 6 June 1947. For a more detailed discussion of these occurrences, see Gordon Stewart, *An Analysis of Industrial Relations at the Central Queensland Meat Export Company Works at Lakes Creek, Rockhampton, from 1945 to 1965*, BA Thesis, UQ, 1978.

9. Minutes of Special Meeting of AMIEU (Qld Branch Executive), Trades Hall, Brisbane, 28 Apr. 1947 and 24 June 1947. CCQC J19/942 5

10. *ibid.*, 16 Feb. 1948. CCQC J19/943 1

11. *ibid.*, 29 Apr. 1949.

Field reported to the branch executive in 1947 that 'there does not seem to be any interference with these scabs by our members'.¹² Yet in the union scrap book on the 1946 strike and its aftermath, those cuttings reporting the alleged victimisation by AMIEU members are not boldly annotated with the word 'LIES' as are many other press articles.¹³ Former works manager Mark Hinchliff, still reserved in his response after half a century, acknowledges:

The free labour gradually filtered away...pressure from the others. The resentment spread throughout Rockhampton. If a free-labour man was in the pub, he was in trouble.¹⁴

Although some former meatworkers are equally guarded in their claim that they 'heard some things went on',¹⁵ Colin Maxwell is more explicit:

You had to get rid of them. It was the men themselves. The union wouldn't organise that but Bill Hobson would have [unofficially]. Bill was state organiser then. He'd be behind that. He'd get them to do it. Len Haigh wouldn't do it...Union blokes were going down [to] the toilet and bringing back stuff and putting it in their billies. When scabs got into the loading gangs, they pushed a few down the chutes. Tough going. That got rid of them...There was a woman, Mrs Armstrong. She was one of my mother's friends. She went down there [to strike-break]. Of course, Mum stopped seeing her.¹⁶

Whatever the exact truth of the treatment meted out to scabs at Lakes Creek, such behaviour by rank-and-file unionists, with or without leadership backing, demonstrates the animosity felt towards these renegades for their disloyalty. It also clearly reveals the determination of members to remove non-union labour from the workplace because it threatened the power of the union and the hard-won industrial conditions of its members.

It was not only workers who refused to take out a ticket that presented a problem to unions. Especially in times of high unemployment during the Depression, workers wanting to enter a particular occupation, or anyone looking for whatever work they could obtain, posed a threat to existing union members who were out of work. It became necessary for unions to restrict membership even though they did not have the legal right to

12. *ibid.*, 28 Apr. 1947

13. AMIEU Cutting Book, 1945–1947. CCQC J19/945 3

14. Mark Hinchliff, interviewed 23 Nov. 1995.

15. Joe Underdown, interviewed 7 June 1996.

16. Colin Maxwell, interviewed 20 June 1996.

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1 automatically refuse entry to any person working in the trade who tendered the admission fee. The local AMIEU seemed unaware of the illegality of refusing admission for several years after the union obtained its first award for meatworkers in 1917, and it regularly restricted or sometimes even 'closed the books' to applicants.¹⁷ Not until the matter arose again in 1924 did the secretary advise members that the contemplated action was illegal 'while enjoying preference' under the award.¹⁸ Even though many awards included preference to unionists, not all employers respected the requirement in the appointment of new workers. Unions therefore rigidly enforced the clause which specified that any recruits without a membership ticket had 14 days to become financial or the union could cite a breach of the award and have them dismissed.¹⁹

Nevertheless, there were several ways the unions could regulate membership intake as and when they wanted. First, the FCDIU and its successors, for example, sometimes instructed the secretary not to issue any tickets to men not already in the industry or advised members not to propose or second any nomination of new members to protect existing unionists from competition.²⁰ Second, if an applicant's work did not substantially fall under an award to which the union was party, it could also deny membership. On this basis, the ARTWU rejected the application of Otto Meilburg in 1928. Meilburg was employed primarily as a storeman at British Imperial Oil Company and only occasionally did carter's work. To the union, 'it looked suspicious that he was endeavouring to secure a ticket...which would be to unemployed members [*sic*] detriment'.²¹ Third, unions could exclude any worker in the industry whose industrial character was not of good repute. Under this condition, the AMIEU refused admission to and refunded the application fee from an S. Matheson 'in view of his unsatisfactory answers...[to questions about]...his industrial character'.²² In 1944, Alexander Whelan had to 'explain his actions' in the shearers' strike more than a decade earlier. The union considered his response

17. AMIEU Minutes, 23 May 1923. CCQC J19/940 5

18. *ibid.*, 12 Feb. 1924.

19. For example, Carters' Award—Southern and Central, Judgment, *QGG*, 1921, Vol. 116, No. 81, 8 Mar., p. 769.

20. FCDIU Minutes, 11 May 1925 and ARTWU Minutes, 10 Jan. 1938. CCQC P16/1952 5 and 1953

21. *ibid.*, 13 Feb. 1928. CCQC P16/1952 7

22. AMIEU Minutes, 11 June 1926. CCQC J19/940 6

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2 unacceptable and the following month directed him to cease work.²³ Fourth, unions could also reject any former member returning to the industry who could not produce the union clearance previously issued. He also had to provide evidence of other union membership to prove he had not been working in the trade without a ticket in the interim. When Cecil Cornick applied to rejoin the AMIEU in 1926, he claimed he had lost his clearance obtained when he went off to the war in 1916. While the union granted him exemption for the war period, Cornick had to pay a prohibitive five years' arrears for the intervening period if he wanted to re-enter the union.²⁴

As well as these methods common to most unions, the AMIEU possessed the ultimate tool in restricting membership of prospective export meatworkers in the interests of existing members. With the union selecting and providing labour according to the award, and in order of seniority for many years, Lakes Creek was technically a 'closed shop'²⁵ for all butchering and general labouring jobs. A hopeful new worker needed to be already a union member to be guaranteed a reasonable chance of being picked at Trades Hall ahead of any outsiders who turned up looking for surplus casual work. Thus the union adopted the practice of accepting membership applications before work was actually obtained. These applicants were subject to the usual conditions of proposal, seconding, payment of fees and examination of prior industrial character. According to varying labour demands, the union could either increase membership by admitting every applicant or decrease intake by balloting for, say, one place per month when jobs were scarce.²⁶

In the smoulderings of the 1946 meat strike, one correspondent with the *Morning Bulletin*, Ron Bailee—perhaps an aggrieved member of the former 'scab' CQMEU—condemned the AMIEU's system of selective recruitment for Lakes Creek. He declared:

23. AMIEU CDC Minutes, 8 Feb. 1944 CCQC J19/941 4; AMIEU Minutes, 6 Mar. 1944. CCQC J19/941 4

24. *ibid.*, 14 May 1926. CCQC J19/940 6

25. Ross M. Martin, *Trade Unions in Australia: Who Runs Them, Who Belongs—Their Politics, Their Power*, Ringwood, 1980, p. 59.

26. AMIEU CDC Minutes, 27 Oct. 1927 and 15 Mar. 1928. CCQC J19/940 7

[The union should] allow other workers and unionists the right to join the meatworkers' union, and not go to Ku Klux Klan methods of proposing, nominating and passing members before they even get a job.²⁷

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The aggrieved Bailee failed to comprehend four fundamental points about the union's recruitment policy. First, the AMIEU had lost preference under the award at the time. Consequently, it had no legal obligation to accept every worker employed by the meatworks until the Industrial Court restored this condition in 1950.²⁸ Second, apart from those years of lost preference, the union had the right to supply labour to the meatworks and to do so from existing members first, whether in employment or not. Reciprocally, the company had an obligation under the award to hire labour through the union and not at the gate. There was, therefore, no legitimate way workers could secure jobs other than through the union and to argue with this procedure was to dispute the Industrial Court's 1922 judgment.²⁹ Third, the union had a moral responsibility to its members to restrict membership when necessary and to admit only those it believed would not threaten the welfare of existing members. Admitting relatives and friends was one way of ensuring this. Fourth, provided there was adequate work available and he met the other criteria for membership, Bailee, too, could have sought admission to the union if he so desired—however with his attitude to the union, the AMIEU would probably have deemed him of unsatisfactory character and a risk to union interests.

27. *MB*, 28 May 1947.

28. Meat Export Award—State, *QIG*, 1950, Vol. 35, No. 1, 30 June, p. 1471.

29. Meat Export Award—State, *QGG*, 1922, Vol. 118, No. 10, 10 Jan., p. 112.

Inter-Union Competition in the Workplace

Had the Industrial Court granted registration to the bogus meat union in 1946, the AMIEU would have experienced two related problems that bedevilled relations between other unions which did not have a monopoly on their industry as did the meat union: jurisdictional arguments and demarcation disputes. The latter of these issues already arose at times between the AMIEU and sectional unions but the presence of another union for meatworkers and general labourers would have magnified the problem enormously. Unions which jointly covered workers in similar occupations, or in one industry like the railway, had to compete for recruitment of membership. Numerical strength usually determined both the industrial clout and the wealth of each organisation, so, even though all union leaders wholeheartedly believed in the need for a unionised workforce, there was little cooperation and often fierce competition over which union would secure new workers. AEU organiser Robert Lyle informed his members in 1924 that he and local officials of other unions had received instructions to conduct a combined drive against the non-unionised section of the Rockhampton workforce. However, he reported:

The process has been slow and little or nothing has been done by way of joint action; meantime, I have been engaged making a shop-to-shop visit amongst the motor and engineering establishments.³⁰

Where an industrial award contained a preference clause, the union or unions so indicated had jurisdiction or the right to recruit workers employed under that award, subject to their particular trade or calling. At the meatworks, for example, the AMIEU recruited all workers directly engaged in the process of meat production and in the plethora of miscellaneous jobs while other unions party to the Meat Export Award—State, such as the AEU and FEDFA, recruited tradesmen fitters, tinsmiths, electricians and engine drivers.³¹ In 1936, Lakes Creek management engaged several boilermaker-welders belonging to the Boilermakers' Society but that union was not party to the award. The AEU insisted that, under the preference clause, the boilermakers had to take out AEU

30. *AEU Monthly Journal*, Sept. 1924, p. 15.

31. The Electrical Trades Union (ETU) later became party to the award.

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5 tickets. The Boilermakers' Society immediately applied to the Industrial Court for inclusion in the award so it could retain the welders' membership; however, according to the AEU, the application was made so the Boilermakers' Society could secure a much-desired toehold in the meat industry. Successfully opposing that request and another from the ETU which was also excluded from the award at the time, the AEU advocate claimed:

These attempts by other Unions to butt in on the Meat Export Award would leave the impression that they desire to participate in the benefits brought about by years of fighting and close co-operation of the Meat Industry Union, Federated Engine Drivers' Union and A.E.U.³²

These words clearly demonstrate the jealousy existing between unions for the right to recruit members and also the AEU's firm conviction that its members enjoyed superior conditions to those of metal tradesmen in other unions. In this case, it was more than £1 a week above what boilermakers received under awards to which the Boilermakers' Society was party.³³

While preference usually determined which union could recruit workers under a particular award, some union officials actually indulged in poaching or 'body-snatching' by deception or intimidation.³⁴ The case of the AWU—which had quite a reputation for purloining members because of its broad coverage—well illustrates this point. In 1939, AWU organiser Allan Howie tried to bully owner-drivers working for the Main Roads Department into joining the AWU. TWU secretary Frank Conlon threatened legal action because his union had preference under the award.³⁵ The following year, Howie gave drivers working on the municipal sewerage scheme two weeks to take out AWU tickets. Under the Local Government Award, the TWU had preference and it successfully cited a case in the Industrial Court over the matter and subsequently retained the drivers' membership.³⁶

32. *AEU Monthly Journal*, June 1936, p. 23.

33. *ibid.* and July 1936, p. 16.

34. Martin, *Trade Unions in Australia*, p. 99.

35. TWU Minutes, 9 Oct. 1939. CCQC P16/1954 1

36. *ibid.*, 14 Oct. 1940 and 11 Nov. 1940.

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By far the greatest rivalry over membership existed in the railway where no particular union held preference and workers could join any suitable union of the 26 or so in the industry.³⁷ Competition for membership and poaching sometimes reached epidemic proportions there. Ideological differences, lines of job demarcation and notions of elitism exacerbated tensions in the railway over membership. In particular, the ARU which espoused 'all-grade unionism' that supposedly catered for 'everyone from fettlers and labourers to the General Manager'³⁸ constantly tried to prise members away from craft and sectional unions. The ARU singled out the AEU as the arch-enemy because of its competitive size and determination to keep itself 'pure as far as possible' from dilution by non-tradesmen.³⁹ The AEU's elitist view that the ARU was really a labourers' union caused further irritation.⁴⁰ Like most other craft unions, the AEU did not organise as actively as the ARU because it assumed tradesmen naturally preferred the traditional body of their calling.⁴¹ Consequently, the AEU was a prime target for ARU poaching. ARU secretary George Kemp faced numerous accusations of 'stealing' members, including that of four electricians in 1920.⁴² AEU organiser Robert Lyle reported in the union journal that 'the ARU is continually attempting to white-ant and steal our members'.⁴³ The following month he warned of 'intense propaganda' by the ARU and advised members

to be watchful of the methods adopted to draw them away from their union. Every trick is being adopted, not for the advantage of the members but simply to swell the numbers of the A.R.U.⁴⁴

Twenty years later, the problem of ARU body-snatching was still rife. In 1940, John D. (Jack) Ryan of the ARU persuaded his fellow tinsmiths in the sheetmetal shop to leave the AEU.⁴⁵ Contrary to the earlier warning by the AEU about the self-serving motives of the ARU, Ryan convinced the men that changing to the all-grade union would

37. Jack Treacy, interviewed 28 June 1995; Frank Campbell, interviewed 1 July 1995.

38. *ibid.*

39. Treacy interview.

40. Austin Vaughan, interviewed 22 November 1995.

41. Jack Egerton, interviewed 21 June 1996.

42. *Militant*, Vol. 1, No. 5, 7 Jan. 1920.

43. *AEU Monthly Journal*, Nov. 1925, p.22.

44. *ibid.*, Dec. 1925, p.18

45. AEU Minutes, 17 Oct. 1940. NBAC E162/33/1

be to their advantage because the AEU had done nothing for them except collect their union dues each pay-day. He pointed out that the AEU had failed to defend them in frequent demarcation disputes with the coppersmiths who also belonged to the craft union. Ryan promised the disgruntled tinsmiths that the ARU would look after their particular interests where the AEU had failed.⁴⁶

The ARU blamed any losses back to craft or sectional unions on 'poisonous propaganda' or members being 'stampeded' into believing that membership of the ARU jeopardised promotion.⁴⁷ But for the tinsmiths who had joined in 1940, the ARU failed to live up to their expectations in defending them any better than had the AEU and, into the bargain, it was too militant industrially.⁴⁸ In the late 1940s, they resigned from the ARU and returned to the AEU, only to leave the craft union again in 1953.⁴⁹ Rather than have their particular interests subsumed in a large union—whether the AEU or the ARU was immaterial—they at last decided to establish their own union with the help of an organiser from Ipswich. The railway tinsmiths and the dozen or so fellow tradesmen from Walter Reid and Company's tinshop thus formed a local branch of the small Sheetmetal Working, Agricultural Implement and Stovemaking Industrial Union of Employees. The new union totalled only about 50 local members and became yet another one of the plethora of small unions in the railway that took little active part in the wider cause of unionism in Rockhampton.⁵⁰

The ARU also vied with the AFULE and the FEDFA for membership of engine drivers and firemen. In any strike the ARU might initiate, running crews were the critical element. Without their cooperation, the strike could not work.⁵¹ At the same time, the two drivers' unions competed with each other for members. The ARU also poached from the Railway Clerical Officers' Union which did not organise or actively protect its

46. Bob Cole, interviewed 28 Apr. 1995.

47. Central District Report, ARU State Council Minutes, 15 Sept. 1926 and 29 July 1927. PTU

48. Cole interview.

49. AEU Minutes, 6 June 1946 and 2 Apr. 1953. NBAC E162/33/2 and 3

50. Cole interview.

51. Campbell interview.

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members. Of all the unions in the railway, only the Boilermakers' Society was immune from ARU theft. A past dispute between the two unions over recruitment at the Ipswich railway workshops had concluded in the Industrial Court to the detriment of the ARU and its smarting officials swore never to attack the craft union over membership again.⁵² Despite all the vitriol and animosity in union journals, there was 'no open enmity' between individual men in the different unions.⁵³ However, as one former official readily concedes, 'workers on the job and officials certainly didn't have any love for one another' either.⁵⁴

While bickering over recruitment of members provided a source of constant tension in some inter-union relationships, it was the matter of demarcation—the right of a particular union's member to perform certain tasks—which caused most of the discord between unions on the job.⁵⁵ Complaints about demarcation frequently arose at sites of goods exchange such as where the road transport workers attended the wharves, railway yards and warehouses. At these points of contact, unions often complained about other workers deliberately doing tasks specified under an award in which their members held preference. For example, both the FCDIU and Storemen and Packer's Union (SPU) often protested that drivers were doing packers' work and vice versa during loading and unloading at warehouses.⁵⁶

Sometimes the principles of unionism were at stake as much as was award infringements. In 1914, the FCDIU complained about waterside workers and laid-off meatworkers doing occasional driving on the wharf, without a union ticket and at below the award rate.⁵⁷ It claimed such action was 'not doing justice' to carters by giving employers 'every opportunity' not to recognise the FCDIU when they required casual drivers.⁵⁸ The WWF agreed to prohibit its members driving on the wharf but the doubting

52. Egerton interview.

53. Treacy interview

54. Vaughan interview.

55. Martin, *Trade Unions in Australia*, p. 99.

56. For example, FCDIU Minutes, 2 Mar. 1922. CCQC P16/1952 5

57. *ibid.*, 16 Feb. 1914. CCQC P16/1952 2

58. *ibid.*, 21 Dec. 1914.

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FCDIU resolved to 'keep a careful watch' on the wharfies to make sure they carried out their word.⁵⁹ As if in retaliation, the WWF complained of 'unfair treatment' by drivers who stepped off the tray of their lorries and rolled wool bales along the wharves. Such action, as WWF secretary Purnell claimed, was 'not a unionist principle'.⁶⁰ Even when it was to safeguard their own interests, workers were not supposed to encroach upon the duties of another union's members. The Federated Clerks' Union, for instance, protested that wharfies were chalking wool bale tallies on a post to check the count of the tally clerks. The WWF president at the time, Tom Maxwell, instructed his members that this un-union-like practice of questioning the accuracy and honesty of other workers had to cease immediately.⁶¹

A fine line existed between necessary cooperation between workers in carrying out their jobs and over-stepping the mark by doing tasks of another union. Frank Conlon frequently requested the QRU/ARU and SPU for more assistance from their members so that his drivers did not have to stack goods in railway wagons or warehouses.⁶² On the other hand, in several letters to the ARTWU in the 1930s, the WWF complained about one particular driver, Ralph Roberts, who stacked wool bales on the wharf 'to the disadvantage' of its members.⁶³ Fifteen months later, the WWF again protested that Roberts had committed a similar offence by stacking hides on the wharf. In response to an official union summons for the supposed offence, Roberts readily admitted doing a wharfie's job but, he claimed, it was only because there was no wharf labour available at the time to clear away the unloaded goods from beside his vehicle. Moreover, he claimed that on several occasions waterside workers had verbally abused him for not assisting them unload hides.⁶⁴ Contention between the two unions over this issue continued until the 1950s when a joint conference formally agreed that wharf labourers would handle all cargo to and from the side of lorries and that drivers would load and unload their own vehicles. In the

59. *ibid.*, 11 Jan. 1915.

60. *ibid.*, 12 Apr. 1914.

61. WWF Minutes, 28 July 1937. NBAC Z387/33/1

62. FCDIU Minutes, 4 Jan. 1919 and 10 Jan. 1921. CCQC P16/1952 4

63. ARTWU Minutes, 14 Sept. 1936. CCQC P16/1953

64. *ibid.*, 13 Dec. 1937; WWF Minutes, 23 Dec. 1937. NBAC Z387/33/1

opinion of the negotiators, the agreement would finally end 'the loose talk regarding "boycotts" and actions' against each other over the long-standing problem.⁶⁵

Demarcation disputes occasionally arose at the meatworks where the line between general tasks and those of a tradesman became blurred. For instance, the AMIEU and Painters and Decorators' Union disputed the right to paint tallow casks while the AEU protested that its tradesmen plumbers, and not semi-skilled AMIEU members, should cap tins in the dehydration room.⁶⁶ The site of most demarcation problems, like recruitment squabbles, was the railway workshops where, by the late 1930s, some 1,250 men of greatly varying levels of skill worked together.⁶⁷ The Mechanical Engineering Award—State, which covered most of the metal tradesmen, gave preference to any 'industrial union registered for callings' to which the award applied.⁶⁸ On the other hand, the Railway Award—State contained no preference clause for any of the 25 or so unions to which its recipients belonged. That provision—or rather the lack thereof—allowed the Commissioner for Railways to make his own terms with individual unions so that he could 'insist on getting from each Union any undertaking he want[ed] for the proper conduct of its members in relation to industrial disputes'. It allowed him, in essence, to play one union off against the other. The Board of Trade and Arbitration maintained this divisive measure was essential following the 1925 strike in which all railway unions had participated.⁶⁹

65. TWU Minutes, 8 June 1953. CCQC P16/1954 2

66. AMIEU Minutes, 29 June 1945 and 28 Sept. 1945. The painters did not work under the Meat Export Award. CCQC J19/941 5

67. Cole interview.

68. Mechanical Engineering Award—State, *QGG*, 1926, Vol. 126, No. 156, 31 May, s. 19, p. 1745.

69. Railway Award—State, Judgment, *QGG*, 1927, Vol. 129, No. 116, 9 Nov., part 2(i), p. 1591.

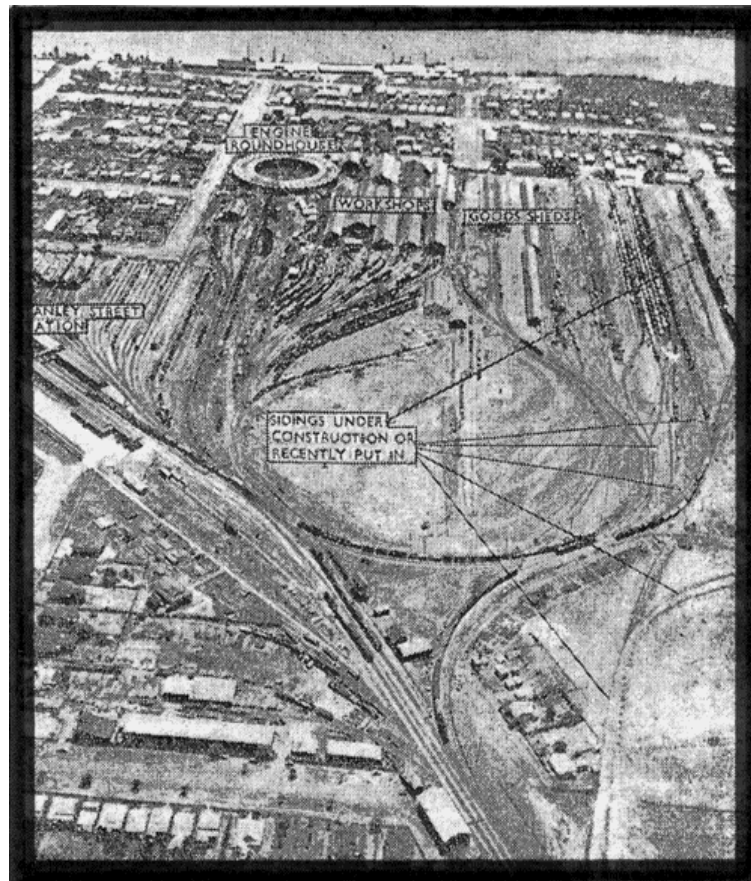


Fig. 69 :Rockhampton Railway Workshops and Yards, 1951
The deepwater wharf is included at the top of the picture.
MB, 24 Nov. 1951

Demarcation disputes often occurred in the railway where different unions lay opposing claims to particular tasks or positions that used common skills, tools and materials. So prevalent were such clashes that in 1919 the railway administration established a Demarcation Board to specifically address the problem.⁷⁰ For instance, unions representing the sheetmetal workers (tinsmiths), coppersmiths and plumbers all vied for tasks using metal sheeting at a workbench. On one occasion which involved the construction of sanitary pans for country stations, opposing unions covering the sheetmetal workers and the plumbers took the matter to the Industrial Court. Unfortunately, the judge did not wish to take sides and he ordered the job to be shared. When this proved impractical, the General Manager settled the issue himself by timing a representative from

70. Jack Egerton, Notes from Boilermakers' Journals, 1915-1926, *Boilermakers' Quarterly Report*, Vol. 16, Jan. 1919, p. 18. UQFL

each union and then examining the quality of his work. Bob Cole recalls the demonstration he participated in:

I made a sanitary pan and so did a plumber. I left him for dead as far as time was concerned and mine was a pretty good job, nice and round, but his was oval-shaped. The bosses gave the plumbers another gross to do and they had a terrible time. So they never got any more sanitary pans to make and the sheeties got them all.⁷¹

Disputes also arose where metal met wood. The AEU often protested that fitters should carry out repairs to rolling stock bogies rather than carpenters even though, especially in the early decades, the bogies were a combination of timber and metal.⁷²

Technological change also sparked some demarcation disputes, with different unions laying claim to new materials, equipment and processes which existing awards did not cover.⁷³ Again, it was the elitist AEU which instigated most of these claims. For example, the introduction of fibrolite sheeting in the early 1920s proved a contentious issue between the AEU's plumbers and the ASCJ's carpenters. The new building material was open to competition, being neither metal nor timber and covered in neither tradesmen's awards. The ASCJ immediately and successfully applied to the court for a variation of the Building Trades Award–State to clarify 'the vexed question' of fibrolite in its favour.⁷⁴ The AEU counter-claimed this greatly deprived its plumbers of work because builders were increasingly using corrugated fibrolite for roofing in preference to the conventional but more expensive corrugated iron sheets. The AEU considered a 'fair line of demarcation' would be for plumbers to attach roofing fibrolite, as this required additional plumbing work for guttering and downpipes, and for carpenters to apply the material to walls in place of timber.⁷⁵ However, the Industrial Court ruled that fibrolite roofing was the province of carpenters because their skills were better suited to such work.⁷⁶ By the late 1930s, the issue still caused tension between workers on the job even if sorted out officially. The

71. Cole interview. One gross equals 12 dozen or 144.

72. Organising Delegates' Reports, *AEU Monthly Journal*, June 1926, p. 17.

73. Martin, *Trade Unions in Australia*, p. 99.

74. Building Trades Award–State, Application for Variation, *QGG*, 1925, Vol. 125, No. 19, 20 July, p. 206.

75. Corrugated iron sheets were also frequently used for wall application in workshops and factories and, for example, in the rear wall of Trades Hall, but this point was not raised in the application or judgment.

76. *AEU Monthly Journal*, June 1925, p. 20; The court considered the most suited tradesman was a slate tiler but, in the absence of such workers in Queensland, a carpenter was next best qualified.

ASCJ complained about plumbers applying fibrolite roofing just as it sometimes had to rebuke its errant carpenters for applying roofing iron.⁷⁷ Certainly some of these cases would have been through ignorance of the award but others were probably quite deliberate flouting of regulations.

The classic demarcation case that festered for decades in the railway was over welding. Initially, the Boilermakers' Society secured the new task of operating the oxy-acetylene plant for its members; however, it soon found itself challenged by the ASE, the predecessor of the AEU.⁷⁸ For many years, the latter's efforts apparently proved fruitless in gaining the task for its members because, in 1939, the AEU organiser reported that boilermakers still held 'a monopoly on that class of work' in Rockhampton.⁷⁹ As well as having demarcation ramifications, there was a practical problem with boilermakers doing all the welding. Any materials requiring welding had to be transferred from other locations to the boilermakers' shop and back again. This proved a lengthy and inconvenient procedure, particularly with large and heavy items from disassembled locomotives.⁸⁰

The AEU's solution to this problem was for each shop to do its own welding and it called a meeting of all unions interested in this idea.⁸¹ As most of the workshops which used welding contained fitters and other metal tradesmen who predominantly belonged to the AEU, this was a clever ploy by that union to break the boilermakers' monopoly and secure the task for AEU members as well. Although the matter was deferred until after the war, the AEU jealously guarded its new domain when finally secured. In 1952, it instituted court action against the Boilermakers' Society over the new task of welding flanges on diesel fuel pipes. The magistrate inspected the job and subsequently ruled that the task was the province of a fitter's welder. The AEU rigidly upheld this decision despite numerous requests from the Boilermakers' Society for a compromise.⁸²

77. ASCJ minutes, 26 Apr. 1937 and 9 Feb. 1939. JOL OMEQ 25/8/4

78. Egerton, 'Notes from Boilermakers' Journals', p. 18. UQFL

79. *AEU Monthly Journal*, June 1939, p. 20.

80. Cole, discussion.

81. *AEU Monthly Journal*, June 1939, p. 20.

82. *ibid.*, Sept. 1952, p. 17 and Oct. 1952, p. 29.

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As with many other demarcation issues in the railway, the AEU fiercely protected the superior position of its members. Securing and protecting members' rights to certain jobs against the claims of other unions sometimes called upon a degree of deviousness and a temporary and superficial unity against the boss as a means to an end. In 1917, the court had ruled that no further labourers were to do what it considered a fitter's work in the lifting gang which dismantled, repaired and reassembled rolling stock. At the same time, the court ruled that the unskilled lifters already in the gang were not to be dismissed. In 1924, the department doubled the gang by employing four more men, but only on a lifter's pay rate which was 3s a day below that of a fitter. As the new men were members of the ARU, the all-grade union on several occasions unsuccessfully applied to have their rate increased in line with the job performed. In desperation, the ARU finally approached its arch-enemy, the AEU, for assistance. This at first appears a strange alliance considering it was at the height of their recruitment war, with vehement accusations of mutual poaching passing back and forth. When the administration again refused to pay the higher rate after a combined union delegation and a general workshops meeting, the unions jointly appealed to the court. Nevertheless, the AEU organiser reassured members in the monthly union journal that 'our interests are being well safeguarded in the matter'.⁸³ Once the court had ruled that the lifters were indeed doing a fitter's work and must be paid as such, the AEU immediately claimed the positions for tradesmen fitters and, as expected, those appointed were all members of that union.⁸⁴

That the ARU could be manipulated in such a way perhaps indicates a degree of naivety in its officials, but more likely it was indicative of the ARU's determination to seek wage justice for workers and great confidence in its ability to subsequently entice the fitters into its own ranks. In the short-term however, neither union gained a victory over the administration. Reluctantly conceding to the directions of the court in employing and paying fitters, the administration retaliated by withdrawing the remaining lifters from the

83. *ibid.*, Feb. 1924, pp. 13 and 14.

84. *ibid.*, Sept. 1924, p. 15.

gang so that the tradesmen had to do the labouring as well as the actual repairs. Exasperated with the intransigence of the railway officials despite negotiations, the AEU decided to approach the Minister for Railways, who at the time was local member Jimmy Larcombe, to intercede on their behalf.⁸⁵ This initiative must have proved effective because there was no further union complaint about the problem in the AEU's journal.

Disciplining the Ranks

Because the strength and success of unionism depended upon worker solidarity, it was essential that unions were ever-vigilant for members who infringed the provisions of industrial awards or went against union rules or principles. As Chapter 7 indicated about employers, award infringements by unionists were far less likely to occur in places like the railway, meatworks and wharves where there was a time-keeper and pay-clerk and where members were under the scrutiny of a shop steward or delegate and fellow unionists. Small businesses with a few employees who developed loyalty to or friendship with the owner, or could be easily intimidated and exploited in isolation from union view, provided a major source of award infringements. But even for these isolated or unsupervised workers, claiming ignorance of the award—as many did—was no excuse for infringing prescribed industrial standards. By law, employers had to display prominently a legible copy of the relevant award wherever a particular trade was carried out.⁸⁶ During the 1920s and 1930s, the problem became particularly widespread with very high unemployment, low wages and a chance for some extra pay all being powerful incentives to comply with employers' pressure to evade awards.⁸⁷

AMIEU secretary Len Haigh constantly complained that retail members in butcher shops and slaughter yards were working out of hours. Even if employers did pay overtime,

85. *ibid.*, Dec. 1924, p. 18 and Jan. 1925, p. 17.

86. For example, as included in Carting Award—Central and Southern Divisions, *QGG*, 1924, Vol. 122, No. 84, 10 Apr., p. 1103, s. 25.

87. Evan Schwarten, interviewed 10 May 1996.

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it was illegal for workers to exceed prescribed hours without the approval of the Industrial Inspector and agreement of the union. The raids Haigh and other secretaries and organisers made on shops and factories in the company of the government officer, therefore, were as much to catch errant members as to catch exploitative bosses. Union officials had to work unusual hours to catch some offending members. Haigh reported that, on one particular Saturday, he had seen 85% of retail members working 'long before' the normal starting time of 5.30 a.m. The Central District Council (CDC) resolved that 'drastic action should be taken to create discipline' among retail members on this point.⁸⁸ Ironically, the worst offenders for the AMIEU were government employees at the State Butcher Shop rather than those in private butcheries. The CDC summonsed one state employee, William Donnelly, for carting carcasses from the slaughter yard to the shop at 4.40 a.m. one Saturday. Haigh had called a councillor from his bed to witness the offence in that instance. On the following Monday, Haigh and President Ilott had visited the shop and found that Donnelly had signed the time book as starting at 8.00 a.m. for the morning in question. Donnelly received a £5 fine for working out of hours, falsifying the time book and accepting incorrect wages.⁸⁹ As well as a union fine, there was also the charge brought by the Industrial Inspector. On one occasion Haigh pleaded guilty on behalf of ten members for not signing the time book, for which offence each man received a 5s fine and 3s 6d court costs.⁹⁰

Of all the local secretaries, Frank Conlon proved to be the most officious in apprehending contraveners of awards or union by-laws. Any carter allowing a boy to ride on his delivery vehicle, for instance, could be doing another member out of an offsider's job, whether in collusion with the boss or not. The union summonsed and fined John Hay and David Coulter one guinea each for allowing boys supposedly on the way home from school to accompany them on ice-carts. Both men denied the boys were helping with deliveries but admitted that they did buy the boys 'an occasional ginger beer'. Additionally,

88. AMIEU CDC Minutes, 14 Apr. 1925. CCQC J19/940 5

89. *ibid.*, 23 Feb. 1928. CCQC J19/940 7

90. *ibid.*, 14 July 1925. CCQC J19/940 6

the committee reinforced its authority by fining Hay another guinea for his resentful aside of 'I hope you grow fat on your guinea' as he left the meeting.⁹¹ At the same time, the union readily permitted Ben Etherden to have a boy to help with deliveries because he could produce a medical certificate as evidence of an injured knee.⁹²

Carters and drivers often had a difficult job convincing Conlon that they were not working out of hours, particularly in the days of horse-drawn lorries. On one occasion, the union summonsed Alex Hare after Conlon saw him 'working' in Harrups' soft-drink depot at 4.30 a.m. Hare claimed that it was his responsibility to feed the horses every morning and gave assurances that he had not attended to any of the motor trucks that morning although 'perhaps sometimes he did'. He escaped with a caution and was told that, forthwith, he was to feed the horses and leave the premises immediately.⁹³ Less lucky was Percy Mason, fined 10s for similarly entering a yard early. That punishment was seemingly enough for Mason who paid up his dues and resigned from the union to seek alternative work.⁹⁴

One carter, Alf Pastourel, enquired at a FCDIU meeting whether it would be breaching the award if men arriving at work early went into the yard and just sat down 'doing nothing for the boss' until the authorised 7.30 a.m start. He claimed that 'it did not look nice to the passerbys to see them sitting around like a lot of gins waiting for the time to pass'. His comparison of the men with Aboriginal women seemingly offended some members because at that stage 'things took a lively turn' in the meeting, with 'much cross-firing'. After the president had restored order, Frank Conlon declared that it was indeed committing a breach to enter the yard early because 'one thing led to another and before long they would be catching horses' before starting time.⁹⁵

91. ARTWU Minutes, 18 May 1927 and 13 June 1927. One guinea equalled £1 1s. CCQC P16/1952 7

92. *ibid.*, 11 July 1927.

93. FCDIU Minutes, 16 Apr. 1924. CCQC P16/1952 5

94. *ibid.*, 27 Apr. 1914. CCQC P16/1952 2

95. *ibid.*, 4 Sept. 1916. CCQC P16/1952 3

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ASCJ secretary Joe Cusack also proved adept in catching errant carpenters. He frequently reported breaches of the award by members working after hours for private housing contractors, particularly on Saturday afternoons. Evan Schwarten clearly recalls that when he was an apprentice in the 1930s, he had a close shave working 'on the sly' one Saturday. When one of the carpenters spotted Cusack and Inspector Poole approaching on their bicycles, the men quickly shinned up into the ceiling but the presence of their tools and bikes gave them away. On that occasion, the men escaped with stern warnings not to re-offend from both Poole and Cusack. Fortunately for young Schwarten, they did not see him hiding out over the eaves. As an apprentice, he was forbidden from working overtime and could have been subjected to disciplinary action by both the Apprenticeship Board and the union.⁹⁶

Even the slightest suspicion that after-hours work might be occurring—or was even being contemplated—was enough to alert the secretary. Joe Cusack reported to the ASCJ committee that he had seen a concrete mixer whilst cycling past the butter factory and assured officials he would check that no carpenters were working there illegally on weekends.⁹⁷ The policing system also lent itself to exploitation by over-zealous members by 'dobbing-in' a unionist working out of hours. One Sunday morning in 1936, carpenter Alex Mercer accompanied Cusack to a house where he and a neighbour had seen several members working. When apprehended on the premises, the men denied the accusation but the informant and witness were prepared to swear that work had indeed been undertaken.⁹⁸ Under the circumstances, Cusack took no action but less lucky was Frederick Jones whom the union fined £1 in a similar instance.⁹⁹

Sometimes the intent of 'dobbing-in' was rather malicious and perhaps indicative of a personal grudge by a neighbour. In 1924, Frank Conlon received a note from George Watson stating that Michael Finn, also of West Rockhampton, was regularly starting work

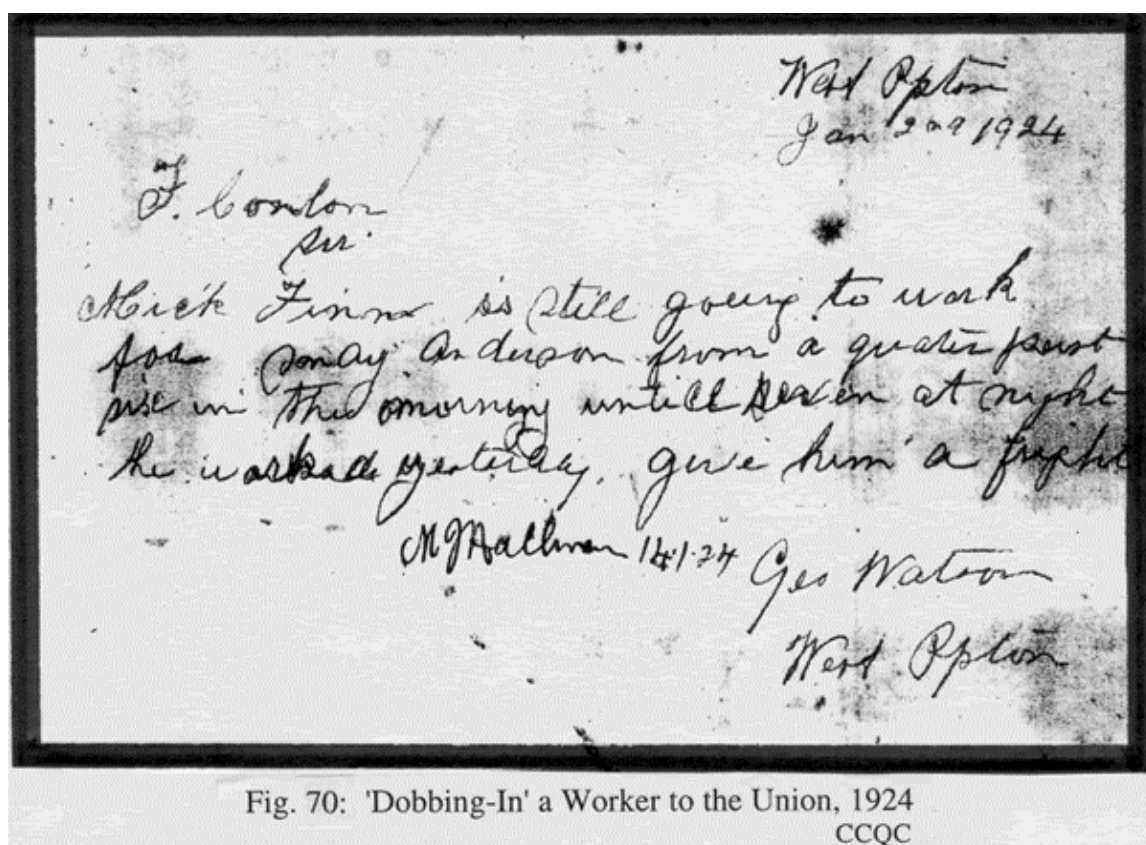
96. Schwarten interview.

97. ASCJ Minutes, 26 Mar. 1936. JOL OMEQ 25/8/4

98. *ibid.*

99. *ibid.*, 17 June 1937.

early and suggested the secretary give him 'a fright'. Perhaps Conlon sensed an ulterior motive because, apart from entering the letter in the inward correspondence, he appears to have done nothing officially about it.¹⁰⁰ Conlon similarly received a report that William Findlater regularly left home well before normal starting time and therefore had the opportunity to start work early. On investigation, the secretary could not substantiate the claim but he still drew the provisions of the award to Findlater's attention just in case.¹⁰¹



Members sometimes refused to pay these disciplinary fines, even though unions had the legal right to impose monetary punishment. In the AMIEU for instance, Roy Hamilton, whom Len Haigh caught working before hours at Osbornes' slaughter yard, simply ignored his £5 fine and thereby compounded his existing problem of arrears in

100. G. Watson to F.J.P. Conlon, 2 Jan. 1924, FCDIU Minutes, 14 Jan. 1924; Electoral Roll, Fitzroy, 1924.

101. *ibid.*, 12 May 1924.

dues. The union instructed its regular solicitor, Daniel P. Carey, to take legal action to recover all moneys owed by Hamilton.¹⁰² At Lakes Creek in the days before workers punched the Bundy clock on entry and exit, the union would simply ask the company to have the gate-keeper 'turn the medals' of any workers who ran foul of the union by not paying fines. Without a medal, meatworkers could not be admitted to the premises for work.¹⁰³

Award infringements relating to pay, meal breaks and holidays also had to be stamped out for the overall good of members and to protect the hard-won conditions of the union. The FCDIU summonsed Robert Humphries for not taking his full dinner hour and for complaining to the boss when chipped by another worker about recommencing work early.¹⁰⁴ The union fined Harold Cheeseman £1 for being party to a breach by not reporting City Bakery for paying him 1s 6d short on two occasions. His transgression came to light when Conlon made one of his lightning time-sheet inspections which he believed was 'not wise' to let the members know of in advance. Cheeseman was also severely cautioned because he had accepted wages in lieu of holidays. He claimed he 'very much needed the money to meet certain affairs and the money was of much advantage at the time'.¹⁰⁵ The union would not accept unforeseen circumstances necessitating working during holidays either. When P. Merton resumed work at McLaughlins' Brewery before the end of his holiday entitlement because another carter fell ill, the FCDIU severely censured him for going 'against the spirit of annual holidays'. Using Merton as an example, the union warned members that anyone doing likewise in the future would be dealt with under union by-laws and fined accordingly.¹⁰⁶

102. AMIEU Minutes, 10 Nov. 1926, 13 Dec. 1926, 20 Dec. 1926, 28 Feb. 1927 and 8 Aug. 1927. CCQC J19/940 7

103. AMIEU CDC Minutes, 26 Oct. 1945. CCQC J19/942 4. Each morning, numbered medals were taken from their hooks on the wall by the gatekeeper and given to workers as they entered the works and were returned to their respective hooks at knock-off time. 'Turning the medal [in]' meant sending it to the pay office so that a sacked worker could be officially paid off.

104. FCDIU Minutes, 23 Jan. 1923. CCQC P16/1952 5

105. *ibid.*, 10 Jan. 1921; TWU Minutes, 27 May 1940. CCQC P16/1954 1

106. *ibid.*, 11 Nov. 1940.

Sometimes youths put their ages up to work at adult rates, particularly at the meatworks. Two lads, H. Dunbaven and V. Henry, received £1 fines for this, as did Kevin Weaver who registered as an adult before he had turned 19 and illegally worked for three days at a man's rate.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, some union members sought permission from the magistrate to work below the award rate because of advanced age or disability. For example, in the application by John Bryant, illustrated overleaf, the absence of two fingers—probably the result of a past butchering accident—would have impeded his working ability and therefore markedly reduced the likelihood of employment if he had to be paid the full wage.

In the interests of its membership as a whole and being ever-suspicious of potential exploitation by an employer, unions generally opposed applications to work at below-award rates. This was the case with the FCDIU/ARTWU's objection to the request by one member, Alfred Woodhouse, to work feeding and grooming horses at J.M. Headrick and Company's warehouse. Woodhouse claimed that ill health prevented him driving a lorry or doing any heavy work and that Headricks had offered him £2 10s per week and free housing as payment for stable work. The union's stance was that Headricks should pay Woodhouse a full stableman's rate of £4 5s and that the offer of free housing in place of award wages was unacceptable.¹⁰⁸ The magistrate granted Woodhouse's request and, after unsuccessfully protesting against several subsequent annual applications, the union finally conceded the futility of opposition and did not lodge any further objections.¹⁰⁹ While there was nothing the union could do about Woodhouse receiving under-award rates in this situation, it did—as Chapter 9 will reveal was an ironic twist for the union though a tragic one for Woodhouse—have the last word on his pecuniary entitlements.

107. AMIEU CDC Minutes, 19 Apr. 1941 and 8 Feb. 1944. CCQC J19/941 3 and 4

108. FCDIU Minutes, 19 Jan. 1926. CCQC P16/1952 5

109. ARTWU Minutes, 13 Feb. 1928. CCQC P16/1952 7

Form 12.

"THE INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT OF 1932."
(SCHEDULE 18. ORDER VIII., r. 2.)

Notice of Hearing of Application by Aged or Infirm Worker.

To (a) Mr. L.G. Haigh,
Secretary, A.M.I.E.U.,
Trades Hall,
ROCKHAMPTON.

Take notice that I, the undersigned, Industrial Magistrate at Rockhampton
hereby appoint (b) Friday,
the seventeenth day of November, 1939, at the
hour of ten o'clock a. m., the time and the Industrial Magistrates Court at
the Police Court House, Rockhampton, the place at which I will
proceed to hear objections (c) (if any) to the grant of a Permit applied for by one
J. Bryant, particulars of whose application are hereunto
annexed.

Particulars of Application.

Name and Address of Worker J. Bryant, Jones St., Wandal, Rockhampton
Age 45 years. Now in the employment
of no-one, at

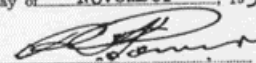
Period for which permit is asked for twelve months

Reason of Application two fingers missing from left hand and general
disability owing to war injuries and deafness.
Calling in which Applicant desires to be employed shopman

Applicant declares he believes the work he will be able to do in the said calling during the
said period will not be worth more than £3-0-0 per week

DATED at Rockhampton this tenth day of November, 1939.

Please acknowledge receipt of this Notice.


Industrial Magistrate.

NOTE.—Notice to be drawn in duplicate—one copy for service, the other to be filed.
As to Service of Notice, see Order V., Rule 3, Rules of Court made under "The Industrial
Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1932."
(a) To be addressed to the Secretary of the Industrial Union of the calling in which
Applicant desires to be employed.
(b) The date of hearing must be not more than seven nor less than three days from date
of notice.
(c) Objections may be raised by any authorised representative of the Industrial Union
concerned.

A copy of the above notice addressed to

was posted on the _____ day of _____, 19

By me—

Clerk to the Industrial Magistrate.

Fig. 71: Application to Work Below the Award
CCQC

Unionists who infringed organisational rules or local by-laws also found themselves subject to disciplinary measures. As the previous chapter explained, to maintain strict control over its members, the AMIEU expressly forbade members from talking directly to the foreman on the job. In addition, any members not acknowledging the authority of their delegate risked punishment. Douglas Jeffries received a £2 fine for both offences in his 'conduct towards [union] officials when chastised for working with a foreman'.¹¹⁰ More fortunate was Matt Horner whose elder brother Alex received a letter from the secretary advising him 'to give Matt a good talking too' [*sic*] that he must recognise his delegate on pain of a fine.¹¹¹ The AMIEU also rigidly enforced the rule about not exceeding prescribed kill tallies—which would benefit only the boss—and fined members like Jesse Harris and William Ogden 5s each for doing so when slaughtering pigs and calves.¹¹² Similarly, the CDC fined five men in the contract beef slaughter team for working one man down and sharing the absent worker's entitlement. Like absenteeism, this behaviour deprived another man of work and had to be stopped.¹¹³

The AMIEU rigidly enforced by-laws relating to official work permits issued by the union at Trades Hall and constantly reminded members of that fact. Members could only enter the meatworks with union approval and at the times and dates specified on the pass. Any unauthorised alteration or marking of the document brought a fine. In the case of Eric Kirkman, the union imposed a £1 penalty for 'defacing a work permit and making false statements' about the matter.¹¹⁴ The purpose of the union pass was to prevent workers gaining employment directly from management and thus by-passing the union's sacrosanct system of labour supply and its seniority policy. Any worker who obtained work 'at the gate' committed an offence which, in union eyes, was tantamount to treason. One such case related to Phillip Fisher who surreptitiously obtained extra work at Lakes Creek as a night-watchman and incurred a £2 fine for doing so.¹¹⁵ Fisher would also have had to sign

110. TWU Minutes, 2 Mar. 1944. CCQC P16/1954 1

111. AMIEU CDC Minutes, 19 May 1925. CCQC J19/940 5

112. *ibid.*, 19 Apr. 1937. CCQC J19/941 2

113. *ibid.*, 22 Feb. 1937.

114. *ibid.*, 27 Oct. 1927 and 25 May 1944. CCQC J19/940 7 and J19/941 4

115. *ibid.*, 19 June 1941. CCQC J19/942 3

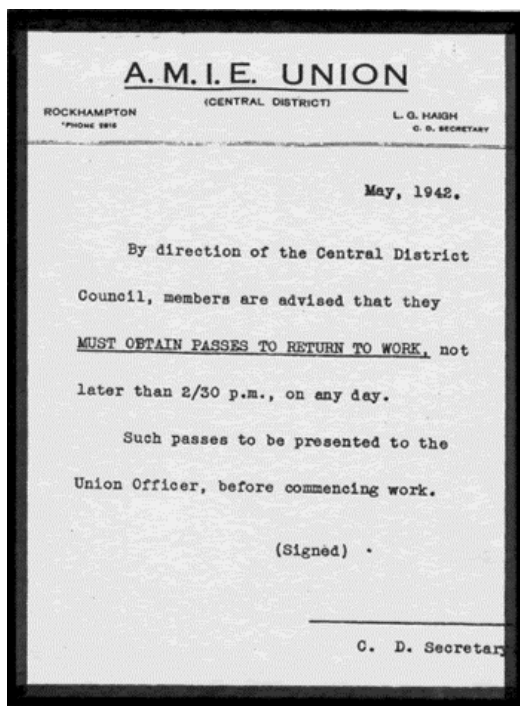


Fig. 72: Union Directive re
Passes to Enter
the Works
CCQC

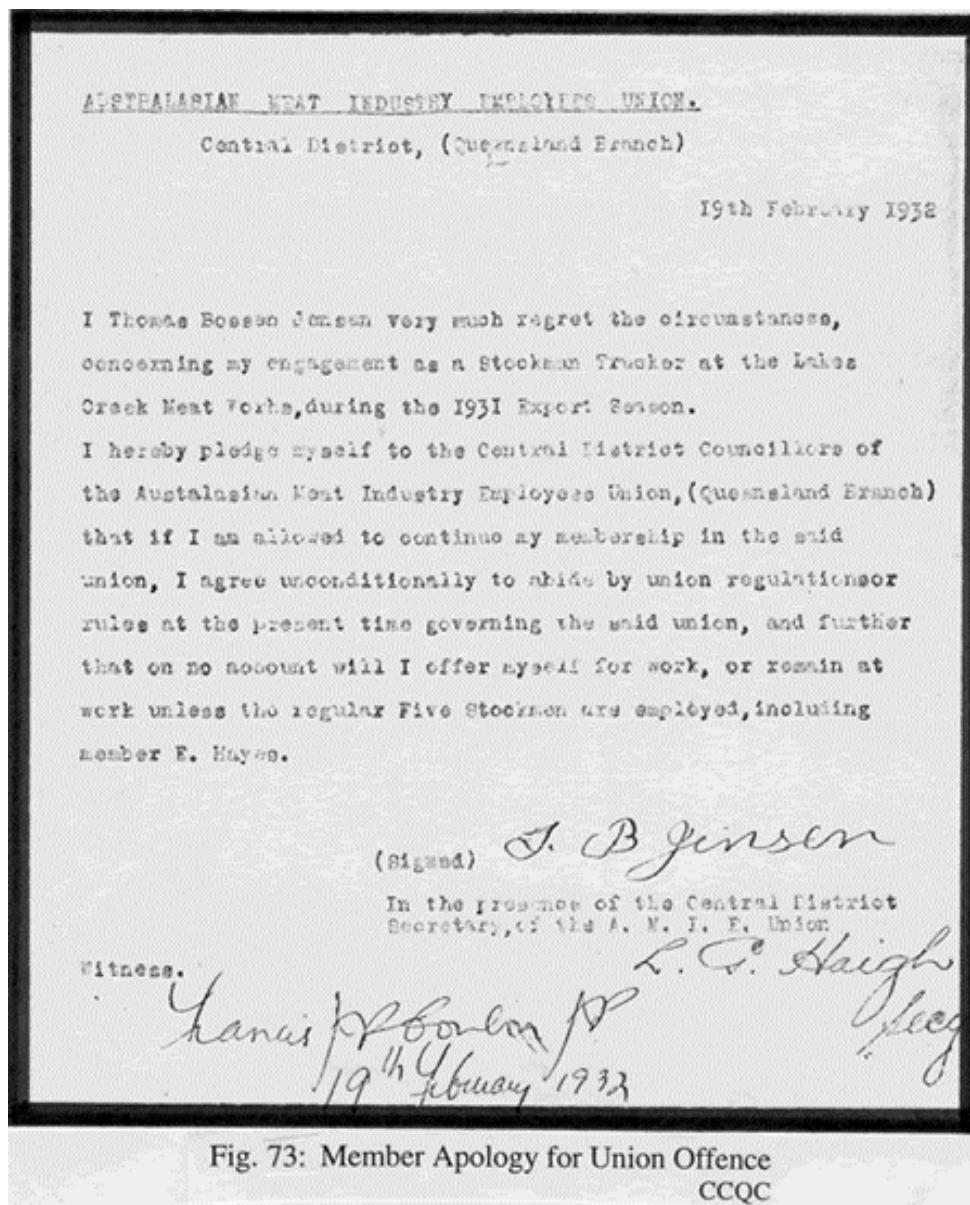


Fig. 73: Member Apology for Union Offence
CCQC

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5 a formal apology and pledge of loyalty to the union similar to the one undertaken by Thomas Jensen after he obtained a job as a stockman outside the union system and ahead of others with seniority. As Jensen's apology indicates, the ultimate punishment for this offence was exclusion from the union and, therefore, loss of employment. In the case of one C. Crosisca, the union had greater difficulty in proving their allegation that he had 'used a telephone to solicit work'. The CDC gave him 'the benefit of grave doubt' and dismissed the charge.¹¹⁶

The WWF rules also provided for disciplining and fining members who obtained work other than through the union at the pick on the wharves. However while the bull system prevailed with its bribery and favouritism, the rule lacked effectiveness. Only after the formation of the Stevedoring Industry Commission in 1942, under which the union gained official control over the labour supply, could it rigidly enforce this rule.¹¹⁷ Lists of wharfies required for work were then displayed on noticeboards outside the wharves and outside Lee Chin's shop opposite Allenstown State School on Dawson Road. After changes following the 1956 margins strike, wharfies tuned their wireless sets into local station 4RO to hear the labour lists read over the radio.¹¹⁸ That way, everybody knew who had authority to work and who did not.

Members who had a second job on the side also presented the union with cause for concern because it compromised the principle of 'one man, one job' to which most unions subscribed. From a practical viewpoint, one-job-only also protected the interests of out-of-work members. In late December 1926, the ARTWU ordered William Jessop, a carter in the employ of Evans' Parcel Delivery by day, to attend a disciplinary meeting to explain why he drove Fred Hopkins's motor bus at night during the Christmas break while there

116. *ibid.*

117. *Rules of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia, Rockhampton Branch*, Rockhampton, 1935, Rule 25 (h) and (i), p. 25.

118. Harry Boyd junior, interviewed 6 Jan. 1999; Melvyn Guley, interviewed 13 Dec. 1998; Norm Draper, interviewed 17 Dec. 1998.

were several drivers on the union's unemployed list. After facing a special committee hearing which found him guilty of 'committing acts in opposition to the principles of Unionism', Jessop then faced the general meeting which unanimously upheld the committee's recommendation of a £3 fine.¹¹⁹

The ARTWU believed it had the legal right to punish Jessop in this instance only because both his regular work and the second job fell under either the same award, or, as in other cases, fell under different awards to which the union was party and therefore had jurisdiction. It claimed the union had no authority over members' weekend activities which came under non-ARTWU awards. Like many members of other unions, carters sometimes picked up extra earnings by, for example, pencilling at the racecourse, manning the gates at the football or working in publican booths at sporting events and the annual agricultural show. In these cases, the ARTWU claimed it had no legal control over its members. One timber carter, who drove for Skyrings' sawmill through the week and worked at the Tivoli Theatre as a projectionist on Friday and Saturday nights under the Theatrical Employees' Award, had legally challenged a union fine for his part-time job and had won the case. Therefore, the union argued, it was up to an appropriate union like the AWU to check that part-timers had taken out a second union ticket and were working to the relevant award standards.¹²⁰

The ARTWU/TWU's refusal to exert control over its members when engaged under another award—even if working illegally—strained its relationship with the SPU. In 1952, the SPU reported that both carters and storemen in the employ of the wholesale merchants, Thomas Brown and Son, had worked one weekend on Saturday and Sunday afternoons moving goods on rollers from one warehouse to another across East Lane. The men received no wages for their work nor did they have union permission to work after hours.¹²¹ When the SPU organiser later heard about the matter, he immediately notified

119. ARTWU Minutes, 30 Dec. 1926 and 10 Jan. 1927. CCQC P16/ 1952 7

120. TWU Minutes, 9 June 1952. CCQC P16/ 1954 2

121. One of these men was TWU president, Frank Cole. His son, Bob, recalls that the firm at least bought the men pies for lunch on the Saturday. Cole interview.

the Industrial Inspector who forced Browns to pay for the labour at storemen's rates. The SPU fined its members £1 for violating the award and requested the TWU do likewise with its members. But the TWU, taking its usual cautious line on the matter, insisted it had no jurisdiction whatsoever over its members when working under an award in which the union had no part. Much to the annoyance of the SPU, all that the TWU was prepared to do was condemn its members' actions. Even some TWU members believed the union could, and should, have punished the offenders for their greater loyalty to the boss, as it seems had occurred on that occasion.¹²²

Like many other unions, the ASCJ firmly believed in the one-man-one-job principle. Following discussion of the matter at an ASCJ meeting, the union contacted the Industrial Inspector and requested his assistance in reporting any carpenters he found doing a second job.¹²³ The practice was most prevalent with railway carpenters who, before the general introduction of the 40-hour week in 1947, could take advantage of their free Saturday morning to pick up extra money by working on house construction or repairs, thus disadvantaging 'outside' carpenters.¹²⁴ The AEU took a similar stance and, although powerless to fine its members, rebuked their actions when apprehended. Catching members engaged in this misdemeanour was not always a straight-forward task. One Saturday morning, patrolling AEU secretary Morgan Lander was cycling past a house and saw what he thought was railway tinsmith and member Bob Cole applying corrugated roofing iron. The secretary immediately dismounted and shouted at Cole to come down and explain himself. On closer inspection, Lander discovered to his embarrassment that the accused was not Cole after all, but rather his 'dead ringer', or look-alike, George 'Dido' Graff. Graff was a labourer for Pearson's Plumbing and a member of another union which, under the Building Trades Award, had the right to work on a Saturday morning.¹²⁵

122. TWU Minutes, 9 June 1952.

123. ASCJ Minutes, 23 Sept. 1937. JOL OMEQ 25/8/4

124. Cole interview.

125. *ibid.*

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The AMIEU readily allowed export members to pick up other jobs when not in work at Lakes Creek. During the slack, which before the 1930s was sometimes more than six months long, it was a common practice for out-of-work meatworkers to line up on the wharves for any work surplus to WWF requirements. In some cases, meatworkers also had a WWF ticket to better ensure work throughout the whole year.¹²⁶ However the AMIEU disapproved of members accepting outside jobs while in active employment at Lakes Creek. In the early decades, the union generally limited its action to complaining as it did to William Nelson in directing him 'to refrain from going helping erect houses' after his daily shift at Lakes Creek.¹²⁷ In later years however, offending members found themselves before the Central District Committee for discipline. The CDC found Daniel Corbett guilty of working on the wharves on Easter Saturday whilst on the Lakes Creek pay-roll. He received a £1 fine;¹²⁸ Reg Nugent was meted out a similar punishment for doing wharf work over the Christmas holidays;¹²⁹ and Alf Pastourel received a £5 fine for accepting work at Lakes Creek through the union for the next day but, instead, worked as a 'casual' extra on the wharves. His action, according to the AMIEU, deprived another member of a much-needed job.¹³⁰

For both the safety of members and good public image, unions had to maintain strict discipline over personal behaviour in the workplace. Union rule books generally contained a disciplinary code relating to behaviour as well as to work procedures and the conduct of union business and meetings. Drunkenness on the job, though not a widespread problem, did persistently occur with some workers. The WWF rules dealt with drunk members whose behaviour impinged on their work either through danger to themselves and others or by depriving another man of work. In 1938, the union strengthened the rule so that rather than simply fine the offender, as in the existing rule, the new regulation drew on the keen sense of group responsibility which typified much of wharfie life both on and

126. Gus Power, for instance, had both AMIEU and WWF tickets and still maintained a close interest in WWF affairs after his appointment as AMIEU district organiser from 1942. He was subsequently made a life member of the WWF. WWF Minutes, 25 Feb. 1948. NBAC Z387/33/2; *MB*, 18 Dec. 1957, p. 8.

127. AMIEU CDC Minutes, 18 May 1925. CCQC J19/940 5

128. *ibid.*, 19 June 1941. CCQC J19/941 3

129. *ibid.*, 26 Jan. 1945. CCQC J19/941 4

130. *ibid.*, 24 Feb. 1950. CCQC J19/943 2

off the job. Not only could the union fine an individual for failing to turn up for allotted work or for being intoxicated at work, but it could also discipline any other member knowingly working in a gang that was short because of drunkenness. They were deemed equally guilty of an offence.¹³¹

Sometimes drinking occurred on the job as well. Les Yewdale recalls of his days in the WWF in the 1950s:

They brought in big vats of rum and when they brought them back empty to send back to Brisbane, we'd get our jug and pour water in it and roll it up and down the ship while the boss was out of the road. We'd all get slightly tiddly at dinner time by getting the drainings out of those big casks of rum.¹³²

Wharfies often covered up for each other in mild cases such as this but, if a man was obviously drunk and particularly if in charge of equipment, the union would sack him from the job and appoint a replacement before the boss stepped in.¹³³ As a further penalty to fines during the years after the union secured control of labour supply in 1942, anyone put off the job for drunkenness, or for behaviour such as persistent slacking, fighting or abuse of a member, could also be penalised by being dropped from the roster for up to one month, depending on the severity of the charge.¹³⁴ This was heavy punishment indeed.

The AMIEU took the greatest number of disciplinary actions against members for illegal or dangerous practices in the workplace. The large membership of the union, the number of 'drifters' who passed through the union's books, the brutal conditions under which meatworkers toiled and the overt masculinity of that work,¹³⁵ all contributed to a higher incidence of anti-social behaviour in the meat union than in other unions. Theft and petty pilfering were common occurrences and the union had to request the company to batten-in the open tops of dressing room walls to keep intruders out.¹³⁶ Other offenders

131. WWF Minutes, 23 Nov. 1938. NBAC Z387/33/1

132. Les Yewdale, interviewed 29 June 1995.

133. *ibid.*

134. Boyd interview.

124. David Atkin, *Aristocracy of Muscle: Meatworkers, Masculinity and Trade Unionism in the 1950s*, MA Thesis, LaTrobe University, 1991, pp. 10 and 42

136. AMIEU CDC Minutes, 2 June 1925. CCQC J19/940 5

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were bolder. The CDC fined one D. Hay £5 for stealing and selling a fellow-worker's bicycle and further removed his departmental preference for the misdeed.¹³⁷ It also imposed fines on members found to have stolen meat from the company and refused to defend any thieves against immediate dismissal or a subsequent criminal charge.¹³⁸ Organised gambling in the dressing and dining rooms also occurred from time to time. The union endorsed the moves of the Works Board of Control to stop this activity and issued a union summons to an S. Wallace for his role in one episode in 1945.¹³⁹ Repeated absence from work also incurred the displeasure of the union because it not only deprived another man of the work but also gave meatworkers a bad public image as malingerers and loafers. For such an offence, the AMIEU transferred James Cook and Michael Donnellan from first to second preference in employment, thereby reducing their seasonal earnings through the later start and earlier finish of the lower ranking.¹⁴⁰

The AMIEU likewise dealt sternly with intoxicated members who, particularly if handling razor-sharp knives or saws, were a danger to themselves, workmates and staff alike. At Lakes Creek, departmental delegates immediately sent home any drunken workers and persistent offenders were dealt with by the CDC. Council fined Ernest Linde for being intoxicated in the freezers but, at the same time, it appealed to the court against his sacking by the company.¹⁴¹ The union's other behavioural problem in the workplace was brawling between members. Whether personal or work-related, physical fights created division in union ranks, disrupted work unnecessarily and stained the reputation of the union. Meat throwing or 'lobbing' was a common form of fighting. In 1945, the union introduced a special by-law prohibiting members from throwing meat or any other objects at each other, on pain of up to one month's suspension.¹⁴² Occasionally, the menacing

137. *ibid.*, 28 Sept. 1945 and 26 Oct. 1945. CCQC J19/943 2

138. *ibid.*, 30 June 1925 and 5 Nov. 1942. CCQC J19/940 5 and 942 3

139. *ibid.*, 23 Feb. 1945. CCQC J19/942 4

140. *ibid.*, 5 May 1942. CCQC J19/942 3

141. *ibid.*, 5 Apr. 1936. CCQC J19/941 2

142. AMIEU Minutes, 28 Sept. 1945. CCQC J19/941 5

object was more dangerous. The CDC fined Albert Ogden £5 for threatening Michael Finn with a .32 rifle at work.¹⁴³

The union did not tolerate the verbal abuse of members either. George Herbert faced a charge of 'filthy utterances' to John Coughlin and was made to formally apologise through the union.¹⁴⁴ The worse insult in union eyes was to impugn another member's industrial character because that reflected upon the union as a whole.¹⁴⁵ William Nash, for instance, called John Lonergan 'a "scab" and a "dirty scab"' within ear-shot of other members and received a summons to explain his derogatory words. Nash claimed he was referring to a bruised hind quarter of beef and not to Lonergan so, despite its grave doubts, the CDC ordered Nash to apologise in writing through the union instead of imposing the usual fine.¹⁴⁶ In the Ogden-Finn altercation, Ogden admitted at the hearing that he had also called a member who came to Finn's assistance a 'crawler'. This abuse exacerbated the primary offence and contributed to the severe fine inflicted on Ogden by the CDC.¹⁴⁷

While most altercations occurred between rank-and-file members, they sometimes involved union representatives as well. The CDC found boner William Lowe guilty of assaulting his delegate, Alex Cameron, and imposed a £5 fine for his actions.¹⁴⁸ The union also had to deal with the case of freezer delegate, Louis Zammitt—the same member the AMIEU had defended against management years earlier—for punching member Bernard Cowley in an altercation over a transfer. As with Cameron, the CDC fined Zammitt £5 but additionally requested him to show cause why he should continue as a union delegate unless he was prepared to conduct himself 'to the satisfaction of the Union'.¹⁴⁹

143. AMIEU CDC Minutes, 9 Oct. 1925. CCQC J19/940 6. The fact that Michael Finn was a member of the FCDIU in 1924 and was in the AMIEU the following year illustrates the movement of many unskilled/semi-skilled workers from one job to another.

144. *ibid.*, 9 Sept. 1929. CCQC J19/941 1

145. C. Maxwell interview.

146. AMIEU CDC Minutes, 20 July 1925. CCQC J19/940 6

147. *ibid.*, 9 Oct. 1925.

148. *ibid.*, 11 Oct. 1943. CCQC J19/941 4

149. *ibid.*, 19 June 1941, 11 Aug. 1941 and 5 Sept. 1941. CCQC J19/941 3

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The tendency to use the fists freely even extended to prominent unionists. In 1935, Len Haigh reported that he had been assaulted by Gus Power who, at the time, was a union delegate at the Gladstone meatworks. The union found Power guilty, imposed a £2 fine and reviewed his appointment as a delegate.¹⁵⁰ Unlike breaches of awards or offences against principles, however, the union readily forgave anti-social behaviour once the member had done his penance.¹⁵¹ Power soon after resumed the position of delegate in Gladstone and, in 1942, won the job of Central District organiser based in Rockhampton. He later became a federal councillor of the AMIEU. Power proved to be one of the union's most popular officials, a fact clearly demonstrated by the hundreds of meatworkers who followed his funeral cortege in 1957. In addition to his organisational skills and friendly nature, Gus Power was someone with whom the ordinary meatworkers could identify.¹⁵² In contrast to the affection of rank and file members for Power, the personal relationship between him and Len Haigh did not improve with either time or the closer working contact. The two were also brothers-in-law who, it seems, had many private disagreements.¹⁵³

Maintaining Union Authority in the Workplace

As well as maintaining a constant vigil for employers who infringed the terms of awards and agreements and taking action to defend the working conditions of their members, unions were ever alert for challenges to their interests, authority and control from within the working-class itself. These threats came from a small minority of workers opposed to the fundamental principal of unionism; from some who put personal interest before that of their fellow workers in providing scab labour during strikes; and from outsiders whose admission to the union would have threatened the job prospects of existing members. Other unions also posed a threat when they encroached upon another's

150. *ibid.*, 14 Jan. 1935. CCQC J19/941 2

151. *ibid.*, 11 Mar. 1935.

152. C. Maxwell interview; *MB*, 18 Dec. 1957, p. 8.

153. C. Maxwell interview; Ursula Barry, interviewed 4 Nov. 1996.

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3 membership or overstepped the lines of demarcation for workplace tasks. At the same time, individual union members sometimes deviated from accepted principles, policies and practices and their industrial actions or social behaviour jeopardised the welfare and good reputation of the union body as a whole. All of these challenges, or even the perception of their likelihood, elicited a swift defensive reaction from union secretaries, organisers and committees or councils. In the highly competitive labour market in which workers toiled, it behoved unions to look after the interests and welfare of their particular members as a whole, at the expense of the concerns any one individual member or of the members of any other union. That was the essence of the collectivism which underpinned unionism on-the-job.

Asserting union authority over one's own members and keeping other workers and unions in check contributed in a significant way to the maintenance of good order and regularity in the workplace, even at the meatworks where behaviour may have been unruly by Rockhampton standards but was far less so than, say, in Townsville.¹⁵⁴ First, employers could rely on union officials to curb their members' anti-social behaviour which might otherwise have resulted in greater disruption to industry. Moreover, although union vigilance in policing awards also caught out errant employers, the prospect of union discipline on top of court penalties also reduced the number of infringements by unionists and, therefore, incidents to which employers became party. A relatively well disciplined membership, therefore, was what Rockhampton unions offered employers. Second, unions diverted much of their activity into squabbles with fellow unions over membership and demarcation issues, thereby diffusing somewhat the focus of unions on employers as the primary threat to workers' interests. Together, these two factors also contributed to the relatively good and quiescent industrial relations in Rockhampton which the previous chapter discussed.

154. C. Maxwell interview; Hinchliff interview.

This mandatory self-centredness of unions, however, inevitably compromised the wider unity of the local union movement as long-standing animosities and transient tensions permeated inter-union bodies and cooperative ventures. It thereby adversely affected their ability to attain many of the higher goals to which the early leaders of the local union movement aspired in bringing much-needed improvement to the quality of life outside the workplace for the Rockhampton working class.