

Mr. Wells at Works Council Meeting.

I must first of all thank you very much indeed for inviting me along to this meeting to-night.

The constitution of a Works Council is far from being a new thing, it is a very old one, and I can quote from my own experience of 20 years ago, when I did with others, try to form a Works Council, and we did actually form it, unfortunately not with much success, although that Council is still running to-day. And I have from time to time sat on Works Councils, but I have always had a fault to find, I never really could express what was wrong with that particular council, and it was only when I came to Runcorn two years ago, and after a period of time came into contact with Camden Tannery, that it suddenly struck me what had been missing from all the Councils that I had either sat on or helped to form during a period of years - what was missing was definitely the team spirit.

We were going to a Council, and the representatives on the workers' side mostly came up to face the management to thrash out and argue over some fault that was in the works itself, but we never got down actually to the point where we really worked together as a team, to put it right. We felt we had no definite responsibility - only just to come and express the views of our constituents. But there was something more than that, we had great responsibility, far greater than what we had ever experienced in the past, and we can only settle these problems by this team spirit.

The Chairman tonight has really expressed a considerable amount of what I intended to say to you, but the basis of it all was that we must retain and expand on this spirit. This is contagious and the only way it can be spread is by everybody practising it, and not being afraid of talking about it. On the workers side that is very difficult, because the Council representative is going to come up against strong opposition from his constituents. He is going to be held up to a considerable amount of ridicule at times, and criticism, but if he has the thing at heart he can face this criticism, and what is more he can win through. The spirit that has been embodied in this Council, has through the Trade Unions been broadcast to many works within a reasonable radius of this works itself. I think that on quite a number of occasions I have myself given Camden as an example of what I consider a sound set-up in Works Council, and I am not saying that just because I am at Camden tonight. I have mentioned it on a public platform, and I am prepared to quote Camden as an example anywhere.



I feel absolutely certain that the spirit that has operated during this last two years will continue to grow throughout the works. I dare say there are quite a number now in Camden, who are very suspicious and distrustful of what is behind this council. From my experience of this works, I am quite certain that the management are being perfectly honest, and I know that the men have been perfectly honest when they have come ~~the~~ to the Council Meetings. I do not think that any of the Committee can be accused of quoting business that has been contracted here outside, nevertheless I have over the last 18 months, formed an opinion from many members that they feel this Council is doing a real job of work. To get new life into the Council is only helping to spread the work that is being done here.

We were going to a Council, and the representatives on the workers' side absolutely came up to face the management to discuss and argue over some point that was in the works itself, but we never got down actually to the point where we really worked together. We felt we had no definite response. We felt to put it right. Only just to come and express the views of our constituents. But there was something more than that, we had great responsibility. We had greater than what we had ever experienced in the past, and we can only settle these problems by this team spirit.

The Chairman tonight has really expressed a considerable amount of what I intended to say to you, but the basis of it all was that we must retain and expand on this spirit. This is contagious and the only way it can be spread is by everybody possessing it, and not being afraid of talking about it. On the workers side that is very difficult, because the Council representative is going to come up against strong opposition from his constituents. He is going to be held up to a considerable amount of ridicule at times, and criticism, but if he has the thing at heart he can face this criticism, and what is more he can win through. The spirit that has been embodied in this Council, has through the Trade Union been broadcast to many works within a reasonable radius of this works itself. I think that on quite a number of occasions I have myself given Camden as an example of what I consider a sound set-up in Works Councils, and I am not saying that just because I am at Camden tonight. I have mentioned it at public functions, and I am prepared to quote Camden as an example anywhere.