

if we can assist them in any way in the upraising of the lower-paid men, we shall be only too willing to do what we can. The request we are making is a reasonable request, and a request that we have a perfect right to ask should be granted. I will not detain the Committee any longer.

2. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] You stated, Mr. Brown, that when you joined the railway service drivers could rise to 13s. a day, while at the present time they can only rise to 12s. 6d.?—Yes, sir.

3. How many drivers received the 13s.?—I cannot give you the percentage.

4. Do you think there were more than one or two?—Yes; about twelve after the 10-per-cent. reduction, but, before, all drivers could rise to 13s. per day.

5. How many hours did they work for that money?—Ten hours a day.

6. Fifty-four hours a week?—Yes.

7. And now they work forty-eight?—Yes.

Mr. S. KENNEDY, Vice-president of the Engine-drivers, Firemen, and Cleaners' Union, examined.
(No. 2.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You reside in—?—Christchurch.

2. And your calling?—I am an engine-driver. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I will endeavour not to traverse any of the ground that our president, Mr. Brown, has traversed. Of course, we understand that there are counter-petitions before you, as well as the ones we have presented. Of course, we do not know what the counter-petitions are, therefore I cannot deal with them. I can only speak for our own petition. Our petition is praying to have the Arbitration and Conciliation Act so amended or altered that it will entitle the Minister of Railways to legally recognise our association. In asking you this, I think we are only putting before you as open-minded men a fair and reasonable request. We are asking you to allow us to do our own business ourselves; and the reason that we ask you to allow us to do this business ourselves is that the men we have hitherto trusted it to have utterly failed in doing that business for us. They claim that they have done it, but we claim as engine-drivers that they have not done it. I could bring a large amount of evidence before you to prove that they have not done it, but I submit that we as engine-drivers being dissatisfied should be sufficient. I will, however, quote one or two instances. When I joined the Railway service about 1884 I started at a higher rate of pay as cleaner than cleaners start at nowadays, and the first-grade engineman of those days drew 6d. a day more than the first-grade engineman does now. That is the position with regard to the locomotive department—and I can tell you it stands out prominently as a fact—that the engine-driver is the only man who is in that position. If you take the New Zealand Postal service, the Police service, and the public services generally, you will find that, compared with other countries, you are paying as good, if not better, wages than any other country throughout the civilised world. But if you take the engine-driver of New Zealand you find, in comparing him with Australia, America, India, and other countries, in comparison to the rates of wages paid to engine-drivers all over the world, that there is a decided drop down in New Zealand. The engine-driver in New Zealand is worse paid than the engine-driver in Australia or America, and he is the only exception—he is the only one in the Railway service that is paid less in comparison. I think we can justly claim that, if the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants have succeeded in raising the wages of all other branches of the Railway service, and have put them on a better footing, they have failed in regard to the engine-drivers; therefore we claim that they do not suit us, and that they have not been successful in looking after our business. With respect to the last amendment of the Government Railways Department Classification Act, they have also neglected us. A reference to the Classification Act previous to the last one will show that the percentage of engine-drivers and firemen earning the maximum rate of pay was to be 50 per cent. of the total number in both grades; but now, under the amended Government Railways Department Classification Act, it provides that there is to be "not more" than 50 per cent., and if you look up the last D.-3, of 1909, you will find that the departmental officers have strictly adhered to this alteration in the Act. Instead of promoting drivers and firemen so that there would be an equal proportion in the first and second grades, they have not promoted a single driver or a single firemen last year—not one; and if this thing is to go on it will simply mean that you will have no first-grade drivers or firemen at all. There was an equal number of both grades in 1908; in 1909 there were 147 first-grade and 343 second-grade. Yet the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants omitted to check this legislation, and to see that the matter was brought prominently before the Minister and the House. They have entirely neglected us in the past, and at last we have fallen out. We have felt for a long time that the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants have not been representing our interests. We therefore started on our own, and have formed a new association. It is not a question as to whether we should be allowed to form an association or not. The association is formed, and we have a very large majority of the drivers and firemen in it. We have between 80 and 90 per cent. It is the recognised society of the engine-drivers, firemen, and cleaners, and is going to remain. All we ask from you is that you should have the Conciliation and Arbitration Act so amended as to allow the Minister of Railways to recognise us, and to make agreements with us. It is a very strange thing that this clause should be in the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. How it got there I do not know, but there is a clause in it that the Minister shall hear the grievances of the railwaymen through the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. Therefore no other union can be formed throughout the Railway service. We want you to alter that, so that any other union can be formed and recognised by the Minister. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants are fighting us very hard. They are trying to block us. At the same time, to show how very inconsistent they are, I may say they are advocating a society which has been formed and recognised by the Minister. The society I refer to is the Railway Officers' Institute. They ask that that society should be recognised by the Minister, and yet at the same time bitterly oppose any alteration in the Conciliation and Arbitration Act—