

3. *Mr. Buick.*] Why is the Amalgamated Society so much opposed to the enginemmen leaving them and forming an association of their own?—They say that we shall not progress; but we disclaim all that sort of thing. We have formed rules and regulations, so that when we are recognised by the Minister we can meet them in conference in respect to matters which concern the railwaymen as a whole, such as superannuation, &c. We can appoint delegates to act with the delegates of the Amalgamated Society, and all can go as a body of railwaymen when approaching the Minister. But we claim the right of dealing with the Minister direct with respect to matters concerning ourselves. Now I just wish to say a few words as to the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the general attitude they take up. It is known to be a very strong society. Mr. Veitch in public not so very long ago claimed that practically anything it asked for must be granted. He stated in public that they were a very strong body, and he claimed that because they have 25,000 votes this society should be upheld. I do not think that is a desirable condition of affairs. I do not think that one man at the head of a society like that should be able to control 25,000 votes at election time. I think that would be a very undesirable state of affairs. Then, again, the last *Railway Review* has an article in it headed "The Ostrich." The Amalgamated Society has come to the conclusion that they can and should run everything. Take the Sick Benefit Fund. They wanted to work things so that there would be only one in the Railway service in New Zealand. There is a very large one in the North Island in the district extending from New Plymouth to Napier, and the Amalgamated Society actually asked them to throw it up. They turned round and said, "No, we will not." The Amalgamated Society then wrote and published an article in the official *Railway Review* claiming that this society is acting the part of the ostrich because they wish to retain their own Sick Benefit Fund. Now, if the Amalgamated Society is allowed to go on in this way it will not be long before they will be able to dictate with regard to almost any matter that they like. I think, myself, that there should be some check, some finality, with regard to the Amalgamated Society. I think that we, as men, should be granted the right of acting for ourselves and doing our own business. They tell us that sectionalism will cause ill feeling. Now, what is the state of affairs at the present time. I can assure you that there is nothing but an undercurrent of ill feeling going on all the time. They do not seem to be able to agree for very long with respect to anything. Why, last year the chairman of the Dunedin Branch resigned owing to internal misunderstandings, and this year the same thing has occurred again. There is no harmony amongst them whatever, and there never will be so long as they represent so many different trades and callings, and have so many different interests to serve. It would be a great deal better if the society were broken up, and each different trade and calling were able to attend to its own business. It is not sectionalism for engine-drivers, firemen, and cleaners to form a union of their own. We are a special line of labour. We have nothing in common with a plate-layer or with a fitter, or with the great majority of the men who are in the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants; and we are taking in the whole of the engine-drivers, firemen, and cleaners, and forming a union of our own throughout New Zealand. We are a separate organization. Finally, I should like to say that in the Amalgamated Society we know that we have numbers against us. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, out of a total of 12,500, represent 6,000 members. They have nearly half of the Railway service of New Zealand. At the same time they have not got a majority of those eligible to become members. We, on the other hand, are a comparatively small body, but have 1,100 members of out of the 1,400 engine-drivers, firemen, and cleaners in the service.

4. *Mr. Craigie.*] You mentioned a difference in pay in America and Australia as compared to New Zealand. Is there any difference in the hours? Do they work shorter or longer hours?—In America the minimum wage is 16s. 8d. on a ten-hour basis. They all work there on the mileage system, and some drivers earn from £40 to £50 a month. They are paid at the rate of so many cents a mile.

5. That is practically piecework?—Yes, sir.

6. *Mr. Buick.*] What is the wage in Australia?—The maximum wage in Australia is from 14s. to 15s.

7. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] What is the minimum?—The minimum in Queensland, where the cost of living is the lowest, is something like what existed in New Zealand a number of years ago. Labourers are receiving 6s. 6d. a day there. The general minimum wage is about 11s. or 11s. 6d. for engine-drivers.

Mr. S. KENNEDY, Vice-president of the Engine-drivers, Firemen, and Cleaners' Union, re-examined. (No. 3.)

*The Chairman:* Will you now reply to what has been said by the representatives of the Amalgamated Society, Mr. Kennedy?

*Witness:* Yes, sir. I am pleased that the president of the Amalgamated Society admits that we have grievances, but we have not come here to put our grievances before you. That part of his statement is entirely outside the question. It is not a matter of grievances. We have not come here with grievances. We have formed an association of engine-drivers, firemen, and cleaners, and we have come here to-day to ask you to have the Conciliation and Arbitration Act so altered that that anomaly which exists and which prevents our having official recognition will be removed. We ask you to have that remedied, so that there will be no bar to the Minister of Railways recognising us. We have not come with any grievances. The grievances we have mentioned have been simply brought forward to prove our case—namely, that the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants does not suit us, and that we have therefore left it and formed another union of our own, and that in future we intend to do our own business. If we cannot get recognition from the Minister it will certainly be a great drawback to us. It will be a blow to us; but, at the same time, the members of the association are determined that they will not go back to the Amalga-