

mated Society. We will keep our own association together, and it is to be very much regretted if we are forced to do the best we can under such circumstances, such as to join the Trades Council or become federated with the Australian unions. We think that this would be a deplorable thing—that we should have to go and federate with Australia. But that would be the only course open to us. Therefore we pray you to allow us official recognition, so that anything of that kind will not be necessary. Mr. Veitch does not admit that we have a large number of members. He can rest assured that we have over a thousand. We claim eleven hundred. Our membership has been going up. Mr. Veitch also referred to the statement made by Mr. Brown to the effect that he started as a cleaner at 5s. 6d. Mr. Veitch said that because of the weakness of the Amalgamated Society in numbers they could not prevent the cleaners' wages being reduced to 3s. 6d.; but Mr. Veitch is wrong: the cleaners' wages were reduced to 3s. 6d. only about nine or ten years ago, and they were a strong society then—

*A Delegate:* Twenty years ago cleaners' wages were 3s. 6d.

*Witness:* I do not think so. At any rate, eight years ago the cleaners' rate of wage was 3s. 6d., so that eight years ago the society was unable to get it raised, and they have not increased comparatively very much during that time. The greatest concession that railwaymen ever secured they procured from a Conservative Government, when the Amalgamated Society was only a thousand strong—and that was the nine-hours day. That does not look as if the society, because of its six or seven thousand, is going to get anything it asks for, and is going to control the legislation of the country. That is about all I have to say with respect to what Mr. Veitch has stated. Now, Mr. Mack claims that the enginemmen, firemen, and cleaners have not only had their fair share of representation on the Amalgamated Society, but that they have had more than their fair share of representation. We admit that. We do not dispute it. But we certainly object to the quality of the men who have appeared for the locomotive department on the executive of the Amalgamated Society. They are below standard; they are not up to grade; and if they had had to depend upon the engine-drivers, firemen, and cleaners to put them into their positions they would never have got them. Mr. Veitch has resigned his seat on the Appeal Board, and it is a well-known fact that he has not got a following in Wanganui amongst his fellow-workers. He represents a minority of the locomotive-men of Wanganui. He knows perfectly well he has not got the confidence of the locomotive-men. I do not think there is a single locomotive-man on the executive of the Amalgamated Society at the present time who would have a hope of getting there if he had to depend upon the vote of his own branch of the Railway service. We claim that these men do not represent us. We wish to have our own representatives, and we wish to go to the Minister with our own business. Now, Mr. Mack spoke about the petition which was sent round—the petition which is now before the Committee. I will refer to a petition which the Amalgamated Society sent round to the whole of the members of the New Zealand locomotive staff a few months ago, when they knew we had got a footing. They thought we should be stamped out, and they sent a petition round amongst the locomotive-men, and this petition asked that the locomotive-men's grievances should be sent to the Minister of Railways through the Amalgamated Society; and they could only get 280 signatures out of a possible 1,400—a very small proportion. That shows conclusively that the men wish their business to go through their own association. Mr. Mack, when speaking of sectionalism, said it was something like granting dairy-farmers one union and agricultural farmers another union. I think he has rather overdrawn that comparison. It is not proposed that all the different trades and callings should have separate organizations, such as the shunters, the porters, &c. We, for instance, are including not only drivers, but firemen and cleaners also in our union, and the whole of them throughout the Dominion of New Zealand. That is not sectionalism. Practically the whole of the men concerned in that calling are in our union, and we claim that we have a right to have them there. Now, the general secretary of the Amalgamated Society claims that they are now increasing in numbers, and each *Review* as it comes out claims increasing membership. Now, I think the Amalgamated Society if they were wise would allow the drivers and firemen to do their own business. They surely cannot claim that we are doing their society much harm by wanting to leave them when they are increasing their membership so rapidly. Mr. Mack says he does not think a hundred members of the locomotive branch have left the society. If he does not know, he has yet to learn that two or three hundred have sent their resignations in to their society—

*Mr. Veitch:* That is not so.

*Witness:* Why, there were 166 resignations in the Canterbury Branch alone. Another charge made against our association is that when we started at first we claimed we were going to assist and strengthen the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. That is absolutely incorrect: we have never made any such claim. We started our union to help ourselves. About six years ago there was a small society formed in Christchurch by the drivers, firemen, and cleaners. They met on Sunday afternoons and did their business, and when their business was done they took it round to the branch secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. Now, that society did work to assist the Amalgamated Society. But that was about six years ago. This society which we are representing has only been in existence sixteen months. This society was started sixteen months ago by a resolution at a meeting of engine-drivers, firemen, and cleaners. Now, since the association has been formed no such assertion has been made by us. We hope that, as time goes on and we each do our own business, we shall forget our differences and be able to assist them in anything they want doing, and we trust that they will come round and help us should we require their assistance. We do not want to quarrel with them. There is another matter I should like to refer to: you will see from day to day reports that local branches of the Amalgamated Association of Railway Servants have carried resolutions that they have no faith in the Engine-drivers and Firemen's Union, &c. Now, these resolutions are being carried at the suggestion of the general secretary of the Amalgamation Society, who has written to all the branches to that effect. It would naturally be supposed that such resolutions were carried by locomotive-men; but no such