

a large extent why the engine-drivers have now got a separate organization. They say, "Let us have a union which will confine itself solely to our interests, and then, instead of being submerged with the large body of underpaid labour, we shall get our wishes represented"; and, so far as that point is concerned, I am prepared to say that I think they are right. With regard to the other matters discussed it would not be proper for me to express any opinion. I should only like to say this: that, speaking as a public man, the conclusion I have come to is this: that they should not completely separate themselves from the Amalgamated Society. If they can get the recognition they ask for, then the two bodies should federate together and work side by side, and then, so far as their own particular affairs are concerned, they would be the correct representatives of the men. I think it would be improper for me to take up any more time, and there is only one other point that I wish to draw your attention to, and that is this: that the Amalgamated Society, as you have already been told, represents only about half, or perhaps a little more than half, of the total number employed in the Railway service, while on the other hand the petitioners are able to say that they represent over 90 per cent. of the men who are capable of belonging to their organization. They are the petitioners, and appearances are certainly in their favour on that point.

Mr. W. A. VEITCH, President, Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, examined. (No. 6.)

*The Chairman:* You reside at—?

*Witness:* I am an engine-driver, stationed at Wanganui. Mr. Chairman, I am not going to be very lengthy in my remarks. I find myself in the fortunate position that I can agree with a great deal of what has been stated by these gentlemen whom I am opposing, in regard to the grievances of the locomotive-men. I, as head of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, admit that the locomotive-men have grievances, and considerable grievances, which I think should be rectified, but we have not the power to rectify those grievances. All we can do is to represent them, and I claim that on behalf of the locomotive-men we have done everything that it is possible for us to do in that direction. Mr. Kennedy made some remarks about the Classification List. That list, which we have only just received, has been a very great disappointment to us, as we hoped for something very much better than that for the railwaymen of New Zealand. Depression has been prevalent in the country, unfortunately, and, to my mind, the whole of the effect of that depression has been shouldered by the staff. That, I think, is not fair. Some years ago the Government instituted the 3-per-cent. policy. That policy, you all know, was instituted by Sir Joseph Ward when he was Minister for Railways. He reduced the railway charges very considerably in order to bring the profits of the Department down to 3 per cent. Since then on every occasion on which the profits of the Railway Department have risen above 3 per cent., further concessions have been granted to the public. It is only fair to say that some concessions have been given to the staff, but now, when depression has come along, we are expected to shoulder the whole of the loss it has caused, while the public is not asked to repay one single penny given to them in reduced freights, passenger-fares, &c. I am very pleased that my friends on the other side of the table have brought this matter forward, and have thereby helped the Amalgamated Society to bring the subject before members of Parliament, and I seriously commend that aspect of the question to the Hon. the Minister of Railways. One statement was made which I regret very much. It was made by Mr. McArley, when he asserted that the reason why we wished to hold all the men together was because we had the same purpose in view that he asserts the labour-leaders had in America—that we were trying to hold the men together for the purposes of a strike. I can assure you, gentlemen, that nothing is further from our minds. I consider that a strike would be a great misfortune to the railwaymen of New Zealand, and it has never been seriously contemplated by us. If a strike by the men would be of benefit to them it would be time enough to seriously consider the position. We must do our duty to the Government and the people of the country. Now, with regard to the statements which have been made that the Amalgamated Society has failed to do its duty to the locomotive-men: I ask them if they can give particulars of any case where they have brought their grievances to the branches of the Amalgamated Society and those branches have refused to deal with them. I say, on the other hand, that the grievances these men are complaining about, such as increases in pay, which are undoubtedly due to locomotive-men, have been advocated by the Amalgamated Society. I have here a schedule of the claims that we made when the Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones was Minister, with respect to engine-drivers, firemen, and cleaners.

Designation.	Grade.	Minimum.	Maximum.	Annual Increments.
Engine-drivers, and night-foreman of cleaners ..	1	s. d. 13 0	s. d. 14 0	2 of 6d.
" .. .. . Fifty per cent. of total number in both grades to be first-class.	2	11 0	12 6	1 of 1s. and 1 of 6d.
Fireman .. .. .	1	9 6	10 0	1 of 6d.
" .. .. . Fifty per cent. of total number in both grades to be first-class.	2	9 0	..	..
Cleaners .. .. .	..	5 6	..	3 of 1s.