

departments of the service shall be represented. I may say that the other departments have been very well satisfied with their representation by enginemen. Locomotive-men are coming constantly in contact with all branches of the service, and they are therefore elected on the executive council. Five out of nine on the council are engine-drivers.

2. You state your membership to be about 6,500?—Yes, approximately 6,500.

3. The total in the Railway service is about 14,000: what would be the possible membership of your society?—We only represent the Second Division, and I cannot tell you exactly the number.

4. Can you tell me what percentage of members you have?—We have probably about two-thirds. There are always a great number of men who are apathetic and who stand out, and there are also a great number of men in the workshops who belong to other organizations—carpenters, boilermakers, &c.

5. You think that is the reason they do not join your society?—That has been the reason in the past, but during the last year our membership has been increasing fast. They are beginning to realise that the Amalgamated Society is a useful organization.

6. You make every effort to get them to join?—Every effort.

Mr. J. WALKER examined. (No. 9.)

*The Chairman:* You reside at——?

*Witness:* Taihape. I am an engine-driver. I think that pretty well everything has already been said. The petitioners claim that they have not been properly represented, and that their interests have been neglected by the Amalgamated Society. Having had a great deal of experience of the management of the society during the past few years, I claim that the interests of these locomotive-men have not been neglected. An instance mentioned was that when the Classification Act was amended in 1907 we neglected to see that the percentages were not fixed. Now, I would just like to point out for your information that when the proposed amendment was sent to us we waited upon the then Minister for Railways, Sir Joseph Ward. The proposed amendment then provided that only 33 per cent. were to be first-grade. We protested against that, and got it altered to 50 per cent., and I asked Sir Joseph Ward personally to make it read that 50 per cent. were to be first-grade. That was not done. But the position is that the blame for that must be upon the Government, or the Minister, or the Department, whoever is responsible, and not on the society. I can refer you to the Hon. Mr. Millar and to the Prime Minister, Sir Joseph Ward, as to whether or not the claims of the locomotive-men have been fully represented to them. Now, in dealing with this question we have to consider, would it be beneficial to the locomotive section themselves that they should be allowed to go out on their own? I claim that it would not be beneficial to their interests. The society is what members make of it, and, if the society has done these members no good, then I say that the men have failed to take proper advantage of the organization that at present exists. There is every facility for them to put forward their claims in a legitimate manner if they desire to put them before the Minister, or before Parliament, or before the management. We have access to the Minister at almost any time and to the management, and on no occasion that I know of have the claims of the locomotive-men been neglected. There has been a great deal of talk about internal dissensions in the Amalgamated Society. Now, amongst six thousand men you will, of course, get differences of opinion, and I should like to ask if, even in the proposed new association, with only a thousand members, everything has gone smoothly with them.

*Mr. Kennedy:* So far it has.

*Witness:* Well, I am very pleased to hear it. Now, another question is that it is very doubtful whether the bulk of the locomotive-men will support this new association. The point was raised by one of the previous speakers that I represented at Taihape about three men. Now, as a matter of fact, there was a petition sent to the locomotive-men there—one of the petitions asking for recognition of the proposed association—and to show you what an interest the locomotive-men themselves take in it I may say that, out of about fifty-six locomotive-men there, only fourteen signed the petition. And it is the same all over that district. A great many men belong to it, but they do not take an interest in it. They seem to have an idea that if recognition is given they will have to belong to it, but at the same time they are praying that it will not be recognised. And so far I am not aware of any one of these men in that district who have left the Amalgamated Association, although attempts have been made to get them to do so. Here in Wellington an attempt was also made to get locomotive-men to leave the Amalgamated Society, but it was not a success. Now, in other countries they have separate societies. We are prepared to admit all that. In Australia they have them. I inquired personally into the working of them over there, and the conclusion I came to was that they are doing no good, and that they are making no progress. I am quite safe in saying that during the last twenty years the locomotive-men over there have made no progress. There is no denying that, though in many instances they are better off than we are. But that is not the fault of the Amalgamated Society. We have asked, and we have represented matters strongly to the Government. We have made every legitimate effort we could, and the Government has not assisted us. The fault rests with the authorities, and not with the society. There was another matter raised, in regard to the Railway Officers' Institute—that they had withdrawn. Now, as a matter of fact, there were never very many men of the First Division belonging to the society. There were a few—there are still some—but still it is not in the best interests of either the First or the Second Divisions that they should belong to the same society, because a great deal of the complaints we have to put before the management are the result of what we consider hardships imposed on the Second Division by officers in the First