

within the four corners of the law in respect to trades-unions. Therefore, under these circumstances, if the Government makes provision for our union to be registered, it must, to be consistent, make provision for it to be duly recognized by the Minister of Railways as a body representing the locomotive-engine drivers, firemen, and cleaners on the New Zealand railways. I must also impress upon you that the locomotive-men's union has within its ranks fully 1,110 locomotive-engine drivers, firemen, and cleaners on the New Zealand railways, and also that fully 1,100 of these men have signed a petition asking for their union to be officially recognized. Now, as a proof that the men are in earnest as to their purpose, I draw your attention to the fact that the petition to the last Parliament was signed by 722, and this petition before you now has, to the best of my belief, been signed by over three hundred more drivers, firemen, and cleaners. That alone, gentlemen, is ample justification for you to recommend this Parliament to extend official recognition to our union. There is and always has been a feeling among locomotive-men that their whole salvation rests in having a union composed of their own calling only. It is well known to you that almost every trade outside the Railway service is represented by a union composed wholly of men in that special trade or calling. This class of unionism is not overlapping unionism, but the representation of a trade by that trade itself. Then why, I ask, should that privilege be not extended to the railwaymen? Is there any logical reason why it should not be so? I most emphatically say there is no logical reason. Another point in reference to these locomotive unions is that they exist in every country in the world. There is not one country, to my knowledge, where they do not exist. Then why are we not allowed the same freedom? Are we not intelligent enough or capable enough of looking after our own affairs? Surely that is not the reason why we are not allowed official recognition? But what is the benefit to be derived from these unions? Why, in every country they are found to be very beneficial to locomotive-men. They not only bring about higher wages and better conditions, but they are great factors in the education and edification of these men. Taking America, for instance, their latest move is for these unions to establish a school of correspondence, a school where the men are taught the technicalities of their work. Every effort is made to bring their members up to the very highest standard of knowledge in locomotive-running and railway-work generally. Now, this is a very important item to the travelling public; it is sound logic, and, I may add, imperative reason why this union in New Zealand should be officially recognized by the Government. Where you have men who are anxious and desirous to improve their knowledge, is there any reason why you should put obstacles in their way? I certainly think not. One of the soundest reasons why you should extend recognition to us is that you are by doing so insuring greater safety to the travelling public. Another factor is that these unions are productive of a more brotherly feeling amongst the locomotive-men. By coming in contact with each other and discussing their service conditions generally it engenders a good feeling among the men. I now wish to read, or, rather, to quote you from the *Railway Gazette* in Australia as to what takes place there. The article is written by a member of these associations, and he says, "A better feeling exists to-day between the men, and a better feeling between the officers and the workers obtains to-day as the result of the existence of smaller bodies of men joining together and coming into direct communication with each other." Now, that is a candid statement from a gentleman who has had practical experience of these unions. This statement, I am sure, can be fully substantiated by our Minister of Railways, who recently visited Australia. Again, I wish to impress upon you that if recognition of these unions brings about this state of affairs, it must be apparent to you that the result must be more capable men and more efficient service, and, what is more important than all, it adds greater safety to the travelling public. Are you going to ignore all these important and logical reasons for the official recognition of our union? Now, it may seem very strange to you to see two locomotive-men appearing here to-day in objection to the recognition of our union, but you will find that almost everywhere in Australia there is a class of men who do not receive the confidence of their fellow-mates, so there can be no objection to recognition on that score, as almost in every country these men are to be found. I am positively certain that it will always be found that it is an utter impossibility to get all the locomotive-men of the one mind, irrespective of the fact that these men do not receive the fullest confidence of other locomotive-men. That is the reason why we have locomotive-men opposing us to-day, and if the Minister inquired while he was in Australia he would find that my statement is absolutely correct in every detail. Now, it has been stated by members of the House that the formation of, or, rather, the recognition of, this union will be the means of breaking up the Amalgamated Society, but you must disabuse your minds of that, because in several States in Australia there has existed for the last twenty years only the two unions, the Locomotive-men's Union and the Amalgamated Society. But, nevertheless, the fact must be borne in mind that where a large body of men are convinced that a union is not doing its duty towards them, then they should be allowed to work out their own salvation should they desire. As far as I am aware, no other body of railwaymen desires to withdraw from the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. Therefore the statement is merely a bogey to prejudice you against our case for official recognition. It is trotted out on every possible occasion, but is not and cannot be borne out by facts. I say this: that if this union receives official recognition it rests entirely with the Amalgamated Society to do its duty towards those remaining in its ranks. Let that society do its duty, and there is no reason why any body of men would desire to form a union. Why should any men desire to leave if they are being attended to by the Amalgamated Society satisfactorily to them? But I do say this: Where any body of men is dissatisfied, then you, as men representing democratic principles, have no right whatever to prevent these men from doing better for themselves if they are under the impression that they can do so. Now my point is this: that it is not for you to be the caretaker of any union, because if you do take up this position I without hesitation say that you are bringing a hornet's nest about your ears; you are simply encouraging that particular union to take things easy,