

knowing that no other union can be formed to usurp their functions. This particular union would simply bask in the sunshine, but you will be continuously persecuted by its members, or, rather, by those who would get disgusted with that union's ineptitude. Therefore it must be positively clear to you that you have no right to be the guardian of any union, but that particular union should be its own guardian. Let the Amalgamated Society prove to its members that it is a very useful body, and they can rest assured that the members' common-sense will teach them whether it is more beneficial to remain in it or not. Certainly it is not your business. I am now going to touch briefly upon the scheme which has just recently been dangled before your eyes by the Amalgamated Society. The scheme I refer to is known as the departmental representation scheme. On behalf of the members of this union I absolutely refuse to touch this scheme. The scheme is in no way beneficial to the locomotive-men, and never would be. The members of this union emphatically decline to entertain the idea in any shape or form. It is simply useless to ask our members to accept it in any way, and there is not the slightest possible chance of our members agreeing to it. Our members are determined to gain recognition for their union, and resent to the fullest extent any tactics of the Amalgamated Society to coerce members of Parliament into blocking our recognition. Departmental representation has never proved a success in any country, and never will. But before I proceed further I must draw your attention to the fact that two of the locomotive-men opposing us to-day are also opposed to departmental representation. Then why is an endeavour being made to foist this scheme upon this union's members. It is simply preposterous. Does it not appear to you as being very hypocritical on these members' part to urge you to coerce us back into the Amalgamated Society through this scheme, which the leaders of the society, who are also locomotive-men, do not believe in themselves. I again state to you on behalf of the members of this union that they will not entertain this scheme for one moment. A large majority of our members have resigned from the Amalgamated Society, and it is absolutely useless to think that they are again going to join that body under any pretence whatever. All that has been said by the representatives of the Amalgamated Society in regard to resigning, &c., is simply bombast, and is all done for the purpose of delaying our recognition. That I am certain of. Now I want to refer to the statements being made that only a few of the locomotive-men have resigned from the Amalgamated Society. That is not a true statement—it is totally incorrect in so far as their own figures go. Now they state that only 700 locomotive-men have resigned. Very well. These are their own figures. When our petition was before Parliament last year it was stated on official figures that they had 1,163 locomotive-men on the books of the Amalgamated Society. Just so. Then, if 700 have resigned that leaves, on their own figures, only 463 locomotive-men in the ranks of the Amalgamated Society. But I am prepared to prove that fully 800 locomotive-men have resigned from that body. Therefore the total number of locomotive-men in the Amalgamated Society is somewhere about 363, and that I believe is a very close calculation. That leaves very few locomotive-men in the Amalgamated Society who are also members of this union, or else they are non-unionists. However, that aspect as affecting our recognition is only a side issue, as I know a considerable number of locomotive-men who are only waiting till this union is recognized and then they have expressed their willingness to join. In any case, the fact remains that fully 1,100 locomotive-men have signed a petition asking for the locomotive-men's union to be fully recognized officially. Therefore it does not follow that because a locomotive-man belongs to the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants he is not keenly desirous of having his own particular union officially recognized. What you have to look to in this respect is the fact that such a large majority of the locomotive-men are members of the New Zealand Locomotive-engine Drivers, Firemen, and Cleaners' Association, and fully two-thirds of the locomotive-men have signed the petitions. Those are the facts which you must look to in order to decide the issue. To be just and fair I maintain that where a large majority is in favour of a certain proposal it must in common fairness be granted. It is not fair to entertain the protests of those who are not directly interested, but who object on purely selfish principles. Those are the points which you must decide the issue on. Now, it is admitted that we have a large number of grievances which the Amalgamated Society say they have no power to rectify, and it is also a fact that our interests have been neglected. That has been proved beyond doubt, but it is simply absurd to go into all the details when certain facts are admitted and others have been proved. But, aside from these points, those who are most capable of judging whether our interests are being diligently attended to are the members of this union themselves. It must therefore be admitted that the members of this union have already decided that issue, and the very fact of their petitioning you for a change is, or should be, sufficient argument for you to recommend official recognition being granted to this union. Certainly you will agree with me that we, as a body of intelligent workers, are capable of being the best judges of the issue as to whether the Amalgamated Society has neglected our interests. Certainly I say the very fact of such a huge majority signing the petitions proves that they are thoroughly dissatisfied with the Amalgamated Society as a channel for locomotive-men's grievances. There is one item I wish to bring before you, although it is not a substantiative of any previous arguments, but it is to show you that we are quite prepared to bury the hatchet and go hand in hand with the Amalgamated Society. What I refer to is the proposal submitted to the Amalgamated Society by the locomotive-men's union. This union made a proposal to federate with the Amalgamated Society which was a very generous proposal indeed, but that scheme does not in any way submerge the identity of either the Amalgamated Society or the New Zealand locomotive-drivers' union. On the contrary, they both retain their entity and work amicably side by side within their own sphere. We consider that proposal a fair one, and will allow the whole Railway service, or, rather, I should say the whole of the members of the two unions, to speak with one voice on matters affecting the whole. Gentlemen, you must admit that in every way the proposal is a fair and sensible proposition. Further it is adopted by all outside unions of specific trades, and is found to answer its