

a discouraging effect upon us as a body, seeing that our oldest and best drivers are at present ranking as second-class drivers, through the withholding of this well-merited promotion. Provision is also made for junior drivers to commence at 10s. 6d. per day this is not adhered to, as 10s. is substituted in lieu thereof, thus entailing an additional 5 per cent. reduction upon them. Clause 2 The scale provides lodging-allowance for drivers and firemen when absent from their homes on duty; but we are sorry to state that in many instances this is left unpaid. Clause 3: Clause 399, Rules and Regulations, New Zealand Railways, reads, 'If an engineman or fireman be not required for his full time upon the line, he is to employ the remainder of his time in the shop, under shop rules, and at such work as the foreman may give him.' Instead of the above-quoted clause being carried into effect, there is a system obtaining called 'booking off,' the said booking off consisting of being simply told by the foreman that our services are not required until further notice. This system of booking off has been going on for the past eighteen months, but not to the extent practised for the last four months. During that period some of us have lost from two to eight days during the four-weekly periods. We therefore specially draw your attention to what we consider an unjust system, causing to us a serious pecuniary loss. Clause 4: We would also respectfully call your attention to the unreasonable number of hours there are required of us for a fair day's work—viz., from eleven to thirteen hours at present—this being the slackest season of the year. During the busy time, commencing with the wool season in November and ending with the grain season in the latter part of May, the hours, as a rule, are from thirteen to seventeen per day; thus from three to seven hours' overtime is worked daily, for which we get from one-eighth to a quarter of a day overtime. In the case of shunting-engines, in certain cases no overtime is allowed if we are out twenty hours per day. We humbly beg that these hours of duty be reduced to ten hours, as we are not desirous of working any overtime, even if we are paid for it. If our petition in this matter be granted, all men in the department will be satisfied, and the clause *re* booking off will be obviated, as all hands would be fully employed. But when the interest of the Department is concerned, we do not object to work a reasonable number of hours, providing we are remunerated at the rate of time and a quarter, as per scale, for all time worked over ten hours, the said ten hours to constitute a day's work. Clause 5: Lastly, there is one more hardship under which we suffer—that is, we are not allowed any holidays during the year, not being paid for Christmas, New Year's Day, Good Friday, or the Queen's Birthday unless on duty. This is, in our opinion, unfair, because if we are correctly informed other Departments of the Civil Service are paid for those days whether on duty or not. Trusting that you will take the above into your favourable consideration, we have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient humble servants." Now comparing the grievances presented by those men to the Minister of Public Works at that time with the grievances we present to the management now, and pushing harder for their redress, I think you will agree with me that progress has been made, and that the Amalgamated Society has done its best. I have been brought to task by the members of the association because I said, when we were last before the Committee, that we had no power to enforce the redress of grievances, we can only put them to the management, and ask the management to grant the concessions asked for. It was said that that was a great weakness, and, as Mr Kennedy and others said, those grievances must be rectified; but there is nothing in that argument at all, because we have not power to force the position. I brought that forward to try and prove to the Committee that the Amalgamated Society has done its duty to the locomotive-men. Now, I desire to read to you a letter which we received from the locomotive society, and in view of what has transpired since, I am rather puzzled as to what the meaning of it is. The letter states, "To General Secretary, A.S.R.S., Wellington.—DEAR SIR,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 6th instant, and in reply to mine of 26th April *re* federation. In answer to your council's request for fuller information on the propositions, I have much pleasure in submitting for your council's consideration a rough draft of our grand council's meetings. On pages 10 and 11 will be found what the grand council considered was the principle on which a scheme of federation could be drawn up between the two unions. It was agreed by the grand council to allow the delegates appointed to work on these lines, and, when a definite scheme was arranged between the two unions, to place a detailed account before them for final approval. As you will observe, our grand council hold office continuously until the next grand council meetings; therefore no delay will take place in getting their final approval. I should also be very pleased to receive a copy of your amended rules to meet the views of this association. Further, I am directed to state that the grand council and council of this association are anxious to formulate a workable scheme, which in itself will represent a 'united Railway service,' but at the same time will allow the locomotive-men power to send their own choice to represent their grievances before the Minister and management. My council also regrets that any ill feelings should have been engendered by the formation of a separate union for locomotive-men, but it gives them much pleasure to say that that feeling has completely passed away and your union, whether federated or otherwise, can always be assured of their loyal support in furthering the interests of railwaymen generally. I should be very pleased to receive a draft of your amended rules before Sunday, the 15th May, 1910, to place before a full council, which meets on that date.' Now gentlemen, what our society has done is this: We have altered our constitution, and brought it to conform to the wishes expressed in that letter. There can be no doubt of that. They say, "We are anxious to formulate a workable scheme which in itself will represent a 'united service,' but at the same time will allow the locomotive-men power to send their own choice to represent their grievances before the Minister and management." We have amended our constitution, and the rules of our society now provide that the locomotive-men will directly elect their representatives to our council. Now, I am not going to take up a one-sided view, and I am going to look at the position in this light: There is a dispute between two parties, the locomotive association has petitioned Parliament and are doing their very utmost. No doubt, they are doing what they think is right. I have no idea