

prevailing prior to the recognition of our society in 1894. I also ask this question, Does any member who is supporting the petition on behalf of the Drivers and Firemen's Association deny the fact that prior to that time the locomotive-men were called upon to work anything up to 100 or even in odd cases 120 hours a week without overtime? Do they deny that since then the time has been gradually reduced to sixty, fifty-four, and forty-eight hours a week? And are they not willing to admit that some little advantage has been gained in the matter of wages? I do not want to argue that we are well off, or that we are as well off as we ought to be, but we are a great deal better off through the instrumentality of the Amalgamated Society than before it came into existence. I wish to emphasize that, and could call evidence to prove it. I am also certain that further progress is more likely to be brought about by such a society as we have than if we split up into sections. Now, we have had a statement made with regard to the locomotive-men who are appearing as opponents to the petition which has been presented by the drivers and firemen, that were a vote to be taken by the locomotive-men they would not secure a majority of the members sufficient to appoint them as representatives. I am not going to argue on that point at all, because so far as that is concerned I am not troubled about it, but I am prepared to say this: that while members make a statement to that effect, which means practically that if Mr Veitch and myself were to submit ourselves for election we should be defeated, I am just as much justified in saying that if the other men were to submit themselves for election they would be defeated also. That is no argument at all, but the point is that, from the commencement of this trouble, and from the very start of the movement in connection with the forming of an association, the burden of the song of the association members has been, 'Give us the right to send our own choice—to elect our own representatives to appear before the Minister and management.' Now, that appears to be reasonable to sensible men. I am twitted with being opposed to that scheme. I am opposed to the scheme of departmental representation, because I believe it is a modified form of sectionalism, but I gave way to defeat straight-out sectionalism. I say that, no matter what the feeling is against me—and I know that feeling does run high, and there is no use denying that there is feeling in the service—when a man gets up and says we are jolly good fellows, and have been doing good work, he is speaking for himself, but the actions of leaders of the movement that we are here to oppose do not demonstrate anything of the kind. Now, if that is the case, that they want the right to elect their own representatives, we have given them that right. It does not matter whether I am defeated or anybody else is defeated. As far as I am concerned, if I can see our ranks solidified to-morrow I can walk out and never go back into office in the society again. I am prompted by a desire to see the ranks as solid as they were in days gone by, and in that condition so essentially necessary to bring about any good, solid, and lasting benefit on behalf of the railwaymen generally. Mr McArley I think, has stated that we have not a rule in our book providing that we are not going to have strikes, or to prevent the possibility of a strike occurring. We have not got such a rule in our book, but I do not think it would be a very difficult matter to get such a rule drawn. However the mere fact of it not being there is attributed to this—that the very idea of striking in the Railway Department is so foreign in every way to the mind of the average railwayman that the thing has never been given a second thought, and the mere reference to the matter here, Mr. Chairman, appears to me to have been made for the purpose of creating an effect. I want to assure this Committee that, so far as we are concerned, not only have we not seriously considered the matter, but the matter has never been referred to, and is not likely to be, either. Now, another gentleman who spoke said that we should be doing better if we devoted our energies in the direction of obtaining members from the ranks of those who were outside the union—the four or five thousand men who were not at present enrolled in any one of these institutions. Now, what are the facts? These figures are approximate. We have in our society at the present day, or at the close of the last quarter, 6,400 members. And what is the total strength of the permanent staff in the Second Division? 6,013, as shown in D.—3; so that we must have an enormous membership in the casual as well as in the permanent staff to have the membership which we have on our books at the present day. Now, Mr McArley made a statement this morning that I very much regretted he did make. I think it would have been far better had he left it alone. He gave as a reason in the memorandum which he read for supporting the petition for recognition of the association that it would give them a freer hand to report breaches of the regulations on the part of members of other departments of the service. Now, those perhaps are not exactly the words he used, but that is the meaning conveyed by his remarks. Now, I want to say this—that if you have a dozen organizations it matters not—a man has his duty to perform, and he invariably does it. The mere fact that a man is a member of a union is not going to prevent that man doing his duty, and I would emphasize this point by saying that, provided Mr McArley takes up that attitude as a reason for withdrawing from the society, if he is looking for them owing to his freedom from them, probably some of them will be looking for him too, and there will be a considerable amount of trouble in this business which is not in the interests of the public, which the Department does not want, and which would not tend towards the welfare of the community at all. Now it was pretty well understood that I was to reply to Mr Milroy, but I have nothing to reply to, because Mr Milroy from the commencement of his address simply gave us praise for what we had done, and really told the truth about the whole situation. A man who has been in the service the length of time he has been knows perfectly well what has been done, and he has been honest and candid enough to come here this morning and admit it, and I am pleased he has done so. I agree absolutely with what he says, that the Amalgamated Society has done good work, and he, with myself and others, is in a position to demonstrate that to you. We know what the conditions are now, and we know the alterations that have been made. Mr Milroy referred to the sectional movement in America, and started off by saying that in a number of the societies in America facilities have been extended to the men on educational lines, and he concludes by giving credit not to the society or the sectional union, but to the officers of the Department. He mentioned that charts and models were