

provided for the men, but the Department here has met us in the same direction, and met us very well, in providing facilities for our meetings, and in providing charts and diagrams. The management have treated us very well in the past, and I am also prepared to say that from time to time, as we have gone along and made requests in this particular connection, I believe the General Manager has gone as far as he possibly could. He has not gone as far as we should like him to go, nor as far as he will be prepared to go in time, but does that justify the claim for the existence of a new organization? My contention, Mr Chairman, is this, plainly and simply that to grant the prayer of the petition some reason must be shown for the necessity for a new union. The necessity which has been advanced by the speakers on the other side is that their interests have been neglected. We hear a total absence to-day of the arguments that were brought forward on the occasion of the last meeting. Australia was quoted galore, we had a lot of Australian conditions trotted out against us. They were quoting first grade there as compared with New Zealand, and first grade in other places, but overlooking the fact that there were a very large number of grades. Now, the strength, so far as our system is concerned, lies in this—and, whether this organization is granted recognition or not, these words will prove to be true in the end—that the fewer classes and grades we have in the Railway service, the better it will be for all concerned. I am perfectly convinced of that, and I say that, so far as our scheme of classification is concerned, although it is not perfect, although it is hardly what one would look for as being the correct thing, still I say that the strength of the whole business lies in the fact that we have two grades, and two grades only, in these particular classes. To argue that we are getting sufficient money would be wrong, and I am not prepared to do that, because I am prepared to argue that we are not, but, knowing that we are not, what we have to consider is the best means of going about getting it. I am convinced that a separate organization will not be beneficial to the locomotive-men themselves. It will be diametrically opposed to the other departments of the service, and it will be the forerunner of sectionalism throughout the system. I am perfectly satisfied in my own mind that that would be the case, although Mr Russell is optimistic enough to believe that it would not have that effect. I believe from my knowledge of the Railway service—and I say it with an experience extending over twenty-eight years—that so soon as you grant official recognition to this particular organization you will find other claims from other organizations. Whatever I have had to say, I want it to be distinctly understood that it is not of a personal nature. I do not reflect on any one personally, and I have every respect for the opinions that have been expressed, but my sole wish and desire in opposing this proposal for recognition is on account of what I consider the best interests not only of all the members of other departments, but in the interests of the locomotive-men themselves.

MATTHEW JOSEPH MACK further examined. (No. 12.)

1 *Mr Brown.*] I think you said there were 568 members in your society, and the other side said there were 1,110 members in their association?—Seven hundred and sixty-four locomotive-men—not engine-drivers.

2. What is the distinction?—They include drivers, firemen, and cleaners.

3 You said there were very few cleaners?—Yes, in our society

4. If there were only 1,400 altogether, and they have 1,110 in their association, and you have 700, that makes between 1,800 and 1,900?—Yes, but the position is that quite a large number of those men belong to both organizations.

WILLIAM ANDREW VEITCH further examined. (No. 13.)

1 *Mr Russell.*] I think you read a letter dealing with the conditions of the Railway service in New Zealand as far back as 1880?—Yes.

2 And the object of that letter was to show that there were very bad conditions existing in those days?—The date was 1884.

3 Then you wish to correct your evidence in that respect, and say that the letter was dated 1884?—I will get the copy of the letter

4. When was the Amalgamated Society reformed and reconstituted?—I do not know what you mean.

5. When was it officially recognized after the strike in 1890?—In 1894.

6. Then for some years the Amalgamated Society was not recognized by the Government at all?—By the Commissioners.

7 Now, do you not know that in the year 1895 the control of the railways by the Commissioners was absolutely appalling, and a new system was set up under which the control of the railways was taken over by the Government?—Yes, I know that—I have never denied it.

8. Do you not know that the effect of that change—the railways being brought under Ministerial control—brought in the whole of us politicians as battlers for the railwaymen?—No, I did not know anything of the kind.

9. Take, for example, myself—are you not aware that I was the author of the great D.—3 list?—No.

10 Well, I might tell you that I was. Are you not aware that in 1895, when the Bill was going through, there was a large party in the House, consisting of Mr Joyce, all the Christchurch members, and myself, representing the Dunedin workshops at that time, which brought all the pressure we could?—I object to words being put into my mouth.

11 Are you not aware that in 1895 the railways were taken over from the Commissioners and put under the control of the Ministry, and that ever since then railway influence has been exerted through members of Parliament for the benefit of the men?—The interests of the Amalgamated Society have been exerted in that direction, certainly