

## PETITION.

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives for the Dominion of New Zealand in Parliament assembled.

The humble petition of the undersigned sheweth as follows:—

1. The petitioners are members of that branch of the Public Service of the Dominion of New Zealand employed in connection with the Government railways under the Government Railways Act, 1908, and are tradesmen or tradesmen's apprentices in their last year belonging to the Second Division.

2. The petitioners are members or intending members of the association known as the New Zealand Railway Tradesmen's Association, which is representative of the following tradesmen: Fitters, turners, boilermakers, springmakers, blacksmiths, carpenters, patternmakers, painters, moulders, coppersmiths, trimmers, angle-iron smiths, forgemen, masons, bricklayers, plumbers, electrical engineers, signal-adjusting engineers.

3. Tradesmen, members of the said association, have for years been members of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and have endeavoured to work through the said society. Notwithstanding dissatisfaction, tradesmen have since 1910 hoped, through tradesmen's committees which were then formed to protect their interests, to remain in the society. The interests of tradesmen have (notwithstanding the representations of tradesmen) not been properly recognized, pleaded, or represented by the said society.

4. The policy of the said society on matters touching the skilled labour of tradesmen is in conflict with the interests of tradesmen. The society has absolutely refused to represent questions touching the remuneration, protection, and conditions of the skilled labour of tradesmen. Tradesmen accordingly were compelled to form their own association.

5. The said association represents a body of skilled labour having identity of interests and interests which are not the same as those of unskilled labour of the Second Division. Tradesmen desire permission to have their interests represented through their own association.

6. Locomotive-engine drivers, firemen, and cleaners, members of the said Second Division, have had official recognition accorded to their association, and your petitioners humbly submit that the Tradesmen's Association, representing a body of labour as large as, and having as substantial identity of interests as, the locomotive-engine drivers, cleaners, and firemen, should have official recognition accorded to it. Wherefore your petitioners pray that official recognition be accorded to the New Zealand Railway Tradesmen's Association.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will every pray, &c.

JAMES McDougall and 57 Others.

## DEPARTMENTAL REPORT.

SIR,— New Zealand Government Railways, Head Office, Wellington, 27th June, 1916.

With reference to the petition (No. 140) of James McDougall and others, returned herewith, I have the honour to report—

1. The petitioners are employed by the Railway Department in the capacity of tradesmen and apprentices, and are members of the Second Division. The conditions under which they are employed are set out in the regulations of the Department, which are applicable to all members of the service. The rate of pay is governed by the schedule under the Classification Act.

2. The Department has no knowledge of what the intentions of the petitioners are.

3. The Department is not in a position to say whether the whole of the persons who have signed the petition were or are members of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, but it is not correct for the petitioners to state that the interests of tradesmen have not been properly recognized, treated, or represented by the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. As a matter of fact, the interests of tradesmen have been strongly represented by the existing society on many occasions; but apart from this the Department watches over the interests of the employees of the service as a whole and would see that the interests of any section of the men were not neglected when making proposals for improvements in the pay or conditions governing the service.

4. These are questions that can best be answered by the representatives of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, whom I have no doubt the Committee will hear.