

mise that I made in the House that I would do the best I could to secure agreement. The Amalgamated Society have gone as far as they could to induce the locomotive-men to fall in with them, but, as I say, the latter have declined to do so.

SAMUEL KENNEDY examined. (No. 4.)

1 *The Chairman.*] What are you?—An engine-driver

2 Will you make a statement giving your reasons why you urge that your association should receive recognition?—Yes. I am vice-president of the Locomotive-engine Drivers, Firemen, and Cleaners' Association. I will endeavour to be as brief as possible, and I do not think I will take anything like half an hour, which is the time you have stipulated for my address, but I should like to state that in replying I may require a little more than ten minutes, because there may be new ground broken that I am not aware of, and which I may desire to reply to. It is hardly necessary for me to go into the whole of the history of this association. The association was formed two years and three months ago, and for a number of years previous to that the engine-drivers, firemen, and cleaners of New Zealand have been very much dissatisfied with the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, or with the way they were having their business done by that society, and there was continual faultfinding. We remained in that society and supported it, taking a very keen interest in it, but there was a large number who were very much dissatisfied, and there was a continual suggestion that we should have a society of our own. That society has been formed now for two years, and has been registered as a union in accordance with the laws of this country. Now, when our petition was brought before this Committee twelve months ago, an argument that was used against the recognition of this union by the president of the Amalgamated Society is contained in a letter which he read to you, and which is also contained in the report of the Committee last year. The letter was written on the 26th July, 1909, to the Minister of Railways, and I should like to quote two of the sentences which were used as an argument against us. He says, "It seems to me perfectly fair to ask that they be required to maintain a membership for one year of 1,000 members." He was trying to prevent our union being recognized, and urging on the Minister that there was no desperate hurry, and he suggested that it was a fair thing to ask them to maintain 1,000 members for one year. That test would prove whether the membership had been gained by a spasm of popular feeling or a general desire to form a separate union." Now, gentlemen, twelve months have elapsed. As you are aware, we did not receive recognition when we first petitioned for it. We have come to you again, and we have passed the test imposed upon us by the president of the Amalgamated Society. We have not only the 1,000 members, but we have a petition before you signed by over 1,000 members asking for recognition, and we have on our books now over 1,100 members, so that we have 100 more than the membership which Mr Veitch required us to keep up. I can assure you, gentlemen, it has been a very hard job to keep that membership up, because you can understand that members of our union, knowing that it was not recognized, and knowing it was problematical whether we should be recognized in the future, and knowing that the Amalgamated Society was recognized and could deal with their grievances, it was enough to damp the ardour of our men, and make them throw up our union, and say, "I am going back to the one that is already recognized." However, notwithstanding that fact, our union has maintained itself, and has been growing during the last twelve months. We have passed the test that was imposed by the Amalgamated Society, and which Mr Veitch appeared to consider a reasonable one, and we have come again before you with our request, and we think for that reason it should be granted. It was said in the House last week that the locomotive-men were not unanimous in their desire for this union, but that is hardly reasonable. Certainly it would be hard to find 1,400 men who were unanimous on any one subject, but out of a maximum of 1,400 men you have over 1,000 petitioning you on the one subject, and I think from that you will see that we have, if not a unanimous request, certainly a very large majority. Last year you will remember we only had 700 or a little more signing our petitions, but this year we have increased the number, and those members are unanimous and earnest in their request that this union should be recognized. To show you that we are unanimous, twelve months ago the Amalgamated Society sent a petition round amongst the locomotive-men praying that our grievances be sent through the Amalgamated Society instead of through the Engine-drivers and Firemen's Association, and to that petition they only got signatures numbering a little over 250 out of 1,400 men. I think that proves that the locomotive-men want this union, and do not want any other society. Further than that, we have eighteen branches of this association established throughout New Zealand, and each one of them has carried a resolution supporting the Engine-drivers, Firemen, and Cleaners' Association, and declaring their allegiance to it, while at the same time declaring that they have no confidence in the Amalgamated Society. The accusation has been made, and it is a frequent argument used against us, that our association has been established to break up the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. I am sorry that the charge has been made against us, because it is certainly not correct. Nothing has been further from our desires. We do not wish to hinder the Amalgamated Society, and I am sure we should be very sorry indeed if we thought we were doing them any harm, or if we thought there was any chance of that society falling through. We do not wish to see that; we wish to see it flourish and maintain itself as the Amalgamated Society should. We have not requested the Minister of Railways to cease recognizing that society, and we do not wish to do so, and would not do so if it were possible. We wish the Minister to recognize it, but I ask, gentlemen, can we ascribe that generous feeling to the leaders of the Amalgamated Society? I think not. We claim that we have been a stimulus to the Amalgamated Society since we seceded from it. If you read the official paper of that society you will find that the membership has been steadily increasing during the last two years, and during that time the engine-drivers, firemen, and cleaners have been seceding from that society. Notwithstanding that fact, they have increased their branches and increased their membership, so that I do not think there is anything in their argument that