

nothing but the mere cost for printing the paper, and I have never been paid one sixpence for literary services by the Locomotive-engine Drivers, Firemen, and Cleaners' Association. I make that statement, and I desire it to be placed before the Committee, because I consider that an exceedingly ungenerous attempt is being made to make it appear that I am being paid by the Locomotive-engine Drivers' Association for services rendered to them as a literary man. There is absolutely no truth in the statement, and I consider it is absolutely unwarranted, and an unfair suggestion to be brought before this Committee.

WILLIAM ANDREW VEITCH examined. (No. 9.)

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

2. Will you make a statement to the Committee giving your reasons why you oppose the recognition of the Engine-drivers, Firemen, and Cleaners' Association?—Yes. Mr Chairman and gentlemen,—The business that we are discussing to-day appears to me to be very much like going over the ground that we went over last year. Your Committee last year heard the evidence on both sides, and after full consideration of the matter reported to the House favourable to us. You reported that you had no recommendation to make to Parliament. Now, the facts have not materially changed since then. The facts to-day are practically the same as they were then, with the exception that we have complied with the suggestion given to us by the Railways Committee in its report. The Committee reported to Parliament as follows “That by internal reorganization of the society the petitioners could always get direct representation on the executive of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. We have complied with that suggestion, and put that into operation. We have had arguments from the gentlemen opposed to us, and I must say, to begin with, that I appreciate the manner in which they have discussed their side of the question. There has been altogether an entire absence of acrimony, and I am pleased to note that fact. However, it is not a question of what their intentions are—we have never charged them with having evil intentions against the Amalgamated Society, but as practical men we have to consider what effect it will have upon the railwaymen of New Zealand if what they are asking for is granted to them. It is all very well for those men to say, We wish the Amalgamated Society well, we propose and intend to work in harmony with it if we are officially recognized that is all right, but what about the experience of other countries where this system is in operation? I say this unhesitatingly: that in other countries there has not been that harmony between those sections that these men claim has existed. We have ample evidence to prove that. We find that when one section of a union makes an attempt to improve the service conditions of its members it fails very often under that system. Then they begin to blame other branches of the service for having pushed their claims in opposition and having prevented their success. It is a very common thing to have the management of different railway companies at Home working off one branch of the service against the other, and this is how it works out. They possibly do not intend to do anything of the kind, but that is the effect. Say the locomotive-men make a move to improve the conditions of their men, and what happens? Directly they make a move the other unions find they must be up and doing, and they begin to push their claims forward, and the management find themselves up against four different unions all working for something different. The result is that the management, although they might be favourable to granting some of the claims made by the locomotive-men, would say, “If we do this we are going to fall into trouble with all the other unions, and therefore we are not going to do anything for any of them.” I do not think the position has been put altogether as clearly as it might be. A great deal has been said, and a great deal of capital has been made out of the argument that the Amalgamated Society has failed in its duty to the locomotive-men, that no progress has been made by the locomotive-men—that is to say, that their service conditions to-day are no better than they were twenty years ago. Now, I am very sorry to have to refer to this. It is a pity to see the representatives of two trades-unions appealing to the representatives of their employers, the people, and using such arguments as those. Here am I in the position to-day that I am compelled to argue that a great deal has been done for the locomotive-men, when, as a trades-unionist, it would be far better for me not to argue on those lines at all. That I say in itself is a strong argument against the sectionalizing of unionism in the Railway Department. Now, I desire to read to you a memorial that was sent to the Minister of Public Works by the locomotive-men in the South Island before the Amalgamated Society was started, and I will ask you to consider the grievances set out in that letter and compare them with the existing conditions of the Locomotive Department to-day, and see from them whether you are prepared to agree with Mr. Kennedy that nothing has been done for the locomotive-men.

*Mr Kennedy* I did not make that statement.

*Witness* It has been argued that practically no progress has been made by the locomotive-men, that their service conditions have not been improved, and that their interests have been neglected by the society. I claim that has been the burden of their song from the beginning. This is the letter “We, the undersigned drivers and firemen of the Hurunui-Bluff Section of the New Zealand Railways, respectfully beg to submit for your favourable consideration the under-mentioned grievances which we are now subjected to, some of which are consequent upon the non-adherence to the revised scale, as submitted by the Government and accepted by us, bearing date 4th September, 1880, and particularized in clause 1. The other hardships are specified in clauses from 1 to 5, and are of much longer standing, particularly clause 2, which has obtained for a considerable period, but not to the extent as at present. Clause 1: The above-mentioned scale provides that 23 per cent. of drivers employed who have served a period of five years in that capacity shall receive the sum of 13s. per day, and shall rank as first-class drivers. Up to the present, in no single instance to our knowledge has this provision been complied with. This has