

of imputing any unworthy motives to them. They are fighting for one end, and we are fighting for another. Now, a dispute has arisen between two parties, and does it not seem reasonable that a compromise should be brought about between those two parties? It seems to me that is the only solution of the difficulty, and that is what we are anxious to do. It has been published in the *Loco Record* that our efforts in this direction have amounted to dirty work. I fail to see that there has been any dirty work. There is no intention on our part to do anything dirty, or unfair, or improper. What we want to do is to settle this difficulty. We realize that if railwaymen once divide we shall never get them together again. The existence of sectional agencies creates irritation, and therefore it may be impossible to get the men together again. Is it not a thousand times better that we should stand together as we have done in the past? It has taken twenty years' hard work and self-sacrifice on the part of railwaymen to build the union up to its present state of efficiency, and I think it will be a great mistake to do anything that will injure that society. At the present time we have many grievances we are trying to remedy, and if the Minister was here he would be quite willing to admit that the grievances of locomotive-men have been strongly urged on him on every occasion we have met him. We have had locomotive-men on the council who have dealt with locomotive grievances, and they have done their level best, and with all due respect to those gentlemen who are opposing us, and who are anxious to take that work up, I assure them that they could do no better. You cannot go into the Minister's office and demand that such-and-such a thing shall be done. If we had the power to do that it would be a bad thing for the country, and we do not want that power, but the fact remains that we must have some protection and some power for our men. Where would be the protection the railwaymen have to-day if we took away from them their strong union? I say there is absolutely no protection given them by the Classification Act. There are the regulations under that Act, and on every occasion we meet the Minister we have to make complaints that those regulations are not being complied with. Now, where is our protection? Supposing the Minister of Railways says,

I have not got the money, and I am not going to pay the money out, where is our power to enforce adherence to those regulations? We should have no power and, notwithstanding the fact that a great deal has been said of a disparaging nature in regard to the necessity for retaining our political power, I venture to say that the railwaymen of New Zealand have absolutely no power of defence but their political power exercised through the A.S.R.S. and that is very much curtailed by their not having the full rights of citizenship the same as other members of the community. Unions outside of the Government service have far more protection than we have. Those are our reasons for trying to keep our hands together. Those who are older hands in the service know how many of our old hands suffered severely in their efforts to establish our union. I can give you cases of men who were persecuted out of the service at that time owing to the fact that they took a leading part in society matters. We have our duty to do to those who have run our union in the past, to those who are in our Railway service to-day, and to those who are going to be members of the Railway service in the future, and I consider it is the duty of the Amalgamated Society to hold the men together, for the reason that we must find protection for the railwaymen in the future. I say that the health and happiness of all railwaymen in the future depends very materially on the decision that this Committee comes to with regard to this very important matter—in fact, this all-important matter to the railwaymen. Expressions of good will from the men opposing us are of no use. We believe them, and we accept these expressions with pleasure, but expressions of good will to-day will not in any way nullify the evil effect of breaking up our union. We feel that it is our duty to meet these men as far as we can possibly meet them. We feel that it is absolutely necessary now that we should come to some arrangement whereby this difficulty will be overcome, but we think it is only fair, seeing that we have made two steps in the direction of meeting them in order to come to a compromise—that it is only reasonable and fair that they should take one step to meet us. We have complied with the sentiments expressed in their letter, and we have complied with the recommendation of the Railways Committee as contained in their report in regard to direct representation. I do not know of anything else we can do to bring about a settlement or to meet these men other than to give way to them absolutely and withdraw our resistance to their recognition. Now, we should be prepared to do even that, and prepared to do it willingly, if we did not fully realize that such a step would result in great disaster to the railwaymen in the future. We have our duty to do, and we must do it. The Hon. the Minister of Railways, in addressing the House concerning this matter, said, "There must be one society only. Whether it would be of advantage to the society or not, there was no doubt in his mind that, once they started this breaking-away it would mean breaking away in many more directions than this, and that would undoubtedly tend to a weakening of the society both politically and otherwise." (See *Hansard* No. 20, Second Session, 1909, page 1047.) Those are the opinions expressed by the Minister in the House, and I quite agree with him. I shall now be as brief as possible with what I have to say; but I wish to reply particularly to what Mr. Russell said, as I look upon him as the leader of this movement, and I should like to say this—that the matter of the locomotive-men's grievances is not the most important aspect of the case, it is a matter now of holding our men together. And the interests of other branches of the service should also be considered. I claim you must have but one system, either the sectional system or the amalgamated system. If we are going to have the sectional system, surely it is only fair that all branches and all members of the Railway service should have a say in the matter of whether the union should be divided into sections or not. Is it fair that the fate of the whole of the railwaymen in New Zealand should be left in the hands of a section of the Locomotive Branch? I do not think it is. I think it is only right that whatever system is to be adopted should first be approved by the great majority of the railwaymen. The whole of this locomotive agitation has been worked up on a misunderstanding. First of all it was said that under sectionalism the men were very much better off; and yet we have admissions in their own paper that the men in