

Wages to be in arrear.

117. In order to prevent the embarrassment caused by men suddenly leaving important work on the railways, we recommend the plan in force in the Northern Island; namely, that not less than a fortnight's wages shall be always kept in arrear, which shall be forfeited if the workman leaves without giving the notice required by the conditions of his service to give.

#### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS.

Dunedin Head Station.

118. As soon as the system of railways in Canterbury and Otago is complete, it will probably be found desirable that the whole should be worked under one management; and in such case Dunedin will probably be found the most convenient point at which to place the Head Station of the system.

Oamaru lines to be worked from Christchurch.

119. In the meantime, so long as the Northern Otago lines are unconnected with Dunedin, we think they can be most conveniently worked from Christchurch, with which they will very shortly be in communication.

Block system.

120. We strongly recommend that all stations should be connected by telegraph as soon as possible, and that the block system should be introduced as soon as the Manager considers it desirable to do so between any stations on a line.

Government special trains to be charged for.

121. Whenever any department of the Government other than the Department of Public Works requires a special train, it should be charged at the ordinary rate for special trains.

Post Office to send officer with mails.

122. Except on trains where the traffic is very small, the Guards ought not to be required to take charge of the mails, the care, receiving, and delivery of which interfere with their other duties, and frequently delay the trains. We think that on all main lines the Post Office should send an officer in charge of the mails.

Book of Instructions.

123. A book should be prepared containing all by-laws, regulations, fares and freights, and all general instructions to persons employed on railways, and should be placed in the hands of every railway official.

Book of Forms.

124. Every Manager should be supplied with a copy of all the forms used in the railway system, which should be bound in a book, and numbered and indorsed for reference.

Law of Carriers.

125. Every Manager should be supplied with a copy of the most recent work of authority on the subject of the Law of Carriers.

Wharves.

126. All wharves should be worked, for the present, locally, under existing arrangements.

#### WHEN NEW SYSTEM TO COME INTO FORCE.

When new system to come into force.

127. Some time must necessarily elapse before the by-laws, rules, and regulations under "The Public Works Act, 1876," can be prepared, and the numerous books and forms printed. We are of opinion that it would be unwise to disturb existing arrangements until the whole new machinery is complete, and the books referred to in Section 123 above have been in the hands of all railway officials for some days before the new system comes into force. It is of the utmost importance that all concerned should be thoroughly conversant with their duties before that period, so that all changes in existing arrangements may be introduced without disturbance to the working of the lines, and with satisfaction to the public. We do not think this can be done before the 31st March next, and recommend that no change be made until after that date, except in the Stores, in which the systems of account and audit in force under the Inspector of Stores in the North, should be applied to the Southern Railways without delay.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Conclusion.

128. In conclusion, we desire to express our regret that the work intrusted to us has occupied a longer time than we anticipated. We thought it might have been completed at Christchurch; but it soon became evident that the whole subject could not be satisfactorily dealt with without a personal inspection of the working of the Otago system. We were, therefore, reluctantly compelled to adjourn our meetings to Dunedin. We venture to hope, however, that the result of our inquiry will fully justify the time and labour bestowed. The Commission has sat every working day, and all day, since its first meeting. Every minutest