

1892.

NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC PETITIONS M TO Z COMMITTEE.

(REPORT ON THE PETITION OF GEORGE ROSS, OF WELLINGTON, TOGETHER WITH PETITION, MINUTES OF EVIDENCE, AND APPENDICES.)

Brought up 4th October, 1892, and ordered to be printed.

PETITIONER prays for further compensation for loss of office in the Railway Department.

I am directed to report that, after having heard the evidence of Mr. Commissioner Maxwell and petitioner, the Committee are of opinion that, although the latter had not received the official notification of his appointment as foreman till 1886, and as he had been performing the duties of that office and had been entered on the pay-sheets as foreman since 1879, he is entitled to further compensation from 14th April, 1879, to 1st April, 1886, subject to deductions for any sums paid during that period for overtime work.

4th October, 1892.

T. THOMPSON, Chairman.

No. 528, 1892.

PETITION.

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled.

I DESIRE respectfully to present my humble petition for further consideration, by way of compensation or retiring-allowance, in connection with services faithfully rendered whilst in the employ of the New Zealand Government Railways.

Particulars of your petitioner's case are as follows: In August, 1875, I joined the service at Nelson as a fireman at 8s. per working-day; February, 1876, promoted as spare driver at 8s. 6d. per working-day; December, 1876, promoted as driver and fitter, at 10s. per working-day; April, 1879, transferred from Nelson to Wellington section as a locomotive foreman of Rimutaka Incline at 12s. per working-day; in 1886, was transferred from Cross Creek to Wellington as locomotive foreman in charge of the whole section.

When taking up duty at Cross Creek, the then District Manager, George Ashcroft, Esq., having in view the peculiar nature of the work required, recommended your petitioner to the then Commissioner, F. B. Passmore, Esq., for an increase of salary commensurate with the important and responsible duties to be performed, which, however, was not granted. Subsequent to this the District Manager arranged that extra allowance should be paid periodically. Whilst located at Cross Creek the duties involved careful and close application, with long hours, for which your petitioner received inadequate remuneration; for although allowances, which were entered in the pay-sheets as overtime, were paid, yet such allowances did not fully recoup your petitioner for services rendered.

Your petitioner severed his connection with the railway service on the 23rd September, 1891, and the reasons that led to this are clearly stated in a copy of resignation attached. (*Vide* Appendix I.)

After leaving the service, your petitioner received the sum of £55 6s. 2d. compensation as for two years and three hundred and two days.

Your petitioner most humbly submits that he should receive compensation for all the time that he was in the service—namely, from 1875 to the time the Commissioners took office. Compensation on this basis would represent the sum of £261 12s. 6d., which, after deducting the compensation paid by the Commissioners—£55 6s. 2d.—would leave £206 6s. 4d., a sum which your petitioner humbly prays may be paid to him.

And your petitioner will ever pray.

GEORGE ROSS.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

TUESDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER, 1892.

Mr. Ross examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] Have you anything you desire to add to the petition—in support of it, Mr. Ross?—The only thing I have in support of it is contained in the papers which I have here. [Papers handed to Chairman, *vide* Appendices A to L.]

2. I do not think there is anything to answer in the shape of allegations against your character, Mr. Ross: the only thing you have to show is that you come under the Civil Service Act, and are therefore entitled to compensation?—I should be most happy to give an outline of things as they happened from the very beginning, if not taking up too much time. I have a document from the Railway Manager (Mr. G. Ashcroft), showing when I was appointed locomotive foreman.

3. *Mr. Joyce.*] What salary were you getting?—Four pounds ten shillings per week. [Statement of the Officer in Charge referred to handed in, *vide* Appendices L and M.]

4. *The Chairman.*] There is no question as to your character at all; that is not challenged in any shape or form—the question is one simply as to your position as a foreman, and whether you were under the Civil Service Act?—The middle of that paper states that.

5. Nobody raises any question as to your ability, or to the different positions you occupied; the contention is that you were not a Civil servant, and not entitled to compensation until you got the later appointment?—My appointment has been as locomotive foreman since 1879.

6. Have you got your appointment in 1879?—The books were never made up. The service register of this section has only been made up by the present clerk some time about two and a half years ago, it was never made until the present Superintendent took charge. After he took charge, they were put on a fair footing. When I was first engaged I was brought to Cross Creek by Mr. Blackett and the District Manager, not as fireman or driver, but as foreman in connection with that section, doing everything outside stationmaster's work—distributing trucks, and working the traffic through. [Report from Head Office, Wellington, dated 22nd September, 1892, read by the Clerk, *vide* Appendix M.]

7. *The Chairman.*] You see, Mr. Ross, the question of retiring compensation is not fixed by the Railway Commissioners: it is fixed by the Audit Department. You are aware of that?—I am of opinion that the Railway Commissioners would not deprive me of any benefit.

8. The compensation was fixed then at £56 6s. 2d., as to the 27th January, 1889, and unless you can give us anything to show that you have received an appointment which will bring you under the Civil Service Act prior to that date, I do not know what we can do.

Mr. Harkness: What constitutes an appointment?

The Chairman: It must be made under the Act, I presume.

Mr. Joyce: No; scarcely.

9. *Mr. Harkness* (to witness)] : You appear to have joined in August, 1875?—Yes.

10. And left on 23rd September, 1891?—Precisely so.

11. Was there no break in your service?—No.

12. You simply commenced at a low step, if I may put it that way, and worked your way up the ladder?—I gave up my position as engineer of my own steam-boat to take service at 8s. a day on a locomotive. I told the master of the vessel to get an engineer to take my place, and I got nothing by that transaction. When I was wired to by the District Manager I accepted the foremanship at Cross Creek.

13. *Mr. Meredith.*] That would be Rimutaka?—Yes.

14. *Mr. Joyce.*] Where is Mr. Ashcroft now?—I really could not say. The last I heard of him he was in Sydney.

15. He is out of the service?—Long ago. There is nothing to show my appointment as locomotive foreman at all; I want to bring out the facts.

16. Was it because you were locomotive foreman that you got the compensation for the two and a half years?—Yes.

17. Mr. Ashcroft says you held the same appointment; he was then Railway Manager?—Yes; and he was the gentleman who gave me the appointment. If there is no record of my appointment in the official books, it is surely not fair to make me responsible for that.

18. Have you any appointment showing that you were locomotive foreman during the last two and a half years?—That is the only one. [Document produced, *vide* Appendix K.]

19. *Mr. Joyce.*] “Mr. T. Ross has been appointed running foreman in lieu of Mr. Jackson, and will commence his duties on the 25th proximo.” What is the meaning of running foreman?—Foreman of all locomotives running on that section, placing each gang and engine every day for train duty; receiving coal from ships and delivering it to the various departments; receiving stores and delivering to the drivers; and making out the official returns in connection with the work.

20. What duty had you been discharging prior to this date?—Precisely the same duty, with the addition that I had the whole of the locomotive repairs to attend to at Cross Creek; I had a workshop there, and had to work the whole of the traffic north of Summit. At that time the District Manager upon this side of the Summit and myself upon the other worked the traffic through.

21. This authority, then, is simply an extension of your duty as locomotive foreman?—

22. *Mr. Harkness.*] What was the salary?—The salary was fixed at £4 10s.

23. *Mr. Joyce.*] What had you been receiving prior to this date?—13s. a day, and, owing to the long hours, the District Manager allowed a certain sum under the head of overtime. The then Commissioner (F. B. Passmore, Esq.) would not permit any rise to anybody.

24. What addition did you make to the £4 10s., in addition to the overtime?—I would be making £4 10s. or £4 12s., roughly speaking.

25. So that the alteration was to fix a rate to avoid the overtime question?—Yes, that is so.

26. Did you work on the Sunday?—Yes.

27. Were you paid for Sundays at the 13s. a day rate?—I do not remember.

28. Did you get overtime?—I really could not answer that, but to the best of my knowledge and belief I do not think so. I was supposed to be on duty so long as the trains were running.

29. Is there any one here who can verify the facts as to you having held the position of locomotive foreman for seven years?—Yes; every one almost in the Locomotive Department.

30. Then, has it been determined that locomotive foremen are entitled to compensation?—I could not say: I believe so; and, in fact, the Commissioners seem to begin with that as a first step.

31. Which?—A foremanship; as being an officer.

32. You got compensation for how long?—Two years and three hundred and two days. Compensation seems to have ceased from the day the Commissioners took office.

32. *The Chairman.*] What was that circular—there was a circular, was there not—sent to all the railway employes?—Yes.

34. That they were either to leave and take compensation, or accept service under the new system?—Yes.

Mr. Meredith: They lost their right by continuing in office?

The Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Meredith: Then how did this gentleman get his: did he continue?

The Chairman: Yes; he preferred to do so.

Mr. Meredith: But when he retired, how is it he received compensation?

The Chairman: That was for the time previous to taking office.

Mr. Ross: The duties I was called upon to perform from the first were such as no reasonable-minded man would ever expect an ordinary day-wages man to carry out: they were in fact the whole charge of everything—doing everything in traffic except stationmaster's duties. I had to see to the running, and to see that, if possible, the traffic got through at all times. There were a great many difficulties in those days, and all of them I had to overcome, if possible.

35. *The Chairman:* You have no cause of complaint against the Railway Commissioners from the time of their taking office?—No, sir; no complaint whatever.

36. I understand that you make your claim not as fireman or driver, but as a locomotive foreman for the whole of the time?—That is my contention.

The Chairman: It seems to me now that we have had this case before us we have gone as far as we can get just at present. We had better now postpone the further consideration of the matter until we can get one of the Commissioners present.

Mr. Meredith: I would like to ask one question. He has stated that he was compelled to work seven days a week.

The Chairman: I would suggest, Mr. Meredith, that you wait until we can have the Commissioner here.

Mr. Joyce: I would suggest that it would be as well if Mr. Ross obtained some corroborative testimony about the appointment when Mr. Ashcroft was in office.

Mr. Ross: I will be most happy to do so.

The Chairman: If convenient this afternoon you might come up to the House and see me, Mr. Ross, about the matter, and then I shall be able to point out to you what should be done. At any time after half-past two.

Mr. Ross: Very well, sir.

WEDNESDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER, 1892.

Mr. J. P. MAXWELL, Railway Commissioner, examined.

Mr. Maxwell: I think the Committee seems to have elicited the position of the case from the examination of Mr. Ross. Mr. Ross was leading driver at Cross Creek for a great many years, and was practically a local foreman. He was then on 13s. a day as rate of pay, and would receive extra pay for overtime work. In 1886 he was appointed running-shed foreman. The question of his compensation, as you are aware, has been decided upon as accepting only his service from 1886 as entitling him to compensation, it being held that his previous service was not that of a permanent officer. I do not know that I have anything more to say than that.

Mr. Ross: Mr. Maxwell has stated the circumstances as known to himself through his officers. I have no questions to ask Mr. Maxwell. I have a kindly remembrance of the Commissioners, and have nothing to say to Mr. Maxwell except to express my gratitude. I simply came here on what I think is a ground of equity and justice, having what I deem to be ample testimony in writing from the officers then over me. I have no diffidence in bringing the matter before the Committee as an act of justice, and wish to see it thoroughly investigated as at present. In 1879 I was practically engaged by Mr. George Ashcroft as foreman of the Incline at 12s. a day, being transferred from Nelson to Cross Creek. I was placed in charge there by Mr. Ashcroft and Mr. Blackett, Engineer-in-Chief for the colony. At that time things were at such a low ebb that the section was all but closed, the Incline being looked upon as a decided failure. At that very time, out of the four Fell engines intended for the incline-work, only one was fit to go up the hill, the other three being disabled. To illustrate matters as they stood, I may say that the only instructions I received from Mr. Ashcroft and the Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Blackett, were: "You see how matters stand. In the course of a day or two you will know as much about it as any one can tell you."

Now let us see what you can make of it." I was given full control of the traffic as the line was extended, and a nice workshop was fitted up at the bottom of the hill at Cross Creek to enable me to do all locomotive and other repairs that were necessary. I had to attend to the working traffic night and day—to send engines away, and so on—and do my best for the traffic there, which was somewhat blocked. I had to arrange for all specials, when necessary, passenger and goods-trains, and to place trucks where required by the traffic officers. I did all and sundry work outside a stationmaster's duties. When the line became broken away, I had full permission, and was requested, if possible, to repair the damage and get the traffic through by any means at my hand. I have done this on many occasions, even to the extent in one instance of working on a Sunday, when the line became washed away two miles on this side of Featherston. The line was washed away there by storm-water, and the rails were hanging like a suspension bridge. This would stop the traffic on the following day. I collected the platelayers and my own staff, and got the material ready and erected a bridge, which carried the traffic over for some two or three days afterwards. This was done with the full approbation of my superior officers. During the whole of the mishaps on the section, which were somewhat numerous, from 1879 to about 1882, there was no day on which we did not get the mail through. On several occasions we did not succeed in getting the trains through, but we managed to tranship the mails. The work of the road was always done in a cheerful manner, and our efforts were frankly met by the public in response, and no complaints were made. Afterwards I had to find out, by instructions, the best mode of working the incline economically, &c. I tried almost every experiment I could think of for the placing of power-engines in front, engines behind, and engines in the middle, showing the results. And, owing to the crooked nature of the road and grade, some of the experiments were certainly interesting. Reports of these have been sent in to the Manager's Office in the usual way, and no doubt are to be found yet. Numerous obstacles presented themselves which very few could have imagined at the beginning. It is only by experiments that these things can be brought to light. However, matters went on satisfactorily after a time. In 1886 I was promoted running foreman for the whole section. There is a statement in the official notice to me to that effect, the words, "whole of the line" being made special use of to illustrate that I have been in the capacity before, but with jurisdiction extended. That is my contention, and it is very clear. I was removed from Cross Creek to Wellington, and from that day resided here. In September, 1891, I severed my connection with the department, after having previously ascertained in the usual way the compensation that would be due to me in the event of my leaving the department. This compensation was paid, £55 6s. 2d., for service as foreman for two years and 302 days, up to the date the Commissioners took office. That being so, it points to the fact that the word "foreman" is in itself understood to be the means of carrying the compensation. "Leading driver" is a term new to me. It has only been used in the service a year or two. That and several other alterations came into force a few years ago. I am not aware that the term "leading driver" has ever been applied to me before. I have been a fitter and driver in Nelson, and acted as such for some time, and know the mechanical work in the place. I never heard the term "leading driver," applied to me on the Wellington Section until this morning. I have it in writing from the District Railway Manager, Mr. Ashcroft, that I have been locomotive foreman under him for seven years. Mr. Ashcroft was the gentleman who gave me my appointment as far as I know. He was the one who telegraphed to Nelson asking me if I would accept the position of foreman of the incline. There is a book in the service called the "Service Register." It is just possible that that book would throw some light on my appointment. In my capacity of locomotive foreman this book was in my possession repeatedly, for the official purpose of entering the names of new employés. I have not seen my name in connection with "leading driver" entered in that book; there was no mention made of it. In 1879 that book will show my appointment as foreman of the incline. There is no hitch whatever in that transaction. That will corroborate Mr. Ashcroft's statement in writing. I have put my case pretty plainly, and do not wish to occupy the time of the Committee. I have no grievance beyond wishing to establish my right as an officer of the Government to whom compensation is due as from the periods mentioned. I leave myself in the hands of the Committee to do justice on that point.

Mr. Maxwell.] Mr. Ross contends that he was doing duties as foreman, inasmuch as he had other men under him. That is the case: he had other men under him. But he was not officially recognised at the Head Office as holding the position of foreman, although the evidence which he brings seems to point clearly to the fact that the local officers recognised him as such. Still, the recognition of local officers alone does not seem to suffice, to permit of his receiving compensation for loss of office for the period when he was acting in the manner he has described on the Rimutaka Incline. That, I think, is all I can say about it.

The Chairman.] You have heard Mr. Ross's statement as to the services he rendered?—Mr. Ross has always given every satisfaction; but I think he must remember that the District Railway Manager, Mr. Ashcroft, would, if he were here, take to himself the credit for doing all those things which Mr. Ross says he did, and that Mr. Ross, of course, merely had to act under instructions. Then, moreover, when Mr. Ross speaks of working the trains, of course he had to do his work like other persons on the section under instructions from superior officers. I must say that he always did his work to the best of his ability and satisfactorily. But he must not leave the Committee under the impression that he was responsible for the whole of the traffic, and everything else over the incline. Mr. Ashcroft had also another officer under him, an Inspector of Permanent Way, whose duty it was to attend to the road. Now Mr. Ross has told us, for the first time to my knowledge, that he was in charge of the repairs to the road when accidents happened. I do not wish to doubt Mr. Ross's word; I only wish to add that there was an officer under the Manager whose duty it was to attend to the road, although I have no doubt that Mr. Ross rendered material assistance when the road needed extra attention paid to it. I do not wish to disparage Mr. Ross as a foreman.

He always did very well; but he must bear in mind that there were other officers on the section instructing him. You heard Mr. Ross say that he never heard of the term "leading driver," and also the reference he made to the Register. I am surprised that he never heard it. Sometimes the local officers use the titles very loosely; he referred to Mr. Ashcroft as Railway Manager. That was not his title, and never was so. He was District Manager. I dare say Mr. Ross never heard the title "leading driver," although it has been known on the railways for many years.

37. Do you understand that Mr. Ashcroft, in sending the returns in, designated Mr. Ross as leading driver?—To verify that would be rather difficult, but I will ascertain. That was understood to be Mr. Ross's position at the Head Office. Still, I have not the slightest doubt that he was treated as a foreman by Mr. Ashcroft, judging by Mr. Ashcroft's letter. [I find Mr. Ross's name entered on the pay-sheets as a foreman, but he received extra pay for any overtime worked.—J.P.M., 29/9/92.]

38. Could you, from your own knowledge, say how long Mr. Ross performed duties which might be considered the duties of a foreman?—Yes; from the very first, I think, Mr. Ross had men under him.

39. You think he did the duties of a foreman from the very first?—Yes; they would be foreman's duties. It would be difficult now to precisely define what were regarded as foreman's duties.

40. *Mr. Meredith.*] Do you dispute Mr. Ross's statement that when he took charge of the Rimutaka Incline three of the Fell engines were absolutely worthless?—I think it would be a great exaggeration if Mr. Ross contends that. That was not the case. I did not go into that statement, because it did not affect the question before the Committee. He was a good officer, and I did not want to discuss the position fourteen or fifteen years ago on an exaggerated statement of that kind.

41. You have also heard the statement of Mr. Ross that, in his opinion, the line was about to be closed?—That is absolutely incorrect. Nothing of the kind has ever been heard of before. I did not think it worth while to remark on these points. They do not affect the question at issue at all.

42. *Mr. Taylor.*] Do I understand from you, Mr. Maxwell, that if Mr. Ross was officially recognised as foreman he would be entitled to a greater amount of compensation than that given to him?—I think, if there had been a proper appointment as foreman to a permanent office, that under the Civil Service Act as an officer he would be entitled to greater compensation.

43. *Mr. Joyce.*] How were appointments made some fourteen or fifteen years ago—that is, as foreman and leading driver?—I cannot tell you. I was not in charge then, and do not know how they were made. In 1880 all appointments were sent in to the Head Office as proposals, and if they were approved the appointments were recorded. In 1879 there was a great deal of laxity, and in a large number of cases there was no record as to how the appointments were made.

44. You know that Mr. Ross was appointed by Mr. Ashcroft in 1879?—So Mr. Ross has informed me.

45. And if a record had not been forwarded by Mr. Ashcroft of his appointment as foreman, that would be the fault of Mr. Ashcroft?—I presume so. I cannot say. I cannot speak with absolute certainty as to what occurred in 1879.

46. Have you that register-book referred to?—I have not. I know that at the end of 1880, when I took charge of the railways, I made every effort to find out everything that had been going on; but the books were not always forthcoming. I could make further inquiries, of course.

47. If you are satisfied from the inquiry that Mr. Ross has been foreman, as mentioned by him, you see no objection to giving him the compensation?—The only difficulty I see is this: Mr. Ross has been paid a daily wage, and had extra paid to him for overtime work. That is the bar, as a rule, as regards compensation if there is any doubt. A permanent officer under no circumstances has received extra pay for working overtime. That makes a sort of dividing-line between permanent and temporary officers.

48. I understood Mr. Ross to state yesterday that he worked on Sundays and did not get any overtime, and had not been paid. That was, when he was on the daily-wage pay rate?—On that Mr. Ross could speak with more certainty. I could not speak without searching Treasury vouchers and turning up the pay-sheets. According to rule he ought to have received pay if he worked on a Sunday. That is to say, he would be entitled to pay for seven days instead of six.

The Chairman: Have you any questions to ask, Mr. Ross?

Mr. Ross: I have no questions to ask, but I wish to place myself right in the eyes of the Committee and Mr. Maxwell. I regret that my evidence has been understood wrongly. I did not say that I had charge of the permanent-way. I simply say that an excellent officer, Mr. Brooks, was in charge of the permanent-way. But the line being smashed in several places, he could not be everywhere. We understood one another; and if I could assist him in the temporary repairs to enable him to get the traffic along, I had his full permission to do so and that of the Manager. I also wish to correct the impression that I was managing everything on the other side of the hill. I was not. I had simply control of the traffic to work it along to its destination as seemed best to me, by night or day. Regarding the condition of the engines when I went there, I wish to correct the impression there. I did not say they were valueless. I simply said that only one engine out of the four was able to bring trains up the hill. The others were simply disabled. There is a wide difference. Next, as to the section as it stood in public opinion: I wish to correct that also. In 1879 Mr. William Stone, who was District Manager before Mr. Ashcroft, wrote to consignees asking them not to forward goods to Featherston at that time, as he could not forward them over the hill. If that is so it is a good indication that the incline was not a brilliant success two months after it was opened. Having corrected the wrong impressions I had created on Mr. Maxwell's mind, I have nothing more to do. The evidence would have read badly if I had not done so. I

wish to add that no man in existence could teach me anything about the Rimutaka Incline. I have experimented with it in every possible way that would be practicable and sensible. I spent seven years on that section from the beginning, and I am not ashamed to say it.

Mr. Joyce : Who do you say was your immediate superior, during the time you were on the other side of the hill?

Mr. Ross : In the first instance Mr. George Ashcroft.

Mr. Joyce : And he then resided in Wellington?

Mr. Ross : No, in Petone.

Mr. Joyce : For how many years were you in charge of your department?

Mr. Ross : From 1879 to 1886, residing at Cross Creek.

The Chairman : You asked me yesterday to communicate with Mr. Carruthers, under whom you served?

Mr. Ross : Yes.

The Chairman : I did so, and he sends the following telegram:—"Mr. Ross served as locomotive foreman and in no other capacity while I acted as Locomotive Engineer on Wellington Section.—W. R. CARRUTHERS." I have shown that to Mr. Maxwell.

Mr. Maxwell : That is practically what I say. Mr. Ross was doing foreman's duties, and the local officers recognised it.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

MEMORANDUM for Mr. G. Ross, Railways, Wellington.

Locomotive Engineer's Office, Petone, 22nd August, 1891.

As already verbally arranged, please hold yourself in readiness for transfer to Palmerston North, where you will take duty as driver-in-charge. The transfer will probably be made in week ending 5th September, 1891.

A. L. BEATTIE, Locomotive Engineer.

APPENDIX B.

MEMORANDUM for LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER, Petone.

Locomotive Running, 5th September, 1891.

In reference to the above-quoted memorandum (22nd August, 1891), please let me know the salary, or pay per day, intended to be given at Palmerston North; and, if the latter, whether for six or seven days per week.

G. Ross, Locomotive Foreman.

APPENDIX C.

MEMORANDUM for Mr. G. Ross, Locomotive Department, Wellington.

Locomotive Engineer's Office, Petone, 11th September, 1891.

As already verbally stated, the rate provided, as per scale, is 13s. per day. The question of Sunday pay has been referred to the Locomotive Superintendent, New Zealand Railways, for his consideration.

A. L. BEATTIE, Locomotive Engineer.

APPENDIX D.

SIR,—

Locomotive Running, 31st August, 1891.

Please be kind enough to let me know the amount of compensation I would be entitled to in the event of my retirement from the railway service.

I have, &c.,

The Locomotive Engineer, Petone.

GEORGE ROSS, Locomotive Foreman.

APPENDIX E.

MEMORANDUM for Mr. G. Ross, Locomotive Department, Wellington.

Locomotive Engineer's Office, Petone, 14th September, 1891.

THE Audit Department advise that the amount of compensation you would be entitled to in the event of your resigning is £55 6s. 2d. for a service of two years and 302 days as foreman, to 27th January, 1889.

A. L. BEATTIE, Locomotive Engineer, per P. D.

APPENDIX F.

SIR,—

Locomotive Running, 19th September, 1891.

I respectfully beg to apply for leave of absence from 21st September to 3rd October, inclusive, on urgent private business.

I have, &c.,

The Locomotive Engineer, Petone.

GEORGE ROSS.

APPENDIX G.

MEMORANDUM for Mr. G. Ross, Wellington.

Locomotive Engineer's Office, Petone, 23rd September, 1891.

As verbally informed yesterday, your application for two weeks' leave of absence has been approved, dating from to-day.

A. L. BEATTIE, Locomotive Engineer, per P. D.

APPENDIX H.

SIR,—

Wellington, 3rd October, 1891.

Please forward my resignation to the Railway Commissioners through the proper channel.

I remain, &c.,

The Locomotive Engineer, Petone.

GEORGE ROSS.

APPENDIX I.

GENTLEMEN,—

Wellington, 3rd October, 1891.

I hereby beg to tender my resignation of the appointment as locomotive foreman, New Zealand Railways, and I request that it may date from the 23rd September last, that being the date on which fourteen days' leave of absence was granted to me. With your permission I will state the reasons that have caused me to take this step, and in doing so I shall briefly refer to what has transpired. On the 23rd December, 1878, I was appointed fitter and driver on the Nelson Section. On the 14th April, 1879, I was transferred to Wellington Section, and took charge at Cross's Creek as foreman. On the day that I was placed in charge at Cross's Creek by the District Manager and Mr. Blackett, the Engineer-in-Chief, there was only one Fell engine available for work, the other three being disabled. At that time public opinion was strongly expressed against the Rimutaka incline route, and it was generally believed that the Fell system was a failure. This feeling was created principally through mishaps due to want of proper care and management. After my transfer to Cross's Creek there was a very decided improvement in the working of the incline, and some twelve months afterwards I was complimented by my superior officers for the successful manner in which I was working the Fell engines and the incline. In addition to the incline work, I had to attend to all locomotive repairs and locomotive-running arrangements north of Summit. In May, 1886, I was promoted to the position of locomotive foreman for the Wellington Section, and transferred to Wellington Station, where I have been located ever since. During the whole of the time referred to my practical work has never been called into question.

I will now refer to matters that are more immediately the cause of the very unpleasant position that the department placed me in. On the 1st January, 1890, my clerk and storeman, J. T. Bovis, was taken ill with typhoid fever. He died on the 1st February. I was without clerical assistance from the 1st January to the 4th February, 1890. On the latter date J. C. Arthur was transferred from the Locomotive Superintendent's office. This man was not suitable. He was ultimately dismissed. On the 27th August Charles Duffy was transferred from Addington, *vice* J. C. Arthur. Duffy proved incapable, and was practically an invalid. He was off duty, sick, from the 8th to the 22nd September, and finally he was transferred to Addington on the 25th September. About the 7th October J. McNeely was transferred from Christchurch, *vice* C. Duffy. McNeely was a good man, and did well, but he was transferred to Greymouth on the 4th November. On the same day J. T. Hadfield was transferred from the Locomotive Superintendent's Office, *vice* McNeely. Hadfield would have suited had he been allowed to remain with me, but he was transferred to Christchurch on the 8th November, after having been with me four days. S. Howard was transferred from Christchurch on the 19th November, *vice* J. T. Hadfield. Howard understood the work, but was dismissed for some irregularity committed at Christchurch. On the 9th April J. Slater was transferred from Hillside, *vice* Howard.

The foregoing list will show that the changes effected with my assistants were very frequent. That, coupled with the fact that some of the men referred to were incapable, others sick at different times, and taken together with the intervals that occurred in replacing some of the men who were taken away, shows that I was for a great part of the time without assistance, and a good deal of time was taken up in adjusting the mistakes made by men unfamiliar with the work that was required of them. When my returns were sent to the Locomotive Superintendent's office direct things went on in a satisfactory manner; but afterwards, when I had to render them to the Locomotive Engineer, Petone, the office-work increased rapidly—so much so that I had frequently to remain in my office all the evening and up to 2 and 3 o'clock a.m., and to be out again at 8. Having attended to my practical work during the day, I repeatedly worked all night in the office and went up the line by the 7.15 a.m. train, and after my return at 7.38 p.m. had then to work in the office up to midnight. And, under the circumstances stated, is it a matter for surprise and condemnation that some of the correspondence and routine office-work was overlooked?

Early last month I was called before the Locomotive Superintendent and the Locomotive Engineer, in the Traffic Agent's office, Wellington Station, when I was informed by the Locomotive Superintendent in kindly terms that I had done my work faithfully and well, that I had been loyal to the department throughout, that there was nothing against me except that I had allowed my office-work to fall into arrears, and that this could not be allowed. He had decided that there must be a change—that a driver-in-charge was required at Palmerston North, and that I could have the position if I felt disposed to accept it. The Locomotive Superintendent said that he had a long list of unanswered correspondence before him. To this I replied that a similar list was sent to me, and that the most of it had been replied to in due course, and that press copies were now in my letter-books. Those remaining unanswered were of trifling importance.

Sirs, for nearly sixteen years I have worked faithfully for the Railway Department. I have performed most important, arduous, and sometimes dangerous duties from time to time, and, according to the Locomotive Superintendent, I have done my work faithfully and well, and I have been loyal to the department throughout, and now I am asked to accept a degradation in rank and a reduction in salary. And why? Simply because clerks who have nothing but their office-duties to attend to have so multiplied the office-work that to properly attend to it would require the greater portion of the day to be spent in the office, instead of outside attending to engines and engine-running. Instead of receiving the assistance that a man in the position that I hold had a right to expect from his department, I have been seriously hampered with constant changes of staff. I was trained as a practical engineer, not as a clerk, and, if my qualifications in the latter capacity fell short of the Railway Department's requirements, it was surely the duty of my superior officers to remedy my deficiency by giving me reliable assistance. No question of my practical ability, or the general management of the men under me, having been raised, there is no need to make any remarks on that subject.

Sirs, I consider that I have been treated in a most unjust and arbitrary manner, and no man with a grain of self-respect could remain in the service after receiving such treatment.

I have, &c.,

The Railway Commissioners, Wellington.

GEORGE ROSS.

APPENDIX J.

MEMORANDUM for Mr. G. Ross, Wellington.

Locomotive Engineer's Office, Petone, 9th October, 1891.

I HAVE to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 3rd instant, received here at noon on 7th instant, covering letter addressed to the Railway Commissioners *re* your resignation. This has been duly forwarded to Head Office, and I am directed to inform you that your resignation has been accepted from 23rd ultimo. If you call on the cashier you will receive the wages due to you.

A. L. BEATTIE, Locomotive Engineer.

APPENDIX K.

(Memorandum.)

Locomotive Department, 24th October, 1885.

I HAVE great pleasure in bearing testimony to the capacity and uniform good conduct of Mr. George Ross. He has been under me for nearly ten years. For seven years he has been locomotive foreman in charge of Fell engines, a post which requires more than ordinary skill and attention. He has discharged his duties with zeal and success. I have the greatest esteem for him, and wish him all success in whatever he may undertake.

GEORGE ASHCROFT, Railway Manager.

APPENDIX L.

MEMORANDUM *re* GEORGE ROSS. (Copy of Entry in Staff Register, handed in by Petitioner.)

Locomotive Running Department, 28th January, 1890.

DATE of engagement, August, 1875: Rate of pay, 8s. per day; fireman on ballast-engine, Public Works Department, Nelson. February 1, 1876: Fireman and spare driver, Locomotive Department, Nelson, 8s. 6d. per day. December 23, 1876: Fitter and second driver, 10s. per day. April 14, 1879: Foreman of incline, Wellington, 12s. per day. May 1, 1881: Pay increased to 13s. per day. April 1, 1886: Running-shed foreman, Cross's Creek, £4 10s. per week.

APPENDIX M.

Railway Department, Head Office, Wellington,
22nd September, 1892.

SIR,—

With reference to your letter of the 14th instant covering a petition from G. Ross (here-with returned), I am directed by the Railway Commissioners to report that the petitioner was paid such compensation under the Civil Service Act as appeared to be legally due—namely, one month's pay for each year of service from 1st April, 1886—the time his appointment as foreman was approved—prior to which date his service as driver was not regarded as “permanent” within the meaning of the Civil Service Act.

I have, &c.,

E. G. PILCHER, Secretary.

The Chairman, Public Petitions Committee, M to Z, House of Representatives.

APPENDIX N.

Railway Department, Head Office, Wellington,
28th September, 1892.

DEAR SIR,—

I have looked up Mr. Ross's pay-sheets of some years back. I find that Mr. Ashcroft entered him as a foreman, but that he paid him extra for overtime worked beyond the 13s.-a-day rate.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Public Petitions M to Z.

J. P. MAXWELL.

SIR,—

29th September, 1892.

By direction of the Chairman of the Public Petitions M to Z Committee, I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 28th instant, *re* G. Ross having been paid extra for overtime, and in reply to ask you to be good enough to inform the Committee as to the amount of money received by G. Ross as extra pay for overtime work.

I have, &c.,

A. F. LOWE,

Clerk, Public Petitions Committee, M to Z.

J. P. Maxwell, Esq., Commissioner of Railways.

(Memorandum.)

THERE will be some difficulty in complying with the request, as the information dates back so far. I send, however, an extract from the pay-sheets, summarised, for seven four-weekly periods during 1883, showing payments of extra amounts to Mr. Ross. The regulation at that time was that ordinary drivers on daily pay worked ten hours a day for six days a week: all time worked beyond this was paid for extra. A running-shed foreman, being a permanent officer, would have been paid by the week, and would get no extra pay for overtime worked. That was Mr. Ross's subsequent position. Will this information be sufficient for the Committee?

29th September, 1892.

J. P. MAXWELL.

LOCOMOTIVE DEPARTMENT, WELLINGTON SECTION.

Pay-sheet for the Period from 10th December, 1882, to 23rd June, 1883.

Four-weekly Period ending	Name.	Occupation.	Ordinary Wages.			Overtime.			Total.
			Time.	Rate.	Amount.	Time.	Rate.	Amount.	
Jan. 6, 1883	George Ross	Foreman	Days. 24	13/	£ s. d. 15 12 0	Days. 5 $\frac{1}{16}$	13/	£ s. d. 3 5 10	£ s. d. 18 17 10
Feb. 3, "	"	"	24	"	15 12 0	6 $\frac{1}{4}$	"	4 1 3	19 13 3
March 3, "	"	"	24	"	15 12 0	7 $\frac{1}{4}$	"	4 14 3	20 6 3
March 31, "	"	"	24	"	15 12 0	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	"	4 4 6	19 16 6
April 28, "	"	"	24	"	15 12 0	5 $\frac{5}{8}$	"	3 13 1	19 5 1
May 26, "	"	"	24	"	15 12 0	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	"	4 4 6	19 16 6
June 23, "	"	"	24	"	15 12 0	6	"	3 18 0	19 10 0
			168		109 4 0	43 $\frac{3}{16}$		28 1 5	137 5 5

APPENDIX O.

Chairman of Public Petitions, Buildings, Wellington.

Ross served as locomotive foreman, and in no other capacity, while I acted as Locomotive Engineer in Wellington Section.

27th September, 1892.

W. R. CARRUTHERS,

Napier.

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