

now, and I was about four years on the New South Wales railways, equipping the railway stock; three years on the Queensland railways; and I was two years in the Petone Workshop, twelve months in Auckland, and three years in the Addington Shops.

12. Are you aware that certain charges have been made against the Addington Workshop employees?—I saw the report in the paper.

13. And you volunteered to give evidence from your own observation and knowledge?—Yes.

14. What did you see at Addington?—I have had nearly thirty-four years' experience in railway and contract shops, and I have taken special note, especially on the railways, being so many years connected directly with railway work. I think the men in the Railway Workshops, especially in New Zealand, and Addington in particular, compare more than favourably with the outside shops. I know that Mr. Jackson is very strict, and looks very well after the men. The class of work, so far as I could see, was very good, and the men generally worked very well. There may be a certain number of men at Addington who loaf, but you will find that in every shop. On the contracts I have had charge of, though I watched the men very closely, still there is a certain class of men who will loaf if they get a chance. Addington is no worse than any other workshop. On the contracts I have always been pleased to engage railwaymen. In fact, I give preference on many occasions to men who have left the Railway service. I find them in every case good workers—very willing workers. They do not need to be watched either.

15. From your own observation can you say anything about the supervision on the part of the foremen and Workshops Manager at Addington?—Mr. McCarthy was Workshops Manager when I was in Addington, and I should be very sorry for any of the men he caught loafing. I know, as far as I could see, there was very little loafing in Addington in my time.

16. Did the foremen seem to be diligent in their supervision?—Yes, so far as I could see or understand.

17. Did you notice the discipline of the shop generally?—It was very good.

18. With your knowledge of outside contract shops and other railway shops, and with your knowledge of the work being done at Addington during the time you were there, can you give any idea of the efficiency of the plant generally at Addington?—I think it was very fair. There is some very good machinery there. Some of it may be a little old, but if even it is a trifle old it is still useful so far as I could see. They have got a very fine pneumatic plant at Addington, and I do not think there is anything like it in any other shop in the Dominion. I am specially interested in the pneumatic tools, particularly the labour-saving tools, and I am nearly sure that Addington has the largest compressor of any workshop in the Dominion. I think I was the first in New Zealand to introduce the American pneumatic tools, and Addington has a very fine stock of pneumatic tools.

19. It has been stated by a witness who seems to have had more or less the run of Addington Workshops that he did not see any pneumatic hoists. Can you suggest why he did not see them?—They are both inside and outside. I know that before Mr. McCarthy left he had some very fine pneumatic hoists for removing rails both inside and outside the shops. I travel over the whole of the New Zealand railways, and visit every Railway Workshop, and they have pneumatic plants in Auckland, Napier, East Town, Petone, Addington, Hillside, and Invercargill. I think the railways are very well up to date so far as pneumatic appliances are concerned.

20. In running your contract for the company, did you yourself engage all your staff?—I have full control either to engage or dismiss at a moment's notice, subject, of course, to the Arbitration Court in the matter of dismissing.

21. You have not any difficulty in enforcing discipline?—None whatever.

22. You have no difficulty in getting the work out?—No. I was continually on the spot.

23. With regard to Addington, you think the allegation of loafing is unwarranted?—It is not true.

24. *The Chairman.*] Have you had experience in English and American shops?—I was eight years and a half with the North-eastern Railway Company, England, and I have had twenty-six years' experience in the colonies.

25. Compare the methods as they were when you were with the North-eastern Railway Company with the methods of this day at Addington—what is your opinion of the relative efficiency of the two?—I say Addington is the better.

26. How many years is it since you left the North-eastern?—Twenty-six years. There have been many changes in that time.

27. It has been stated that the hands of the foremen at Addington are somewhat tied—that they have not real power over the men. Do you consider that to be the case?—I could not say anything about that. I do not know anything about the official matters.

28. Do you consider the system at Addington such as will result in the maximum amount of work being turned out?—I think the Manager or the Engineer should have full power to discharge or employ as he likes. I have that power on the contracts, and that is why they are carried out so well.

GEORGE BROOKS examined. (No. 8.)

1. *Mr. Beattie.*] What is your position?—I am Workshops Foreman at Petone Railway Workshops.

2. How long have you been in the service?—With one break, about twenty-seven years.

3. I understand you can give some evidence as to a conversation which took place in your presence between Mr. Jenkinson, Foreman Forbes, and yourself?—Yes. I cannot remember the exact date, but it was the day prior to the publication of Mr. Ronayne's memorandum. That would be about the 19th January. I went into the machine-shop, and Mr. Jenkinson and Mr. Forbes were talking together. Mr. Forbes introduced me to Mr. Jenkinson, and I passed a jocular remark as to whether he was looking for a job, and he said he was not. Mr. Jenkinson said, "You seem to be pretty busy";