

matter that under the present system the Stationmasters, under whose control the cadets are placed during their probationary period and subsequently, are responsible for reporting to the District Officers at least annually on the progress and qualifications of the lads, and if this duty is efficiently carried out by the Stationmasters who have the cadets continually under their control, District Officers would find no difficulty whatever in making their recommendations as to the retention of the cadets in the service or in respect to the granting of increases in salaries. The guiding principle for Stationmasters in reporting on members of their staff should be general efficiency and conduct. Where the progress or conduct of any member of the staff has not been satisfactory the officer under whose immediate control such member is placed should report accordingly and decline to give a favourable recommendation in every case in which he is dissatisfied with the conduct, progress, or efficiency of the member concerned. A strict adherence to this rule will ensure greater efficiency and be of much more value than a system of examination for the purpose of indicating the general progress and efficiency of the members reported on.—I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant, T. Ronayne, General Manager.” So that this letter shows that the General Manager recognizes the fact that his system is superior to the system at present in vogue in the Post and Telegraph Department?—I was aware of that letter, but when the Hon. Mr. Millar asked me the question I took him literally. I understood he meant examination tests as they have in the Post Office, and that is how I answered the question.

THURSDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER, 1911.

GEORGE CLARKE SMITH examined. (No. 6.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Assistant Locomotive Foreman.

2. You wish to make a statement to the Committee?—Yes. With the permission of the Committee I propose to deal with clauses 8, 9, and 10 of the petition, which more or less dovetail into each other, before clause 7 is dealt with. The clauses are as follows: “8. That the provision at present made in the Act for the remuneration of officers is, in the opinion of the members of the institute, inadequate for the services required from those officers. This is particularly so in the case of those officers who also act as Postmasters, which is demonstrated by the fact that when the Post and Telegraph work is removed from railway-stations to permanent post-offices the Postal Department in nearly every instance pays the postal officer a higher salary than the Railway officer received for the combined positions. 9. That if the remuneration of the officers of the Railway Department (as set out in the parliamentary paper D.-3, 1910) be compared with that paid to the officers of the Post and Telegraph Department (as set out in the parliamentary paper F.-5, 1910), the only other Department of the Government having a classification, it will be found that in all classes the salaries of officers in similar grades are on a higher scale in the case of the Post and Telegraph than in the case of the Railway. 10. That while each of the above Departments deals directly with the public, the duties of the Railway officer entail a larger responsibility, not only by reason of the fact that the hours of duty are longer, but also that safety of human lives is dependent upon the efficient performance of those duties. Moreover, Railway officers do not receive remuneration for overtime, and are not so free from dismissal and punishment as officers in the Post and Telegraph Department.” As to the position of Locomotive Foreman, the minimum rate of pay in the Act of 1896 was £210 per annum. Between 1901 and 1907 several Locomotive Foremen were appointed at £190 per annum, a reduction of £20 for the first year, contrary to the spirit of the Act of 1901, and some of these men were receiving equal to about to £220 per annum in actual cash. In 1907 the minimum rate for Locomotive Foremen was raised from £190 to £210, and in that year 50 per cent. of Locomotive Foremen were in this ninth grade, and in 1910, 62 per cent. or ten out of a total of sixteen Locomotive Foremen were in the lowest grade but one in Division I. The position of Locomotive Foreman is only attained after twenty to twenty-five years’ successful service on footplates of engines train-running, and you must graduate through the various steps of Locomotive Running Department. Three examinations have to be passed, and the mechanical training required, coupled with train-running duties, to qualify for Locomotive Foreman are more than equal to any other branch, and to be promoted to the lowest grade except one is unsatisfactory. The responsibilities of this office are various. Upon them rests the responsibility of seeing that engines are despatched on to their trains in good working-order, also the control of large staffs and making the most economical staff arrangements consistent with safety. Arrangements have to be made with Traffic Branch for engines suitable for the various jobs, and at large centres it oftentimes becomes a difficult problem to manipulate the staff. The Assistant Locomotive Foreman carries out this duty, and he takes charge during the absence of Senior Locomotive Foreman from headquarters. The forty-eight hour-a-week system has also materially added to the work, while consumption of fuel and stores has to be attended to. Continuous Westinghouse Brake and the Interlocking Department have been added during the past few years, speed of trains increased and improved, and heavier rolling-stock placed on line, and, although these greatly increased the working-expenses, it proves that strict economy must have been exercised to secure such good results. It seems strange that senior drivers are appointed from the highest grade or position in Division II, and in being promoted to Division I they are promoted to the lowest grade except one. The average service of the ten Locomotive Foremen at present in grade 9 is thirty-one years, the highest of any branch in the service. The total average for the 278 members in grade 9 is twenty-five years, and amongst these members 87 were recruited from Division II. The following are positions in grade 9: Workshop Foremen, Locomotive Foremen, Car and Wagon Inspectors, Brake Inspector, Foreman of Works, Permanent-way Inspectors, Stationmasters, Relieving Officers, clerks, &c. and amongst them are some of the best and most