

13. Where the tablet system is in operation does the Stationmaster have the responsibility of altering the train crossings?—Yes, he has the responsibility of altering the train crossings to suit the times in many cases.

14. Do you know if the house accommodation supplied to Postal officers is superior to that supplied to Railway officers?—The house accommodation provided by the Post and Telegraph Department is in 99 per cent. of cases better than that supplied to Railway officers, and also I know of one if not two cases where in the same town the accommodation supplied to the Postmaster is up to date and more superior, and he is paying a lower rent although he is receiving a higher salary than the Stationmaster.

15. Therefore, although the house accommodation is superior for Postal officers, yet the Railway officers are obliged to pay higher rents?—That is so.

16. Referring to Schedule C, you will notice that in those cases towards the end of the schedule, Stationmasters are compared with Postmasters?—That is so.

17. In the case of the Stationmaster at Rakaia, he receives £255?—I understand so.

18. That was one of the combined stations?—Yes.

19. And the Postmaster at Rakaia now receives £260?—I understand so, yes.

20. At Takapau, which was also a combined station, the Stationmaster received £220?—That is so.

21. And the Postmaster now receives £260?—Yes, I understand so.

22. At Wyndham the Stationmaster receives £200?—Yes.

23. That was also a combined station?—Yes.

24. And the Postmaster now receives £260?—Yes.

25. At Winton the Stationmaster receives £220, and the Postmaster now receives £260?—Yes.

26. At Otautau the Stationmaster receives £220, and the Postmaster now receives £260?—Yes.

27. At Waikouaiti the Stationmaster receives £200 and the Postmaster £220?—Yes.

28. And until recently all those positions were combined stations?—Yes. The Stationmaster had to do exactly the same duties as are performed now by the Postmaster, and the Postmaster at Waikouaiti has to work from 9 to 5, I understand.

29. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] Your contention, Mr. McPherson, is that the same salary should be paid in the same town to the Postmaster and the Stationmaster?—That is so.

30. You enumerated a great number of duties that the Stationmasters have to perform?—Yes.

31. How many perform all those duties?—Well, we will take Waikouaiti, for instance.

32. I want to know how many Stationmasters in the New Zealand service perform those duties?—I could not say, but it could easily be ascertained from the records.

33. When a post-office is established, who does those duties then?—The Railway man does his duties and the Post Office man does his duties.

34. I am talking about the duties you spoke of such as the Government Insurance work and registration of births, deaths, and marriages. When an office is established is the work done by the Stationmaster or the Postmaster?—At Waikouaiti the Stationmaster does not do the work of the Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages; it is done by a chemist, who receives payment, but the Stationmaster receives nothing.

35. Does he not receive the fees?—I do not think so. I never received them.

36. You are taking a special case; but as a general rule where a post-office is established the Postmaster takes over all such duties that come under the heading of the post-office?—Yes.

37. Although the Stationmaster is relieved of all that class of work he is still to get the same salary which you think he is entitled to?—Yes. If his position when he did the work was worth £200, say at Waikouaiti, can you tell me any reason why the Post officer should get £20 more?

38. Your argument is again in the direction of showing that the Postal officer is too highly paid?—Not at all, but the Railway men are paid too little, and we can only compare them with another Department. I consider that the officers in the Post Office are not too highly paid for the responsibilities they carry, but I consider the Railway officers are greatly underpaid for the responsibilities they carry.

39. You did not make any comparisons between the salaries paid in other classes of work in the Railways?—The railway work is of more importance and the responsibilities carried are greater than any of the duties or responsibilities carried by a Postal officer.

40. Are the responsibilities of the Railway men in New Zealand any greater than the responsibilities of Railway men in Australia?—

*Mr. Ramsay:* I object to this evidence, Mr. Chairman.

*The Chairman:* I have followed this evidence, and I think the question has a right to be put.

*Mr. Ramsay:* I do not think it is right to put a question like that to the witness and ask him about things he is not familiar with.

*The Chairman:* It is quite competent to refer to outside railways here, because the Hon. Mr. Millar wants to get at this point: Why did the institute not compare Railway service and Railway service instead of Railway service and Postal service, seeing that it has been suggested that the Postal service is too highly paid.

41. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] Wherever a Stationmaster has had to attend to these combined duties has he not always an increased staff?—No, he has not always had an increased staff. For instance, I am in charge of Woodlands. We open at 4.45 in the morning till 9.25 at night. The staff consists of a porter who does no postal work; a clerk who takes a shift with myself, and no other assistance. If the post-office were taken away to-morrow the railway work could not be done with a smaller staff.

42. Are you aware that in a large number of those cases there never would have been a station at all were it not for the combined offices?—No, I do not know of a single case where the railway office has been closed when the postal work has been taken away from the Stationmaster.