

pare. The Traffic Managers at Wellington and Dunedin, in addition to the ordinary duties of District Traffic Manager, carried on the duties of Traffic Superintendents previously at those places. They supervise the time-tables for the whole of the North Island main line and branches and the South Island main line and branches respectively, and allocate the rolling-stock to those lines as the traffic requires, and if there is a rush at one place they have to transfer stock from another place. The Traffic Clerks are practically Assistant Traffic Managers. They have to be qualified to take up the duties of Traffic Managers and carry on their duties when they are away from the districts, and, except that they do not carry so much responsibility, their duties are pretty well the same. They have to make staff arrangements and complete time-tables as the Manager directs; they have to see that time-tables are correctly printed and supplied to those requiring them, and at the same time to attend to arrangements in connection with advertising and so forth. In the event of traffic being disorganized by floods or accident the bulk of the work in connection with emergency arrangements falls on the Traffic Clerks, and it is not unusual for them to be on duty for twenty-four hours at a stretch in such cases. The Traffic Inspectors supply orders for plant in the various districts, and they are expected to be able to do it in the most competent manner possible. They have to arrange and apply to the Manager in connection with any case of special train requirements, to work the goods traffic with which the ordinary service cannot cope; they make inquiries into causes of accident and irregularities when required by the Traffic Manager, and they have to report on the working of the time-tables in connection with the special events I have already mentioned. They have also to watch the working of the various stations, especially in connection with trains and signalling, and that is a matter on which the public safety largely depends. The public safety is the most important consideration in the work not only of those three members of the service I have mentioned, but of nearly every member employed in the Traffic Branch. An error in a time-table or a train telegram, or an omission to supply the proper man with proper train advice, may not only end in considerable damage to property, but loss of life, and I do not think that is a factor which obtains to any extent in any other Government Department. Before concluding, gentlemen, I should like to compare some of the salaries in the Railway Department which are in advance of the Post Office. We have been putting forward cases where the Postal service salaries are better than ours, but there are a few where ours are better than the Post Office. Our Minister's portfolio, I am given to understand, is considered to be the second in importance in the Cabinet. The General Manager of the Railways receives £1,250, and the Secretary to the Post Office £1,000; the Chief Traffic Manager £900, and the Assistant Secretary and Inspector of the Post Office £800. I think it is not unreasonable to suggest that in the lower grades the salaries should be more equal than they are. I think the value of the Railway and the Postal service to the community might be considered in connection with the salaries. Transportation is the basis of the commerce of the country—in fact, of the whole world—and if you consider what might happen when those services were disorganized it would give you a fair idea of the value of the respective services. The interruption to the transport services in England recently brought some of the large towns there to the verge of starvation, and a few years ago a railway strike in Victoria raised the cost of the necessities of life to famine prices in a week. If the Post and Telegraph service stopped altogether I do not think such hardship could occur at all, and I think that is a fair ground for arguing that we should be remunerated to at least the same extent.

3. *Mr. Ramsay.*] You read an extract from *Hansard* containing a report of Sir Joseph Ward's speech to show that the comparison we made between the Traffic Manager at Invercargill and the Chief Postmaster at Wanganui was a fair comparison?—Yes.

4. Do you consider that the comparison that is made between the Traffic Clerks at Dunedin and Wellington with the officers in charge of the principal post and telegraph offices is a fair comparison?—I think so.

5. Do you think the comparison we made between the Traffic Clerks at Christchurch and Auckland with the Assistant Postmasters is also a fair comparison?—I think so.

6. I have here the annual report of the Post and Telegraph Department for the year 1909, and of the 6,593 employees in the Post and Telegraph Department are there any Railway men included?—Yes, there are some included. "Postmasters and Telegraph officers who are Railway officers, 166."

7. How many of those employed are Telegraph messenger-boys?—One thousand seven hundred and fifty four.

8. I have here a statement showing increases in traffic and revenue at certain stations for year ending 31st March, 1910, compared with year ending 31st March, 1908. Is that correct [handed to witness]?—Yes. [See Appendix.]

9. That has been compiled from the railway returns?—Yes.

10. *Mr. Witty.*] Is there as much interest taken in the work of the Department by the younger officers who are coming on as there used to be?—No, certainly not.

11. Is there any feeling or any friction between the two Divisions?—I have not noticed any: there is certainly none in our district.

12. *The Chairman.*] What grade are the Traffic Managers to be found in generally?—They are divided into about three grades.

13. Are some to be found in the seventh and eighth grades?—No, in the second, third, and fourth.

14. *Mr. Ross.*] Mr. Ennis, you told the Committee that part of the duties of Traffic Inspectors was the conducting of inquiries and investigating claims?—Yes.

15. As an experienced officer and Traffic Inspector, do you think that your real duties, which are of more value to the Department and the public, could be more satisfactorily carried out if you were relieved of those inquisitorial inquiries such as investigating claims and conducting inquiries?—Yes, possibly so.