

42. Well, is it not a fact that at the Invercargill district office there is a District Traffic Manager, the Traffic Clerk, and at least one other man who has train-running powers?—That is so.

43. Well, where was the necessity for the Traffic Clerk to remain on duty for twenty-four hours?—He apparently considered it necessary.

44. Well, was it necessary?—The Traffic Clerk considered it was better for him to stay on duty. He was looking after the public interest in doing so.

45. Was his working twenty-four hours round the clock the result of insufficient or inefficient Departmental provision?—I do not suggest that at all.

46. Then it was not?—No, I did not say it was.

47. Then this man elected or volunteered to remain on?—Yes.

48. *Mr. Ross.*] I presume he thought it was necessary?—Yes, or else he would not have stopped.

49. *Mr. McVilly.*] But provision was there to carry on the work in his absence, is not that so?—But in the case of a serious dislocation like that, a senior officer would hesitate leaving it in the hands of a junior—any man would who had the interests of the service at heart.

50. How many times during a year do Traffic Clerks, not only in Invercargill but in every other important district in connection with the railway system, work their shift and nothing more: is it not a daily occurrence?—At ordinary stations, yes.

51. And does it not frequently occur—in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred—in times of stress?—In times of stress the hours are generally extended.

52. In times of stress those men stop on twenty-four hours?—Not always—it depends on the nature of the accident or interruption.

53. Is it necessary for them to do so?—If I were in their position and a serious accident occurred I would be inclined to do so myself.

54. Is it necessary from a departmental point of view?—The Department may not think it necessary, but an officer may think it better that he should do so.

55. Has the Department not authorized in its time-tables applying to every section certain officers in each district office to have train-running powers?—Yes.

56. What is the object of that?—One object is so that there will be at least two men at the time-table.

57. Is not the object this: that the officers responsible for train-running may have reasonable hours of duty?—I should say so, yes. That may be another reason. Of course, in the case of Invercargill the officer next to the Traffic Clerk is only a ninth-grade man. He is practically a junior officer.

58. Notwithstanding that, is it not a fact that the Department has authorized that man to be placed in charge of train-running?—Yes.

59. And the Department takes the responsibility of the arrangement?—The Traffic Clerk would never know how he would stand in the case of a dislocation of traffic. If the junior officer made a serious error he would naturally be doubtful as to how he would stand.

60. Do you seriously ask the Committee to believe that when the Department has authorized two officers or more to control train-running, and one man that the Department has authorized happens to be a junior, that if he made a slip the Traffic Clerk would be held responsible for what happened when off duty?—I should say it would depend on the circumstances and the nature of the accident.

61. Can you quote a case where it has been done?—No, I cannot note a case at the moment.

62. You were speaking of clauses 8, 9, and 10 of the petition. Clause 9 refers to Schedules B and C. Are you familiar with those schedules, Mr. Ennis?—Yes, I have read them.

63. Schedule B purports to be a comparison between the Postal Department and the Railway Department. Now, do you see the way that schedule is put on this statement?—Yes.

64. Do you consider that a fair way to show a schedule?—I do not see any unfairness in it.

65. Do you think, for instance, that it is a fair thing to compare the first grade in the Postal Department with the third grade in the Railways?—If they are making a comparison all grades must be shown.

66. Well, do you not think it would be a fair and proper thing to start the other way about—to take the first-grade Postal as against the first-grade Railway?—Well, the list must overlap at one end or the other, and if you start at the bottom where the salaries correspond I think it is the fairest way to start the comparisons.

67. Well, you consider that the first grade should be first-grade Postal and first-grade Railway?—No, I think the comparison should start the seventh-grade Postal against the tenth-grade Railway. That is the lowest grade in the Postal.

68. And then put the seventh-grade Postal against the eighth, ninth, and tenth Railway? You will see the seventh-class Postal is £120 to £220?—Yes. That is the lowest class for a clerk in the Post Office, and it is fairest to compare it with the lowest class in the Railways.

69. What about the ninth?—That is the next grade in the Railway, as against the sixth in the Post Office.

70. If you are going to take the minimum of £200 in the Postal, then you should take the minimum of £200 in the Railway?—The minimum is £120 in the Postal.

71. But the minimum of the sixth grade I am talking about—the minimum of £200. Do you not think it fair to take £200 in the Railway?—The Postal man can go up to £220.

72. Do you not know that the £220 in the Postal is a side track?—I do not understand what you mean by "side track."

*Mr. McVilly:* By side track I mean—— [At this stage Mr. Graham approached to speak to the witness.] You will sit down, Mr. Graham; I am not talking to you.

*Mr. Ross:* I object, Mr. Chairman, to the proceedings being conducted in this manner. If the Committee is going to be run by Mr. McVilly, then we might just as well leave, as there will