

91. *Mr. J. V. Brown.*] You mentioned in regard to one officer being on duty for twenty-four hours, and that it was at his own option whether he went away, but apparently he stopped on, thinking he may be wanted, as some extraordinary circumstances might arise; but that does not occur very often, I suppose?—No, it was an exceptional case—there was an accident.

92. It is not usual?—It is an unusual occurrence. We might have one or two such occurrences in a year.

93. Has it been your experience to be on duty for twenty-four hours?—Yes.

94. How often?—Four or five times altogether.

95. In how many years?—Six years. It would not be much more than that.

JAMES YOUNG examined. (No. 10.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Clerk in the District Railway Engineer's Office, Christchurch.

2. You wish to make a statement to the Committee?—Yes. In Schedule C of the petition the position of District Engineer in the Railway has been compared with that of Telegraph Engineer in the Post and Telegraph Department. I wish to give briefly some of the duties required of the District Railway Engineer. He has charge of a large section of railway in which the capital cost is more than the expenditure on telegraph lines and equipment. He is responsible for the maintenance of the running-track and structures in a high state of efficiency. This requires a highly technical knowledge. The safety of the travelling public depends on the soundness and efficiency of the various structures over which the trains pass, and the importance of such work cannot be overestimated. He has control of a large permanent staff (up to four hundred men) and a numerous casual staff. Under existing regulations he must qualify and hold the diploma of A.M.I.C.E. That is the regulation for all qualifying for Assistant Engineers; there are one or two who have not that diploma, but most of them have. On the South Island main line and branches there are three Engineers controlling 1,623 miles of railway, including sidings, the capital cost of which is £12,540,000, and the expenditure for the maintenance of the way amounted to £269,029 for the year ending 31st March, 1910, this being the latest date for which figures were available when the petition was prepared. The districts are divided as follows: Christchurch District—All the lines north of Glenavy (including branches), 632 miles, including about twelve miles of bridges and sidings. Dunedin District—Glenavy to Clinton (including branches), 533 miles, and Mosgiel duplication-works. Invercargill District—All the lines south of Clinton, 458 miles. Foremen of Works in the Railways have been compared in Schedule C with Assistant Officers in charge at principal telegraph offices. I am also acquainted with the duties appertaining to this position. He acts directly under the District Engineer, and must possess technical knowledge of a varied nature. Foremen of Work are in immediate charge of the maintenance, renewals, and repairs of all bridges, buildings, and other structures, and must be capable of compiling estimates and working out various engineering calculations. These officers have under their immediate control a large staff of skilled artisans and ordinary labourers, and they are responsible for directing the work of their staff to the best advantage so that the work will be carried out cheaply and efficiently with due regard to safety. I may say that officers of the rank and file in the Railway services all over the world have to a certain extent been poorly paid, and of course, the colonial Railway services have been originally based on the Old Country Railway services with regard to the payment of their officers. The Old Country Railway services are private companies managed for profit, and of course to a certain extent the payments to officers have been with due regard to the profits. The New Zealand railways are managed on a different basis. In my opinion they are the largest Government institution in the colony—that is, an institution worked by the people for the benefit of the people. We wish to compare that system with the next largest Government system in the colony—that is, the Post and Telegraph service. We think that is a fair comparison to make instead of comparing it with other railway systems which may be based on the capital of the concern and worked solely for profit. That is briefly what I wish to say to the Committee.

3. *Mr. Ramsay.*] Then you consider that the comparison made in Schedule C between the District Engineers in the Railways at Dunedin and Auckland with the Telegraph Engineer of the Post and Telegraph Department is a fair comparison?—Yes, I do.

4. *Mr. McVilly.*] Mr. Young, you spoke about the pay of the Railway officers throughout the world: have you any idea what the pay of the Railway maintenance officers is in Australia?—No, not particularly.

5. What, for instance, is the pay of the Maintenance Clerks in Australia?—I do not know.

6. Well, coming to your own particular case?—I am not speaking of my own particular case—I am not voicing my own case.

7. I do not mean your case personally. Coming down to the payment of the Maintenance Clerks in New Zealand, what was the payment of the Maintenance Clerk in Christchurch in 1897?—I do not recollect what it was—I was not there then.

8. Can you tell us what the pay was in Dunedin or in the principal districts?—I think it was about £250 or £260—something like that.

9. In 1897?—Yes, as far as I can recollect.

10. What is the pay now?—£355.

11. You cannot state definitely what it was in 1897?—No, but it was something like what I have mentioned.

12. Have you any personal knowledge of the work of the Telegraph Engineers that you spoke of?—I have a fair knowledge I think. I know a good many of them by meeting them in the course of business.

13. Can you tell me what their duties are—that is what I asked you?—Their duties are in connection with controlling the maintenance and telegraph-lines, telephones, and services in that direction.