

14. Are not their duties in connectin with the Postal Department and the public business of the country equally as responsible in their way as those of the railway?—Not in my opinion.

15. Wherein lies the difference?—In the first place they have not the staff under them—not the Railway Engineers; and in another direction he has not to go through the same training that a Railway Engineer has to go through.

16. Well, is not that the result of two engineers following different professions—one has a training as an electrical expert?—I do not think so—not as an electrical expert as far as I know. They qualify from telegraphists. I do not think they are electrical engineers in the general acceptance of the term.

17. What do you call an electrical engineer?—An electrical engineer is a man who is qualified in electricity and electrical works. Of course, there are grades.

18. There is the electrical engineer who is an expert in transport and the electrical engineer who is an expert in telephony and telegraphy?—Of course it pertains to electricity, but what I take to be a modern electrical engineer is a man who has to do with electrical power, more particularly an electrical tramway engineer.

19. Would you expect a man who was going to attend to telegraphy and telephony to devote his time to telegraphy as compared with transport?—No, I think he directs his time to what is required in his Department.

20. Is not that expert?—It is to a certain extent, and I do not wish to say he is not entitled to all he gets, but I wish to emphasize that I consider a Railway Engineer at £525 is not paid in proportion to the Telegraph Engineer at £600.

21. You said the Telegraph Engineer gravitated from a telegraphist?—Yes, in most cases.

22. What does the Railway Engineer gravitate from?—He has to be educated as an engineer. Most of our engineers have had a university education.

23. Have all of them?—Not all of them, but most of them have.

24. Are those men who have not had a university education any worse than those who have or any better?—I could not say whether they are any worse.

25. Are they any less efficient?—I could not say, but I think if it were so, what would be the use of the universities?

26. That may be all right, but how many of our men have graduated from the ranks?—Of the present district officers?

27. Yes?—I know of two or three at present, and I know that one of them has had a university education and has obtained the diploma of A.M.I.C.E. Another of them was prepared for his examination but I do not think he went up, but he is a man who has been a great student, and I know he has a big library and has studied his profession very carefully. The third one I do not know much about.

28. There has been in the past nothing to prevent it, and some of our men have got through as District Engineers in exactly the same way as you say the Telegraph Engineers have got through?—Yes, some of them.

29. *Mr. O'Loughlen.*] Can you tell me what has been the increased cost of living since 1907 up to the present day?—No, I could not tell you the proportion. I know it has increased, that is my experience as a family man, but I do not know how much.

30. Can you say whether the work in your office has increased?—Certainly it has. The strenuousness of it has increased ever so much.

31. Assuming £100 more per annum is paid now for the position you occupy in Christchurch than was paid in 1897, do you think that is sufficient and adequate to cover the increased cost of living and the increased work attached to the office?—Of course, my evidence would be comparative. I did not raise any question about my own position—I was referring to District Engineers; but as the question has been raised I say that if the salaries in our own branches and other branches had been raised or increased by £100 a year, that with the extra responsibility and extra work it is only reasonable.

32. The comparison has been made, and that is why I asked the question?—Yes.

RICHARD WILLIAM MCVILLY further examined. (No. 11.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Chief Clerk of the New Zealand Government Railways.

2. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] You have heard the evidence, Mr. McVilly, of the last four witnesses in connection with their demand for increased pay.* Kindly give information to the Committee in reply to that as to the total cost which will be incurred by the Department, and the total it would amount to within eight years?—I think, sir, that the first witness called yesterday by the institute, Mr. McPherson, raised the question as to the insufficiency of pay for Stationmasters. He laid particular stress on the large amount of work that was done by Stationmasters acting in the combined positions of Postmaster and Stationmaster. He spoke generally of the Government life-insurance business, registration of births, deaths, and marriages, post and telegraph, money-order and savings-bank business, and referred to the very great stress under which those duties had to be carried out. Well, taking a line through the majority of country post-offices at combined railway-stations, the amount of business that is done by a country Stationmaster in his capacity as Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages is very small indeed. I question very much if the whole of the work that such men have to do in connection with births, deaths, and marriages averages at railway-stations six entries per month. I question that very much, and I think if time had allowed I should have been able to obtain facts that would have put beyond any doubt my assertion in that direction. I am not speaking as a layman in this connection; I have been through the mill, and I have acted as Registrar and collected Government insurance premiums. I think it was contended that all this work was done as a labour of love. Well, carrying my memory back when Mr. McPherson was giving his evidence, I had some vague recol-

* See Exhibit No. 6.