

that purpose a number of positions of Assistant Running-shed Foremen were created, and those men who had been recommended and who occupied the senior position as Senior Enginemen were put into those positions and retained seniority although they were not always the senior men on the list. That is how Mr. Smith and one or two others came to be Assistant Running-shed Foremen. There are drivers senior to them who would be probably recommended to-day for the position, but Mr. Smith having held the position for a long time has been transferred to the First Division, and if he has not got altogether as much pay as he thinks he ought to get—but about which question the Department has another view—then Mr. Smith has got his chance, which is to get a Running-shed Foreman's position in due course. With regard to the time it has taken to attain those positions, it must not be overlooked that the men who occupy those positions are men who worked up from the Second Division, and all necessary work in the Second Division entails long service to get through. The Second Division is a big division, and when men enter the Second Division as engine-drivers or any other grade they have a pretty big row to hoe—a pretty long list of men to get through—and in many cases they can only get through by seniority and good service. In other cases they get through by qualifications. So far as the question of pay is concerned, the original Running-shed Foreman in Christchurch, Mr. Dickenson, got £300 a year before he retired. I am speaking from memory. Mr. McKenzie, his successor, after seventeen years in the First Division rose to £290. Another man after long service in the Second Division, who is now Running-shed Foreman, was getting £290 after six years' service in the First Division. Now, contrast the position to-day with 1897. In 1897 they started at £210, and after seven years' service they still got £210. To-day they start at £210, get to £220, and then they have to wait for vacancies or until the Department considers that the duties are of sufficient importance to justify it in raising the position a grade. You cannot deal with any one position in the service by itself. I want to emphasize this fact: when the original Classification Act was introduced it provided specifically certain grades for Stationmasters, &c. For instance, Locomotive Foremen were shown by themselves, Inspectors of Permanent-way were by themselves, and so on; but there was so much difficulty and so much dissatisfaction among the men that when the Act of 1902 was introduced the Department, at the urgent solicitation of the staff—and there is no question about that—decided to adopt a classification on the same basis as the Postal service—that is, to classify everybody so that irrespective of what position a man held he was put on the D.-3 list in his relative position to everybody else. The cry and contention then was that a Stationmaster did not know his relative position with a clerk—nobody knew it but the Head Office. Well, that was practically true at the time. To get over that the present system of classification was introduced, and now if you want to put up a Locomotive Foreman you have to consider the relative value of the position of the Locomotive Foremen, Inspectors of Permanent-way, Bridge Inspectors, Foremen, and clerks right through, and where there are three hundred men in a grade, every one of those men is going to question that Foreman's promotion. It is all very easy to say, "Oh, this is so-and-so," that may satisfy the Department, but you cannot satisfy the men concerned. Every man thinks he ought to be in a very much better position than he is. At the same time, the unfortunate thing about it is that we are not judges of our own qualifications; there is somebody else over all of us who is responsible for the administration of the Department so far as the railway is concerned, and who has to say what is going to be done. If Mr. Smith or anybody else thinks he has got a grievance if passed over by a junior, he has got the Appeal Board, and that is where he should go and thresh out any personal matters; but so long as the position remains as it is, I submit it would be most unfair to the bulk of the men, and not in accordance with the spirit and intention of the Department and the Government when the Classification Act of 1902 was framed and put into its present form, to single out certain men for favourable treatment if the Department considers that other relative positions on top of those are worth just as much money. The expenditure must be governed by the revenue. The Department has got nearly £31,000,000 of capital invested, and we are approaching the time when we will have fully that amount of capital to pay interest on. You have got to keep steadily in view the fact that at 31st March each year you have got to have £1,162,500 to meet interest. I submit to the Committee that when the position is like that it is necessary to go very cautiously indeed in making promotions or spending any money. Now, I should like to ask how many members of the Railway service ever think what an increase of one penny per day per man means in expenditure? I suppose it would surprise any one to know that it is nearly £20,000 a year. You can take it that we have—reduced down to full time—about 12,885 men; but if we take every man working we employ, including casuals, there are over 20,000 men in the Railways. The number is reduced when broken time is taken into consideration. One penny a day means 26s. a year per man. The question, however, gentlemen, is the sufficiency of the pay. I will tell you what the Locomotive Foreman gets. Mr. Smith quoted some figures yesterday in regard to New South Wales to show that the men there got up to £900 a year. The average rate of pay for Locomotive Foremen, Boiler Inspectors, Car and Wagon Inspectors in New Zealand is £261; New South Wales, £286; Victoria, £299; and Queensland, £250. Now, we know that we are lower than New South Wales and Victoria, but we are higher than Queensland. Well, I suppose it will be admitted that the pay should bear some proportion, at all events, to the services. I should like Mr. Smith to put an hour or two in the depôts at Eveleigh or in Melbourne, and then tell me if he thinks that the New Zealand men, having regard to the duties carried out over there as compared with the duties here, are underpaid. The man in charge of the engine-drivers at Eveleigh has about nine hundred engine-drivers, firemen, and cleaners under him, and the other depôts have from two hundred and fifty up to four hundred men under them. They have an enormous number of engines, and a train service that we do not realize in New Zealand. I am quite satisfied, as a result of my own personal observations and inquiries, that, having regard to the circumstances under which those men work there and the conditions under which our men work, I know which is the best place and the best pay. I will look up some instances later on