

75. If I was to say it was not taken into consideration, would you deny it?—I would probably contradict you, and say I would want the evidence of the Secretary of the Post Office on that point.

76. Do you know whether the Telegraph and Telephone Branches pay interest on the capital cost?—I have already told you I did not go into the management of the Postal Department at all, and I am not going to be drawn into a discussion on that subject.

77. So that you do not know?—I am not going to admit anything of the kind.

78. Do you admit or do you deny it?—I have already told you I have no personal knowledge of the internal administration of the Postal Department.

79. You heard Mr. Smith, the Assistant Locomotive Foreman at Christchurch, giving evidence?—Yes, I heard Mr. Smith give some evidence.

80. It was to the effect that men became Locomotive Foremen after twenty or twenty-five years' service on the footplate and engine-running, and after having graduated in certain steps and passed certain examinations?—What are the examinations for? I have heard him make no such statement. He passed no examination to enable him to take up his present position. He passed an examination while in the Second Division.

81. You heard him say that the average age of Locomotive Foremen was between forty and forty-five?—Some statement was made regarding the average age by somebody, but I do not know who it was now.

82. Do you consider that a man with this experience and length of service is on being promoted to Division I at least entitled to be placed in grade £240?—No, I consider a man should be placed in the position at a rate which the Department considers fair value for the work he is doing, and although a man has been forty years in his previous position it does not follow that he is fit to take up First Division work: he has to be trained to it.

83. Upon whom does the responsibility rest when a man is transferred from Division II to Division I?—Upon the General Manager.

84. And upon whose advice does he act?—On the advice of the head of the branch.

85. Have the recommendations of the head of the branch been always carried out by the General Manager?—No, certainly not. If the General Manager does not agree with the recommendation of the head of the branch he is not going to carry it out if he thinks it wrong.

86. So that the fixing of the salary finally rests with the General Manager?—Yes, finally.

87. So that he may fix the salary and yet have very little knowledge of the duties carried out by the particular man?—That is not so.

88. Then, take a Locomotive Foreman: have you any practical experience of his work?—If you are talking of me personally, then I say you are absolutely wrong. I said the General Manager decides the matter.

89. So that the question of fixing the salary ultimately devolves upon the General Manager?—He fixes them after consultation with the officer who is qualified to advise him, and where the General Manager disagrees with that officer the officer in question is given the reason—that is, if he is discussing the matter with the head of the branch. The head of the branch knows what the position is, and he concurs in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred after hearing the reasons. Reasons are always given. As a matter of fact, I may tell you in reply to that question that there are many cases in which the General Manager fixes a higher rate of pay than the head of the branch was prepared to recommend.

90. Can you name a case?—Not straight away.

91. Would you be able to name a case later?—Yes, I have no doubt at all.

92. And will you supply us with a list of those cases?—Yes.

93. Do you know what the minimum rate of pay was of the Locomotive Foremen thirty years ago?—The minimum was £4 10s. or £4.

94. So that in a period of thirty years the minimum wage payable to Locomotive Foremen has increased by the large sum of £2?—Locomotive Foremen of those days and of the present day are different people altogether: the positions are different and the districts are different. A considerable number of the Locomotive Foremen at the present time are in what we consider, comparatively speaking, unimportant positions. There has got to be some relation between the pay at the smallest locomotive depot and the pay at the largest. If you fix a high rate for the small man, where are you going to stop with the other man?

95. But is there not a difference now between the qualifications required to become a Locomotive Foreman as compared with 1881?—It is rather too far back for me to talk about what the qualifications were in 1881, but I know the men who were holding the positions in 1881. Some of them were men who had had their training at Home.

96. Do they receive a better training at Home than here?—At that time they did, and I am not sure that they do not now. I know that at Home it takes very much longer to become an engine-driver than it does here, where a man gets out on the footplate after he has been three or four years in the service.

97. I take it that, generally speaking, you are familiar with the regulations under the Act. Regulation 40 states—“(1.) Whenever a vacancy occurs, or a new position is to be made, the member who has been standing for the longest period at the nearest inferior rate of pay to that attached to such vacancy or position shall be appointed thereto if the General Manager certifies (a) that it is necessary in the interests of the Department to make the appointment; (b) that the member named is suitable and qualified to fill it; (c) that he has passed the prescribed examinations; (d) that he is the member best entitled to the appointment. (2.) If such member does not fulfil these conditions, then another member shall be selected in like manner, and so on until the list is exhausted. Every member who has been promoted and who fails to efficiently perform the