

132. Would a number of them?—One or two might, with training. I will go further than that and I will say that any man, it does not matter in what walk in life, but any man with intelligence who likes to apply himself and who has a fair amount of education could take charge of lots of things in this world.

133. I want to deal now with Schedule C. Take the cases marked—that is, the stations that were until recently combined stations but are now separated: Rakaia—Postmaster £260, Stationmaster £255?—That is the same grade.

134. Takapau—Postmaster £260, Stationmaster £220?—The Stationmaster at Takapau is getting as much as the job is worth.

135. Wyndham—Postmaster £260, Stationmaster £200?—The Stationmaster there is very fortunate in getting £200. He owes that to the Classification Act of 1907.

136. Otautau—Postmaster £260, Stationmaster £220; and Waikouaiti—Postmaster £220, Stationmaster £200. Now, until very recently those stations were combined stations, so that the whole of the work was performed by the Stationmasters?—Yes.

137. Now, can you give any reason at all why in each of those cases the Postmaster should receive when the duties were separated so much more than the Stationmaster when he performed the combined duties?—Well, I can tell you this: that, speaking with a knowledge of the work, the Stationmaster was amply remunerated for the work he did at the combined station, and so far as the Postal officers are concerned, I have already told you about that. If you want me to repeat my view, then I say your question is another argument for pulling down the Postal.

138. It is not a question of pulling down?—You are asking me for a reason, and I say the Postal men are overpaid, and the Railway men are amply remunerated.

139. Then, you stated in evidence that the Railway Department classifies stations in which combined work is carried out in a higher grade than it otherwise would do?—It does in many cases.

140. Can you name stations in which it has occurred?—I cannot, speaking from memory, but I know we have done it, and I can tell you, further than that, that we increased the staff at those stations which we otherwise would not do.

141. If you increase the staff at those combined stations, does it not follow that there is an increase in the responsibility?—No, it does not necessarily follow. Now you come to the responsibility I want to say this: that in the course of my inquiries from time to time respecting requisitions for additional staff at stations, I have asked on many occasions for a list of the duties performed at the various stations by the various members. Speaking generally, you get this sort of thing—"Mr. So-and-so deals with passengers, parcels, abstract inwards, goods outwards. Mr. So-and-so deals with parcels out, goods in, G.-76. Cadet So-and-so does so-and-so. Stationmaster keeps the C.-7, replies to correspondence and supervises." In many cases I have wanted to know, if Mr. So-and-so dealt with all the passengers and all parcels business, and Mr. So-and-so and the cadet dealt with the goods business and the general business of the station, what the Stationmaster thought he was being paid for, and I have promptly pulled a man out of those stations. You talk about responsibility: I say that wherever we give the men additional staff the tendency is for the Stationmaster to at once throw the responsibility on to the other chap and put his hands in his pockets and supervise. In other words, the man in uniform thinks it "*infra dig.*" to take a fair share of the work.

142. Is not the supervising the responsible part?—There is such a thing as too much supervision. There is supervision and supervision. My opinion of supervision is not to walk about on the platform with your hands in your pockets. My idea of efficient supervision is to go round the station-yards from time to time and inspect things and supervise things properly and do a portion of the work yourself.

143. But the man who has the supervision cannot do the work?—I am speaking from experience.

144. Take the combined stations in Schedule C, were those stations classed at their present grades for the reason that they were combined stations?—I cannot say straight off, but I can tell you this, that we always take into consideration the work being done, whether combined offices or not. The positions are reviewed from time to time. We run through the stations every year.

145. You stated that the responsibility for each Department was equal?—I said the responsibilities were equal so far as the general public were concerned—that is, in so far as the postal business is concerned, it is just as necessary to the public that that work should be efficiently done as it is that the railway work should be efficiently done.

146. Coming back to the responsibilities, if a man in the Railway Department makes a mistake, is he not much more seriously punished than a man in the Postal Department?—I do not know what the punishments in the Postal Department are now-a-days, but speaking as a Railway man, when I was doing the combined office-work the thing that used to trouble me most was the little queries that we got from the Postal Department if you forgot to cross your t's or dot your i's. So far as the Railway Department is concerned, we get our "Please explains," but I used to feel very annoyed with some of the queries of the Postal Department.

147. You have a better opinion of the Railway officer?—The Railway officer is not so pernickity and he is broader-minded in that respect.

148. You have a better opinion of him?—I hope so—I am in the Railway service.

149. For mistakes the punishment in the Post Office is 3d. to 10s. in fines?—Yes, I know they used to have a minimum of 3d.

150. And in the Railway Department the fines are from 2s. 6d. to £5?—Yes.

151. Then does that not show that the responsibilities of the Railway officers are greater than the Postal officers?—No, not at all. It is the Department's view of the seriousness of