

certain things. We may take a more serious view of certain things than the Postal Department does, and not so serious in other respects. For instance, we never ask a man for an explanation if he drops out a "t" altogether.

152. You referred to six men who were transferred from the Postal Department to the Railway Department and had made successful Railway officers?—As a matter of fact I referred from memory to seventeen men who had been transferred from the Postal Office. Those men not only made successful Railway officers, but were also successful outside. Mr. Donne is Trade Commissioner at Home now.

153. You also mentioned a number of men who had gone to outside work from the Postal Department?—Yes.

154. Did any of those men seek employment in the Railway Department?—I am not sure that they did. I think the probability is that at the time they retired they left the Department to take outside employment or go into business. If a man is not satisfied with the conditions of his employment and he has any spirit of independence he says, "Very well, I will strike out and sail along by myself." I would not stay twenty-four hours in the Department if the conditions were distasteful to me.

155. Referring to those men who were transferred from the Postal Department to the Railway Department, when did the last transfer take place?—I cannot tell you that—it is some years ago probably. Mr. H. F. Mooney, who is now Stationmaster at Balclutha, was Telegraphist at Timaru when I remember him first. I believe he left the Postal service, and I know Mr. Mooney was very glad to get into the Railway service. That is probably twenty years ago.

156. *Mr. Brown.*] Did I understand you to say that Locomotive Foremen at the present time got £2 more than they did thirty years ago?—No, they started at £4 per week then, and they start at £220 a year now; but the men mostly start at small jobs and are assistants. The man who got £4 10s. years ago controlled the district from Christchurch right down to Oamaru. The man who controls a part of that district to-day gets £355 and has an assistant at £255.

---

WEDNESDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER, 1911.

*Mr. Ramsay:* Before continuing the examination, Mr. Chairman, I have an explanation which I should like to make. When we came before the Committee yesterday I was under the impression that each witness would be entitled to ask Mr. McVilly questions relative to his own evidence. I am not, as you are aware, connected in any way with the Railway Department: I appear here simply as counsel. My intention was to put some general questions and then to call upon each witness to ask questions in turn. We were therefore, sir, placed at a decided disadvantage when I was informed by you that only one person would be allowed to put questions. The explanation, however, which I desire to make is that I adopted yesterday a line of examination of which the members of the institute strongly disapprove. I quite unwittingly, sir, questioned the policy of the Government in making concessions. Members of the institute desire me to say that they all recognize that they have no right whatever to question the policy of the Government, and that once the Government have decided upon a policy that it is their duty to abide loyally by it whatever their individual opinions may be. This is the stand, sir, that the members of the institute have always maintained and ever will maintain, and I trust, sir, that you and the members of the Committee will accept this explanation in the spirit in which it is made.

*The Chairman:* Yes. In connection with the disadvantage at which you say you are placed, Mr. Ramsay, it was clearly explained to you at the opening of the proceedings that the Committee had decided on a definite course, and that course was that all your witnesses could give evidence, but only one could ask questions on each side, so that you were at no greater disadvantage yesterday—if you say it is a disadvantage—than you were on previous occasions. The Department is in exactly the same position. Mr. McVilly, Mr. Ronayne, and the Minister cannot ask questions of one witness—they must choose which one of the three is to do so.

*Mr. Ramsay:* Yes, from what you said I understood that was the position at the very first, but I understood as we went along that the procedure was being changed. Yesterday I was under the impression, from what you had said, that I would be entitled to ask questions, and then the witnesses would be called and they would be allowed to ask questions.

*The Chairman:* You may have understood from my statement that the members of the institute could confer as to the questions they should ask. You will also remember that we decided to allow any member of the institute to question on any one clause, and that gave you the advantage of choosing any expert on any particular clause to question the Department's witness. It gives you an advantage in that you can choose different questioners to deal with the different clauses.

*Mr. Ross:* It would have been an advantage to the officers of the institute and the Department if every officer who has given evidence and has a special knowledge of the evidence were to have the opportunity of asking Mr. McVilly questions in connection with that evidence. It must be quite plain to us all that an officer who has given evidence and whose evidence was traversed by Mr. McVilly in his statement would be foolish to hand his questions to another officer who has no knowledge of the facts which support his evidence on that point.

*The Chairman:* But when he is giving his own evidence would he need to ask questions? You said, giving his own evidence. If there is anything additional to be brought out any member on his own side can question him.

*Mr. Ross:* That is not the point. An officer gives evidence, and that evidence is traversed by Mr. McVilly in reply. Then according to our rule of procedure those officers who have given evidence, in cross-examining Mr. McVilly, must cross-examine through one officer only, and the result is that we have, as we had yesterday, questions emanating from a gentleman who had given evidence, but being put to Mr. McVilly through one advocate, and the result was quite apparent to the members of the Committee—namely, disastrous to the institute—because the advocate is not