

45. I am talking about the present condition of affairs?—Where Stationmasters have houses in Victoria I am not going to admit that they get a cash value of £52 per annum. You have got to assess the value of their houses on the basis we are doing here.

46. We simply wish to find out whether the statements you made so far as Victoria is concerned are correct?—Both the statements I made are correct. When you compare the business in New Zealand with the business in Victoria, then I say that the New Zealand Stationmasters in corresponding grades to what they are in Victoria would be getting from £50 to £60 a year less than we are paying.

47. That is what you say?—That is a fact.

48. Is it not a fact that the labourers receive 7s. to 7s. 6d. per day in Victoria, whilst in New Zealand they receive 8s. to 8s. 3d per day?—That is a fact, and the reason is that in New Zealand we pay wages which involve giving the greatest good to the greatest number.

49. Is it not reasonable that officers should receive in New Zealand proportionately increased remuneration?—No, it is not. You are urging that we should pull down the labourer to less than a living-wage, reduce the rank and file of the Railway service, to put it on the top end.

50. That is not my argument at all?—I said you are urging that.

51. That is not the inference to draw from my remarks at all, Mr. McVilly. What I want to ask you is that, considering the fact that the wages of the working-men are higher in New Zealand than in Victoria, is it not reasonable that officers should receive proportionately increased remuneration?—No, it is not.

52. Can you say whether Stationmasters in New South Wales perform similar duties to those performed by Stationmasters in New Zealand?—In a general way they do.

53. What do you mean by "a general way"?—Well, taking the general routine of station-work. Of course, I know that at larger stations—

54. But are you intimately acquainted with the work they perform?—I have just as much acquaintance as a Railway man can have after having personal observation.

55. Then are you aware that the Chief Booking Clerk in Sydney receives a higher rate of pay than the Stationmaster?—Yes, I am aware of that.

56. Does that not prove that the Stationmaster is not a superior officer in Sydney to the Chief Booking Clerk, and that the positions are not able to be compared with similar positions in New Zealand?—No, the organization is different.

57. Therefore the positions cannot be compared?—The Stationmaster in Sydney performs the same work as our Stationmasters do in the large centres.

58. Referring to Schedule C, Mr. McVilly, certain stations are mentioned, and I desire to ask you whether the duties of the Stationmasters in those particular cases are not at least equal to the duties performed by the Postmasters?—My recollection is that this matter was discussed yesterday.

59. I never asked you about Stratford or Marton—I was dealing with the combined stations?—My recollection is that it was dealt with yesterday. The comparisons made in Schedule C are: Stratford—Postmaster £315, Stationmaster £255; Marton—Postmaster £315, Stationmaster £255; Rakaia—Postmaster £260, Stationmaster £255; Takapau—Postmaster £260, Stationmaster £220; Temuka—Postmaster £260, Stationmaster £220; Wyndham—Postmaster £260, Stationmaster £200; Mataura—Postmaster £260, Stationmaster £220; Winton—Postmaster £260, Stationmaster £220; Otautau—Postmaster £260, Stationmaster £220; Waikouaiti—Postmaster £220, Stationmaster £200. In a number of those positions, until quite recently, combined work was performed. Having heard those positions read, do you not consider that the duties performed by the Stationmasters at those particular places are equal to the duties performed by the Postmasters at the same places?—The duties of Stationmasters and the duties of Postmasters are matters for two different Departments. The Railway Department, as I stated definitely yesterday, amply remunerated its officers for the services they performed for the Department. Whether the Postal Department overpays its officers for the work they do is a matter that should be discussed with the Secretary of the Post Office, and not with me.

60. So that you decline to give me an answer to my question. My question was, Are the duties performed by the Stationmasters at those particular positions equal to the duties performed by the Postmasters, and you decline to answer?—I have not declined to answer. I have stated the position. I am not going to discuss the Postal officer. You must discuss those with the Secretary of the Post Office. I say the Railway Stationmasters are amply remunerated for their work and responsibilities.

61. That is not what I want?—Well, that is the answer.

62. The answer is Yes or No?—Pardon me, I am not going to allow you to put words into my mouth.

63. Then I will put it this way: I put the question to you, and you decline to answer Yes or No?—I decline to discuss the postal business, which is under the head of another Department.

64. Do you consider, Mr. McVilly, that the officers were properly classified in 1908?—The officers have been properly classified in 1908 and every other year.

65. You stated in your evidence yesterday that the positions were reviewed every year: is that so?—Yes, that is so. I stated what was a fact.

66. Then I propose quoting to you a few stations where the traffic has increased, and I desire to know whether certain positions occupied at those stations should be regraded. The figures I will quote will show the increase in 1910 over 1908. Auckland Passenger-station: Increase of passengers, 1908–10, £46,109; increased revenue, £45,151; pay of Stationmaster in grade 6, maximum salary (less house-rent), £355. The Stationmaster is still at the same salary in 1910 as he was at in 1908?—Well, has the grade been pulled down?

67. Now do you consider that this position should be regraded?—I consider the position amply remunerated. It is for the management to determine the value of a position.