

90. Gore: Passenger traffic increase, 11,201; revenue increase, £5,248; Stationmaster, in grade 7, salary (less house-rent), 1908 and 1910, £300. Do you consider that that man is adequately remunerated?—I consider he is fairly well paid for his work.

91. Do you consider the Booking Clerk at Christchurch is properly remunerated in view of the fact that the revenue has increased by £1,594, the total revenue being £79,525 in 1910, and he only receives £220?—I think I have given you the answer to that question already. I have stated that all positions are reviewed at the end of every financial year, and that the Department itself attaches to the position the pay that the management considers is reasonable for the position held.

92. So far as those stations I have referred to are concerned, with the exception of Feilding, how long have those in the North Island been at the present grade?—In order to answer your question I will place on record now the gradations of all the stations in New Zealand from 1895 till 1911. That statement gives all the stations and shows the exact positions they were in. [Statement put in—Appendix B.]

93. Will you first confine your answer to those stations I have mentioned?—I am going to put this statement in, and it deals with every station in the New Zealand Railways, and I have also the summary here. [Produced.]

94. I was quoting from 1908 to 1910, and this is no answer to my question?—You have quoted figures to show nothing was done, and I am putting in figures to show what we have done.

The Chairman: If you were making a statement, Mr. McVilly, you would be entitled to put that in, but as you are answering questions it is different. In the meantime what Mr. Ramsay wants to get at is a summary of some of the stations he has mentioned this morning.

95. *Mr. Ramsay:* With regard to those stations I have mentioned in the North Island, with the exception of Feilding, how long have they been graded as at present?—Palmerston North, 1904; and others as follows: Hawera, 1902; Wanganui, 1902; Marton, 1905; Eltham, 1902; Stratford, 1902; Frankton Junction, 1907.

96. Now we come to the last point I propose dealing with, and that is the estimated cost of carrying out what we desire—that is, putting the Railway men on a similar classification to the Post and Telegraph Department.* Now, do you consider an estimate of the cost of ten years hence reasonable, seeing that the conditions in the next ten years cannot be estimated?—Yes, I consider that is reasonable, and the experience of the Department shows that all estimates we make in connection with these matters are understated, not overstated, for the time. I consider the figures I have quoted will be the lowest cost of giving what you say you want.

97. You also consider that an estimate of the cost nineteen years hence is reasonable?—I have simply indicated what the cost will be assuming the present staff—that is, the nineteen years, based on the staff as at 1st April, 1911—the additional cost if the Railway officers were brought under the Post and Telegraph Classification Act. Those amounts shown are in addition to the scale increases which have to be provided for, and I have told you that that amount in fifteen years would be £816,415 for that particular class. Then you have got to deal with the question of promotions, and by the time you have done with 278 men who have been promoted three times who will object to the automatic, and then 215 men who have been promoted about four times and would also have to be pushed up again, it would be £1,082,095, and in eleven years £83,000 in addition for scale increases.

98. That statement of yours was prepared on the assumption that the increase in the grade would be automatic?—This statement was based on the assumption that you were asking that the men should go up to £260 a year.

99. No, I will make that quite clear. We say nothing of the kind. Our point is this: That the present Railway scale of grade 10, minimum £120 and maximum £200, will become the ninth grade at the same minimum and the same maximum. The increase in the maximum will be nil, and the increase in the number of officers —?—Pardon me, do you say the increase in the maximum will be nil?

100. That is right?—You propose to put 1,313 officers up and give them £20 more and you tell the Committee that the cost will be nil. You propose to make the bottom grade £220: that is putting £20 on to every man.

101. No, we propose to make it £200?—Then you propose to put up every man £40—the 278 men.

102. That is correct, yes—that is our proposal. We do not say that those men should automatically go up from grade to grade; we recognize that the grade barrier must exist, and that no promotions can be made from one grade to the other grade unless there are vacancies in the grade to which promotions could be made?—That is what you say in theory.

103. That is what we say in practice?—No you do not, pardon me. I asked the question yesterday before I quoted figures. I wanted to know exactly what it was the institute did want, because different members of the institute had made different statements. Mr. Ramsay, I think, in his opening address stated that they wanted the Postal and nothing but the Postal, and Mr. McPherson made the same statement.

Mr. McPherson: I did not make the same statement. I corrected Mr. Dennehy on the same point, and I also said we did not want any automatic scale, and still Mr. McVilly says that I did say that.

The Chairman: Well, you denied that yesterday, Mr. McPherson; but, in any case, if Mr. Ramsay were to ask now what he wants to know and state what the institute wants, and then ask Mr. McVilly what that costs, it would explain matters.

Witness: That is what I want to get at. I asked the question yesterday before I quoted my figures, and I certainly gathered from the reply that I got then that what was wanted was £220 to £260, practically the Postal scale. If that is so, then the position comes down to this: that if I am told exactly what you want, then I must go and make other calculations, because my figures are based on what we understood from the petition the institute was wanting.