

you speaking the truth?" "Yes." Then I say, "Very well; you go back and tell your Station-master, or Foreman, or Inspector of Permanent-way, as the case may be, that now you know the reason why you have not got your increase or promotion." That is, they have told the Department No and told you Yes. Now, that is the sort of thing we get. We take every one of those cases up right away. There is no case which comes under notice in that way which the Department does not immediately take up. Now, that does not show that the system is inefficient, but it does show that officers who have got men under their control, and who are responsible for their increases being withheld or otherwise, will not face the position when the man who has not been recommended comes along. They consider it is much easier to say, "Yes, I recommended you as a good man," than to tell the man they have not recommended him, and they pass the burden on to the Head Office.

10. *Mr. Ross.*] Why not make it a rule that a copy of the recommendation or report is sent to the man affected?—There is an instruction to that effect, and officers' attention has been called to the fact. When the matter was brought before the Minister by the institute he stated that the rule was in operation, and we reminded those concerned by sending out further instructions stating that every man was to be told when he was not recommended.

11. *Mr. Witty.*] Where you got a case where they had not carried out that instruction?—Well, we deal with them. We take up every case. I want to make the position quite clear in respect of what happens: where men are not recommended for an increase or promotion there are a few cases in which the men are told, but 95 per cent. of the cases are referred to the Head Office, either by the man coming in himself or by letter. If a man writes to know, a letter is sent to the Head Office by the officer, "So-and-so inquiring so-and-so; please instruct—reply." "Advise So-and-so that increase or promotion has been withheld because not recommended." The man gets this reply from the officer, "The General Manager directs me to inform you so-and-so," and puts the blame on to the General Manager, instead of stating the reason you were not recommended was because I was unable to give the certificate required under the Act, being dissatisfied with the way you have done your work during the past twelve months. Well, you cannot do more. There is no system on this earth that I know of that is efficient, or that can be efficient, where you have got that sort of thing to contend with.

12. If you compelled them to forward their recommendation in duplicate, and forwarded a copy back to the man, you would be sure?—The instruction is that wherever a man is not recommended he has to be told. If a man does not hear so far as the Department is concerned, it ought to be proof to him that his work is satisfactory, conduct satisfactory, and that a satisfactory recommendation has been made. The Department knows perfectly well that there are cases in which the first notice the man gets of an adverse recommendation is when he sees he has not got an increase or when he is passed over.

13. *Mr. Ross.*] When he sees the D.-3?—Yes. That is not the fault of the Department.

14. *Mr. Buick.*] Could you not have a rule that where a report is against a man a copy should be sent to him?—We have an instruction to that effect, and it has been in force since 1903, and the Department has from time to time directed attention to the complaints that have been made, and to the necessity for the instruction being carried out.

15. How would it be if the Department forwarded a copy of the report to the men?—What we do is, when the staff is to be reviewed, we send a form out with columns for positions to be filled in—"Not recommended" or "Recommended." There is a schedule with every man's name, and the officer reviewing the staff put in columns, "Recommended So-and-so; suitable for so-and-so." It is "Yes" or "No," as the case may be, and the District Officer who makes those recommendations and who is responsible for them has instructions to advise those of his men who are not recommended as to the reason. The Department cannot do more than take up, as it does, every case in which a man complains that he has been passed over. We take the case up straight away; and, of course, the position that then arises is that the people you are dealing with, those who are responsible, turn round and say, "If we make an adverse recommendation we are asked too much—we are told to do so-and-so or something else"; but they forget that the questions are only asked so that the position may be clearly understood, and that all they are asked to do is to make a *bona fide* recommendation and to tell the men that they do not recommend, giving them the reasons, instead of which they put the unpleasant duty on to Wellington every time.

16. *Mr. Witty.*] If you were to tell them it would be a guide to many, and they would be able to correct their faults?—We have done that, sir, and whenever a man's misconduct is brought under the notice of the Department he is always warned that he will have to make an improvement or something will happen.

17. *Mr. Arnold.*] Can you suggest any way in which the institute could control that?—No, I cannot, except this: that if the institute would use its influence, and if every member of the institute would do the square thing—

18. Perhaps all of those may not be members?—No, there is a number that are not. The institute say they represent 1,700 men out of 1,881, and, if that is so, then I say the members could be of great assistance to the Department if they would fairly and squarely do their duty. So far as the Department is concerned, it is quite prepared to uphold the superior officers when they do the right thing, but it wants to protect the men as well as to protect the officer. It has to protect them in every case in which it considers an injustice is being done. We hold that those men who are not recommended are entitled to know the reasons, and whenever they come here or write we inquire and then tell them, and we go to a very considerable amount of trouble before we tell them either Yes or No—if it is by correspondence—to ascertain whether, where adverse recommendations have been made, there is sufficient *bona fide* reason. Where there is a doubt we give the men the benefit of the doubt. That is, I take it, in accordance with the ordinary ideas of British fair play. If you have a doubt give it to the man, and if there is no doubt then