

not that show some defect in the system?—No, it simply shows that certain recommendations were made and acted upon. Take No. 3: as I stated the other day, No. 3 went to the Appeal Board and lost his case. He has never been recommended for a position that has been vacant. No. 9 was not recommended at the time for the position that was vacant. Nos. 11 and 15 were men occupying positions that were considered to be special positions and to be worth more than the positions occupied by Nos. 3 and 9, and they were not shifted out of the positions they occupied. They had special qualifications and training.

39. But you see that one year two men are put ahead of two other men, and the next year those two men are put back again. Does not that appear to be peculiar?—No, it does not. It is merely an illustration of the fact that the Department does not want to do an injustice to any man, and if it is shown at any time that a mistake has been made the Department is prepared to rectify it. Although those two officers, Nos. 3 and 9, were not recommended at the time, there was considerable correspondence as a result of their complaints, and they were put back in their proper positions because the Traffic Manager stated that, although he could not recommend them for the positions held by Nos. 11 and 15, he considered the positions they were then occupying should be paid for at the same rate as the other two men. We rectified that straight away. Had he said at the outset that the positions were worth the money, then the men would have been put up at the time.

40. He changed his mind in twelve months?—Correspondence was going on the whole time.

41. Well, would they be given a satisfactory reason?—That I cannot say. I cannot say whether they regarded the reason as satisfactory. They got the reason so far as the Department was concerned.

42. But would not the reason that was given merely amount to a statement that they were not considered competent for the position?—That possibly was so, but then it is their business to find out from their immediate superior officer in what way he was not satisfied with them. We always tell the man immediately in control to advise those concerned, and he should give the specific reason. I do not know what is in the mind of the Traffic Manager at Invercargill if he does not recommend you. I would tell you you were not recommended, but at the same time that I told you that I should want to know from him the reason why, and I should tell him to tell you the reason, but I cannot read what is in the mind of the men.

43. Is it not a fact that the Managers do not give any further reason than merely to state that the man is not considered efficient?—I have already told the Committee that the Department tells the man whenever he asks the question. Whenever the Manager or responsible officer brings the matter before the Department and says, "What are we to do?" we say, "Advise the man that he was not recommended for so-and-so, and give him reasons," and the instructions state that the men are to be given reasons.

44. And if they do not do that, is not that another defect in the system of dealing with promotions?—There is the human equation again. We provide rules and regulations for the working of the Department; we know that certain men from time to time commit breaches of those rules which result in certain things happening, but that is not a defect in the system—that is the human equation. That is simply the result of a man not carrying out his instructions, and you cannot hold the system responsible for the failure of those men to carry out their instructions.

45. Another case quoted was No. 180 in grade 8. I think it is admitted he went over the heads of a large number of men?—Yes.

46. He was not on the staff of any District Officer, was he?—No, he was not on the staff of a District Officer.

47. And he passed over the heads of a large number of men who had been recommended for promotion by District Officers?—Yes.

48. Well, as to any reasons in that case, the District officers could not be expected to say more than that a man was not considered to be efficient. They could only repeat the reason they got from the Head Office in that case?—Well, they were told by the Head Office. I know the particular position you are referring to, and I should like to say this: that, as the man who is responsible for the carrying-out of the routine work of the Head Office, I recommended for the position the officer who, in my opinion, was the best qualified and best trained for the position that was vacant at the time, the man who had spent all his service at the particular work in the Head Office, who knew nothing whatever about station accounts, but a man who was absolutely the best fitted and the only man who could take up the particular work of that position—that is, the only man except seniors in the office—and I made that perfectly clear to the Appeal Board when the question was before the Board. It was made so clear that the man who did appeal asked permission to withdraw after the case had been gone on with, and I raised no objection to that course. Anybody else who was passed over, and every man who asked, so far as we were concerned, was told through the District Officer distinctly that they were not considered to have the qualifications which would enable them to take up the duty of that particular clerk.

49. But the particular qualifications required were not exceptional, were they: it was not pointed out to those officers in which particular respect they were deficient, so that they could qualify for such a position?—How many officers know anything about recording?

50. Members in all district offices know about recording—they have recording work to do there?—Yes, but to a limited extent. I know the member who appealed thought he knew all about it—he had been through a district office, but I was soon able to convince the Appeal Board that he knew nothing about it. The system is altogether different in a large office. Everywhere you find that in the large offices your Record Clerk is a specialist who is trained right up to it and who is kept there all his time, and that is what he is there for.

51. *Mr. Ross.* Sometimes he has to do the work when he is a cadet?—Well, he is trained to do it. I know this particular man started copying letters, as others have done, and he has been there all the time. If I were to ring up and ask for a special paper in connection with a matter