

6. That, notwithstanding the fact that the traffic on the railways has increased considerably during the last few years, the Department is, in many instances, requiring officers in a lower grade to perform the duties and accept the responsibilities of officers in a higher grade at a lower rate of remuneration than that payable in the higher grade. Consequently, efficient officers of long and faithful service are deprived by the Department of the promotion to which they are rightly entitled. This is causing dissatisfaction and unrest amongst officers, who feel that the Department is not carrying out the spirit and intention of the Act. (See Schedule A—Example of some of the positions reduced in the Railway Department during the last three years.)

7. That the system of promotion in the Railway service is defective by reason of the fact that efficient officers have been superseded by junior officers without a satisfactory reason being given to the officers who have been superseded.

8. That the provision at present made in the Act for the remuneration of officers is, in the opinion of the members of the institute, inadequate for the services required from these officers. This is particularly so in the case of those officers who also act as Postmasters, which is demonstrated by the fact that when the Post and Telegraph work is removed from railway-stations to permanent post-offices the Postal Department in nearly every instance pays the Postal officer a higher salary than the Railway officer received for the combined positions.

9. That if the remuneration of the officers of the Railway Department (as set out in the parliamentary paper D.-3, 1910) be compared with that paid to the officers of the Post and Telegraph Department (as set out in the parliamentary paper F.-5, 1910), the only other Department of the Government having a classification, it will be found that in all classes the salaries of officers in similar grades are on a higher scale in the case of the Post and Telegraph than in the case of the Railway. (See Schedules B and C—Comparison of annual salaries payable to officers in the Post and Telegraph Department and the Railway Department.)

10. That, while each of the above Departments deals directly with the public, the duties of the Railway officer entail a larger responsibility not only by reason of the fact that the hours of duty are longer, but also that the safety of human lives is dependent upon the efficient performance of those duties. Moreover, Railway officers do not receive remuneration for overtime, and are not so free from dismissal and punishment as officers in the Post and Telegraph Department.

11. That the travelling-allowances payable under the regulations of the Act to relieving officers in grades 7, 8, 9, 10, being officers in receipt of maximum salaries of £300, £255, £220, and £200 per annum respectively, are, in the opinion of the members of the institute, insufficient to compensate relieving officers, and that if such allowances be compared with the travelling-allowances to officers of the Post and Telegraph Department in corresponding positions it will be found that the travelling-allowances are on a higher scale in the case of the Post and Telegraph Department than in the case of the Railways, as will be manifest from Schedule D attached to this petition.

12. That it is provided by Regulation 55 of the Act that the General Manager may, at such times as in his opinion are convenient, grant to each officer leave of absence on pay for each continuous year's service a total of two weeks in each calendar year, provided, however, that in all cases where sick-leave is granted on full pay the period covered by such leave shall be deducted from the ordinary leave specified therein. That Regulation 56 provides that, subject to the production of a satisfactory certificate from a medical practitioner, or a copy of such certificate attested by an officer of a friendly society, any officer shall be entitled to full pay when absent from duty owing to illness for any period up to four weeks of such absence, and that no further payment shall be made without the authority of the Minister. The interpretation placed on these regulations by the management of the Railway Department is that the Department is entitled to deduct all sick-leave from members' annual leave, irrespective of the time they are absent, and this interpretation they are strictly carrying out. Your petitioner submits that the just and equitable interpretation of these regulations is that a member is entitled under Regulation 56 to full pay when absent from duty owing to illness for any period up to four weeks, and that where the four weeks have expired and extended leave of absence has been granted, the extended leave only should be deducted from the annual leave, so that an officer should receive the whole of his annual leave provided the period during which he has been absent on sick-leave does not exceed four weeks.

That, owing to the interpretation placed by the Railway Department on Regulations 55 and 56 there are many cases where Railway officers have not received any leave for recreation purposes for three years.

13. That, notwithstanding the fact that the duties of Railway officers are more exacting than those of officers in the Post and Telegraph Department, the hours of employment are considerably longer, and that no payment is received for overtime or any other special duty, yet only twelve days' leave of absence is granted to them, together with four departmental holidays, as against a maximum of thirty-three days to officers in the Post and Telegraph Department. (See Schedule E—Comparison of leave of absence granted respectively in the Post and Telegraph Department and the Railway Department.)

14. That officers are required as circumstances arise to go on duty on Sundays in connection with,—

- (a.) Ordinary suburban trains to and from seaports;
- (b.) Trains leaving starting stations on Sunday;
- (c.) Trains leaving starting stations on Saturday and finishing the run on Sunday;
- (d.) Alteration and repairs to running-track and signalling-apparatus;
- (e.) Other duties in connection with accounts, &c., which must be done on Sundays and which cannot be done on the Saturday immediately preceding or the Monday immediately following.