

years!—It is not an exceptional case. I have been pretty well all over New Zealand, and I have even known of storemen getting up to £4 a week, and I know of one storeman just recently who, after thirty-five years' service with a firm in Dunedin, was kept on at full pay up till his death, which was quite recent, and he was off duty for three years.

75. That was an exception?—You are asking for exceptions, and I cannot quote you generalities.

76. You do not know about generalities!—No, it is only these instances that impress themselves upon your mind.

77. Those are exceptional cases that you have quoted as to liberal treatment?—No, I take it that is the basis of treatment that these firms give their employees, and I say that is a liberal scale.

78. I want you to give the Committee some idea of the lower-paid men. You cannot tell us now what the present pay is of the men outside in the ordinary rank and file—your information seems to be of an exceptional character?—Oh, no.

79. I want to compare the rank and file outside with the rank and file of the Railway Department, and if you can only quote exceptional cases, then, of course, it is no good?—I am not. It is you who said they were exceptional, and I said they might be. I said they were the only cases that came within my experience. The low salaries might be exceptional also—it cuts both ways.

80. With regard to the bonuses you spoke about, is it not a fact that they are generally given at the end of the financial year?—Yes, at the end of the financial year.

81. And depend on the financial results of the business?—I could not say so far as that is concerned.

82. Well, if not entirely, to a large extent?—I would be wrong in saying that. They are an annual thing in many cases, and are given for good conduct and freedom from accident and risk by the employee in many cases.

83. Are you suggesting that if a commercial concern was run for twelve months at a loss that at the end of that term the men would get bonuses?—They may not. They would not pay it out of losses, nor would the Railway Department pay us full salaries out of losses; they would want to introduce a ten-per-cent. reduction just the same as the merchant. It has been done before, and I could give an illustration.

84. I want to know whether, where those bonuses are granted, if it is not a fact that they depend on the financial results—that is, if a firm makes a loss they are not likely to pay bonuses?—None of those firms I have in my mind have made losses, and therefore there has been no year that has come under my notice wherein the bonus has been withdrawn.

85. But if a loss was made?—Well, if a loss was made in the Railways we should have to suffer.

86. In respect to those stations which you have quoted, where a man goes on duty at 6 o'clock in the morning, for instance, what are the hours that the station is open to the public?—The hours that the station is open to the public are from 8 to 5.

87. And if a man goes on at 6 o'clock in the morning it is not necessary for him to remain continuously on duty, providing there are no trains?—I think you have been through the mill as well as I have, and I think if I go on duty at 6 o'clock in the morning I can find sufficient work in the office to fix up the papers and clean it up till 8 o'clock in the morning.

88. In those stations you have porters, and the Stationmaster does not generally clean the office up?—In the report I got from the officers of the Department no outrageous hours were to be quoted, and meal-hours were to be excluded. If a man came out at 6 o'clock in the morning he could not go on duty for five or six minutes. He would also have to go back to breakfast.

89. If a man goes out at 6 o'clock in the morning it is not necessary for him to remain there, if there are no trains, till 8 o'clock in the morning—he can go away?—Well, what does he go out for?

90. A man goes to signal a train, and stays there two minutes?—If he has the tablet he cannot do it in twenty minutes. He has to have the tablet on before the train reaches the station, and then let the train through and close the tablet; and it is impossible for him to get away in three-quarters of an hour.

91. That would make it 6.45?—Yes.

92. Then, it is not necessary for him to come back till 8 o'clock?—It is necessary for him to go and see that his signals are all secure. He has a hundred and one little duties to perform if he is a careful man. The time it takes depends on the care of the man. If the station is interlocked it becomes more complicated, and takes a longer time.

93. I have in my mind one case which you quoted where there are no trains running after 5 o'clock and the man can go away for two hours, and he is contending he is on duty. In that particular case there has been very close investigation made?—Yes.

94. If your last train went out at 4 o'clock and did not come back till 9 o'clock, you would not regard yourself as being on duty till 9 o'clock, would you?—I would only regard myself as being on duty till I had closed off my work and balanced for the day. I would reckon that was part of the duty, to remain on the station till I had balanced up, locked up everything securely and made the premises secure, and you must go round the yard and see that the points are secure and signals set at correct angles.

95. Would you consider it necessary to remain at your station from 5 to 9?—I am not aware of any of them doing that, but if I lived in a railway house I should certainly go home if I had secured everything.

96. That is what most of them do, I think?—Yes, I am granting you that. I would certainly go home if the hours of duty were finished for that day.

97. Then your contention is that where there is any important duty devolving upon a man he would not go home and leave it?—My contention to-day is that he has a right to do it and he