

was absolutely necessary. The reason that the Railway Department adopted the existing regulation was because it knew from experience that extortionate claims were being made by officers for transfer expenses. The Department's practice originally was to grant payment for, I think, about a week. Then, in one or two odd cases the Department, as it always does, gave consideration to special circumstances, and expenses were paid up to a period of a fortnight. The fortnight almost invariably became the standard. Every transfer voucher that came in was for a fortnight. Then there was some exceptional case in which, owing to local difficulties, an extension of that time was asked, and after investigation the General Manager approved three weeks. Three weeks immediately became the standard; everybody contended for that. In one or two special instances a month was paid, and then an attempt was made to make a month the standard. Every case was taken up, and there was the utmost difficulty, from the 1st January to the 31st December, in getting the expenses kept within a reasonable limit in respect to time. Finally the matter was brought under the notice of the Minister of Railways at that time, Mr. Hall-Jones. He directed straight away that members were to make on every voucher for transfer expenses a deduction to cover their ordinary cost of living, the rule to apply to both divisions. That was done, with the result stated, and the deductions were not, in the opinion of the Department, fair deductions. I want now to touch on the conditions under which transfers are made elsewhere. Let us compare Railway transfer conditions in New Zealand with Victoria. An officer transferred there is granted free passes for himself, his family and effects. If the transfer is within the suburban area he gets no time off with pay, but has to work his shift, and to pack and unpack in his own time. Outside the suburban area he gets three-quarter time for travelling, with a maximum credit of one day for travelling and a minimum of one day for total time occupied in travelling and work. If no house is procurable he is allowed regulation expenses for himself, but none for his family. He has to notify the Department after one week if there is no house procurable, and then an endeavour is made to place him elsewhere. If he has to pay board for his family owing to delay to furniture, three-quarter expenses is refunded as a maximum. If the officer is not responsible for the delay a mutual arrangement is come to, but no pay or expenses. No payment is made if transfer a punishment. In South Australia when an officer or employee is transferred for the convenience of the Department the Commissioner transfers him, his family and his furniture, and such number of live-stock as is certified by the head of his branch to be reasonable, free of expense to the employee. He is allowed a day's pay for each day necessarily occupied in the transfer, and reasonable expenses for meals and beds for himself and family while *en route*. If he is a married man and unable at once to obtain house accommodation, he is paid board and lodging for himself at a reasonable charge for a period not exceeding two weeks, and 10s. weekly for a period not exceeding four weeks thereafter, provided he has not been able to obtain a house during the period named, but the head of the branch concerned in each case has to decide whether the latter allowance shall be paid for the full period stated. When an employee is transferred to suit himself, or as punishment, and not as a result of the Department's requirements, himself, his family and furniture, and such live-stock as is certified to by the head of his branch to be reasonable, are franked over the railways, but no expenses of any sort are allowed. In Queensland when employees are transferred in the interests of the Department, or for the purpose of promotion, they are allowed passes for themselves, their families and furniture, and are also paid for one or two days, or, as the case may require, for the time occupied in transfer from one place to another, and the head of the branch is empowered to pay reasonable expenses should he consider them warranted. When men are allowed to transfer from one place to another to suit themselves, or are transferred by way of punishment, they are allowed passes so far as the railways are concerned for themselves, their families and furniture, but no pay or expenses. In West Australia, when an officer is transferred from one station to another to suit the convenience of the Department he is paid actual out-of-pocket expenses not exceeding £2 when married and 15s. when single; in addition he gets a free pass for himself and family dependent upon him, and free railway transport of furniture and effects. When an officer is allowed to transfer from one place to another to suit himself, or is transferred on account of misconduct, he is allowed a free pass for himself and family and furniture, but no expenses. Under the Commonwealth, if officers are transferred at their own request they must pay all cost themselves, and also if they are transferred for misconduct. If an officer is transferred to suit the convenience of the Department or for the purpose of promotion, the actual cost of the conveyance of the officer, his wife and family, is paid by the Department. For carriage of his furniture and effects, an officer in receipt of a salary up to £200 receives a maximum allowance of £25; £200 to £400, £35; £400 to £600, £40; £600 and over, £50. They have to call for tenders for the removal of their effects. They must obtain tenders from at least two carters, and only in very special circumstances can these maxima stated be exceeded. I submit, sir, that, having regard to all the circumstances, and also the facts I stated just now in respect of the charges made for hotel accommodation, the Railway men in New Zealand have no justifiable ground for complaint, and that they are treated fairly and reasonably in the matter of transfers.

10. Does that statement refer to officers exclusively, or men also?—That refers to the officers.

11. *Mr. Ramsay.*] When you were dealing with the amount of transfer expenses paid at the present time did I understand you to say that this 10s. is paid in addition to the actual personal expenses?—I said that was the practice previously.

12. In addition?—Any expenses of his household.

13. That is, the Department pays the actual expenses of the household, but does not pay the expenses of the man—he is allowed 10s. a day to pay his own expenses?—That was the position.

14. I understood that what you said the position was previous to the passing of the present regulations was that the officers charged a maximum amount and a minimum deduction: is that so?—Yes; the officer claimed 10s. a day for himself—that is the maximum amount—and full hotel expenses for his family.