

from one Island to another and made him pay all his expenses as enumerated there, it would simply mean that one-half of the men in the Service could not possibly do it unless they went bodily into debt to do so.

31. That is an extreme case?—Mind you, it is done.

32. A man transferred from North to South?—Well, we will say a long distance where he has had to go into debt to do it.

33. A railway journey?—Yes.

34. When those transfers become necessary is the Department not put to considerable expense in transferring other men to fill the vacancies?—It may be. It depends where the officers have gone.

35. Notwithstanding that the officer filling the position has to be paid all out-of-pocket expenses for himself and his wife?—Yes, certainly, but the Department would have to do that if the man died.

36. But in this case the man is in the service and you have to fix him, and you know the Department often has to make several shifts in order to fit a man in?—They would have to do that in the case of ordinary promotion. If a man resigned you would have to do the same thing.

37. But in that case where a man died there would be a necessity, and in this case you are keeping the man in the service, and frequently the Department has to incur a large expenditure in keeping him in the service: is that not so?—Yes.

38. *Mr. Young.*] Referring to the illustration made by Mr. McVilly of an officer being reduced for a technical mistake, could such a mistake possibly happen to a Post and Telegraph officer?—No, it could not.

39. That is, a mistake entailing such punishment?—Yes, that is so.

40. Do you know of any cases of an officer resigning rather than accept such punishment?—Yes, I do.

41. That is, transfer from one Island to the other?—Yes.

42. *Mr. Brown.*] You said the punishment was abnormal for the offence committed—do you mean all cases?—No, a number of cases.

43. What proportion?—I do not know that I can estimate that, but in a number of instances; and it has been recognized amongst Railway men that it has been an outrageous punishment, because the officer is a good officer and is still left in the service. Of course, he has got an opportunity to rehabilitate himself, but it may take him years to overtake that punishment that has been inflicted upon him.

44. But he has still his superannuation and other advantages ahead of him?—No, he would lose his superannuation on the amount of salary.

45. Unless he recovered his position?—Even then he would lose it. If he retired during the next promotion he would have to serve five years in the grade to recover his former position under superannuation.

46. But a Postal servant could not possibly kill one hundred or one hundred and fifty people by a mistake?—No, that is what we say. We are a more important branch than the Postal Department, and they cannot kill any one.

47. When an officer risks killing fifty or one hundred people, then his punishment must be more severe than a man committing an error of an unimportant nature?—Yes.

48. Well, you say the greater responsibility rests on your shoulders because an officer may have done wrong in fixing the signals, and then his punishment must be more severe?—Yes, exactly.

49. That is where you complain?—No, because we receive less remuneration for taking those risks than the men in the Postal Department. That is the part we wish to emphasize in the whole proceedings.

RICHARD WILLIAM McVILLY further examined. (No. 31.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Will you now state the case on behalf of the Department in reply to clause 17?—Yes. I do not wish to labour this clause, but I want to ask the officers of the institute by what line of reasoning they can claim that a man who misconducts himself should not lose his salary, should not pay out-of-pocket expenses connected with the transfer of himself and family and effects, or should not suffer in the event of his not being reinstated in connection with his superannuation allowance? Now, sir, we all know that if a man commits an offence he has got to bear the punishment; he cannot expect people who are not concerned in that offence to put up with the consequences thereof, and I submit that in very many cases where the punishments referred to are the only alternatives to dismissal the men are very fortunate in retaining their positions.\* Take the first item in the clause, "Reduction in salary from £5 to £55 per annum": there are many offences committed in the Railway service in the way of breaches of regulations which involve serious consequences one way or another, and the only punishment for those offences is either reduction or dismissal. I have got in my mind a case in which it was contended that the breach of a very important instruction which involved the safety of the public was not by any means an important matter, and did not constitute a good and sufficient reason for the Department reducing the particular officer. I know that in another case, where an officer was reduced after repeated warnings, he contended that he was very harshly dealt with in the particular instance; but the reduction only came after the man had been given every opportunity. In that particular case there was no personal risk so far as loss of life was concerned, but very considerable irregularities had been going on right under the personal observation of this officer, and, notwithstanding repeated warnings, he had failed to deal with them. Now, sir, the rules of the Department and the rules of all railway services, as far as I can see—and I have examined a good many—all provide that where an officer or member of the service is suspended he loses pay during suspension

\* See Exhibit No. 9.