

Department has declined to let an appeal go on where circumstances of that kind existed and warranted it.

98. Is there not frequently delay in giving effect to the decisions of the Board?—Well, when the decisions of the Board come along they have to go to the Minister, and the Minister cannot always deal with them straight away, and neither can the Department deal with them straight away. The Minister and the Department have got certain other public matters to attend to, but there is no avoidable delay, and effect is given to the decision as soon as it can be. If a man is suspended and it is recommended that he should be reinstated, that is generally telegraphed, and then he gets his pay from the time it was withheld.

99. There is no unavoidable delay in giving effect to the recommendations?—No.

100. *Mr. Ross.*] As the question of drunkenness has entered into this subject so largely this morning, Mr. McVilly, might I ask you what is the recognized departmental definition of drunkenness?—Now you are asking me to explain something which the Chief Justice has admitted he cannot define. I am not prepared to say when I should consider a man drunk, but if a man came along and I thought he had had liquor and was not able to do his work I know what would happen then; but I am not going to define when a man is drunk.

101. So that a man might have one drink and be considered drunk?—If you had got a fanatic on temperance to deal with I think he would say that a man with one liquor is under the influence of liquor, while another man will say that a man with a gallon is not. You have to leave that to the person who sees the man at the time.

102. What I was going to suggest is this: That as this consumption of drink on duty is evidently fatal to quite a number of good officers, would it not be a good thing to insist on all employees in the service being absolute abstainers?—They do so in America in regard to train-running, but I am afraid if we tried to do so in this democratic country a lot of us would have to get out.

103. Why I am putting the question is because I am afraid that any outsider reading this evidence would come to the conclusion that drunkenness was pretty prevalent in the Railway Department among officers?—No, I do not think that could be sustained, because, taking the service as a whole, there is only a small number of cases, and you will have that in every walk of life wherever a number of men are employed. The probabilities are that greater prominence is given to the matter in the Railways by reason of the fact that the public safety has to be considered, and therefore a sharper look-out is kept; but I do not think you would get the same amount of intemperance in the Railway Department as among a similar number of men employed outside.

104. You would probably get less?—Yes, very likely so, but I cannot say.

Mr. Ramsay: I should be glad, Mr. Chairman, if you would ask Mr. McVilly to produce the files in connection with Harrington's and McKenzie's cases.

The Chairman: Yes, they will be put in for the information of the Committee.

INSTITUTE'S STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED COST OF PROPOSED INCREASES.

The Chairman: Regarding the statements asked for from time to time, I think the first one was mentioned in Mr. Dennehy's evidence. Mr. McVilly promised to look into the matter of the cost based on the institute's request, and supply the Committee with his estimate of the cost.

Mr. Dennehy: It was the estimated cost of granting to the Railway officers a similar scale to that given to the Post and Telegraph Department. I quoted certain figures, and at a later date the institute handed to Mr. McVilly a statement which he agreed to look into and give the Committee his opinion of at a later stage.

Mr. Ramsay: With regard to the statement put in showing what the institute estimated would be the cost of adopting the Postal scale in the Railway service, perhaps Mr. McVilly admits that those figures are correct.

Mr. McVilly: Oh, no, I do not.

Mr. Ramsay: Then, if they are not correct, what is the position to be? I suppose Mr. McVilly will point out where they are incorrect, and allow one of the members of the institute who understands the figures to cross-examine him.

Mr. McVilly: If I might be allowed to state, sir, the position was this: When Mr. Ramsay was giving evidence he put in a statement of the estimated cost, and when examining me on a point of evidence I had given he asked me if I would admit their statement as to the cost was correct. I said I would not, but would be glad to look into the statement if it was handed to me. I would like to say that this statement was put in as a result of my having read out certain estimates prepared by the Department to show that the cost of what was proposed would be about £816,000 in fifteen years. Mr. Ramsay then put in the institute's statement showing "the total estimated cost for four years was £30,260," and he asked me to admit the correctness of it, but I have not admitted the correctness of it. So far as the Department is concerned, I am quite prepared to stand by the original figures I quoted.

The Chairman: Mr. McVilly should deal with this statement as his side of that particular point. The institute has placed on record its side. Mr. McVilly would then be putting on record his side of the case, and the institute could question him as before.

Mr. McVilly: I understand that when asked to look into this matter I am asked to admit the accuracy of the statement submitted by the institute, that the total cost in four years in bringing into effect what they are asking would be £30,260. Well, I said at the time I did not admit the accuracy of the statement, and, obviously, to deal with it I must place some figures before the Committee to show wherein it is inaccurate; and in dealing with that I propose also to hand in some other statements showing the cost of various proposals that have been made.

The Chairman: Statements you want to put in which have reference to any matter that has not been postponed you can put in without comment, but any other matter you will have an opportunity of explaining.