

act on that recommendation in respect of the men in the service up to the year 1920, well I know what will happen then.

115. So that the duty of the Chief Traffic Manager and those other gentlemen who visit those other centres annually is not merely to inform the District Traffic Manager of the standard that is expected to procure promotion, but the duty goes beyond that and causes him to remain in that district a sufficient length of time to examine into the fitness or unsuitability of most of the members of the staff for promotion or otherwise?—The work the heads of the branches have to undertake in the various districts and the time taken over that work is fixed by themselves. All preparations for this review of the staff are made ahead of their visits. The district officers are notified some months before that the review of the staff is to take place on a certain date. They are informed by the Head Office. They are instructed to make themselves acquainted with the qualifications of all the members under their control, so that they can discuss the matter with the head of the branch and make a recommendation in due course.

116. The reply to my question should have been "Yes"—that the duty of the Chief Traffic Manager and the other gentlemen who visit the other centres annually is to examine into the fitness or unsuitability of most of the members of the staff for promotion or otherwise?—They discuss with the officers in charge of the various districts and the officers who are responsible for making the recommendations the suitability of each man in each of the districts, and they make recommendations accordingly.

117. At these annual reviews of the staff the relative positions of the members of the staff on that particular section are actually fixed in the district by the visiting officer and the District Traffic Manager or proper officer who is in control of that branch of the service?—I have not said so, and it is not so. The relative positions of the members of the staff is not fixed by the District Officers.

118. Will you tell the Committee what is the object?—I have stated the object.

119. Will you tell the Committee what is the object of the visit of the Chief Traffic Manager and other officers to the various districts annually?—I have already said that one object is to review the staff in conjunction with the District Officer and the men who are responsible and immediately in control of certain men.

120. So that in saying that little or no reliance can be placed on the recommendations made by officers, and the great difficulties experienced by the Head Office in arriving at a fair conclusion as to the proper positions the members of the service should occupy on the D.-3—in saying that you include those heads such as the Chief Traffic Manager and other similar officers dealing with other officers of the service?—I do not include those gentlemen at all. I have already stated definitely that they confer with the District Officers and the men who are in charge of the staff. They certainly go into the question of the qualifications of the staff and the recommendations, but they do not override the recommendations of the Foremen or Stationmasters or District Traffic Managers except in very rare cases, and in those cases the District Traffic Manager or the District Officer has got definite instructions to send in a report stating the cases in which he disagrees.

121. So that, on this review of the staff, if the Chief Traffic Manager or any other similar officer disagrees with the Chief Traffic Manager or any other similar officer, that disagreement is reported to the Head Office?—Yes.

122. And then the Head Office decides the matter?—After looking fully into the matter and remembering that the immediate officer in control would be likely to have the most intimate knowledge of the man concerned.

123. By what process of reasoning would you adduce that the Chief Traffic Manager and similar officers are exempt from this blame which you are levying on the other officers of the Department with reference to the improper recommendations that are made for promotion?—By the same process of reasoning that the blame for all disabilities suffered in the Railway Service is laid on the Head Office.

124. And in conclusion you would exempt the Chief Traffic Manager and similar officers from any blame in that connection?—I have said nothing whatever about exempting any one.

125. I am asking that question, Yes or No?—So far as the District Officers and so far as the heads of the branches are concerned, they do not personally know the qualifications of all the men; they have to be guided by the recommendations of those men under them who are in immediate control, and they simply transmit to the Head Office the recommendations of the other men after having made a careful review.

126. I think you told the Committee just now that when they disagreed with the District Officer it was their duty to report?—I stated that it was part of the duty of the District Officer, when he disagreed with the recommendation, to report the fact, giving reasons.

127. So that certain responsibility should be borne by the Chief Traffic Manager?—The reports referred to when received are nearly always sent back for further information, and the responsibility is borne by all.

128. So that the blame cannot be centred on to the other members of the service?—Oh, yes, it can. The chief officers do not discuss the personal qualifications; they simply see that the proper standard is adopted by those in immediate control when recommending—the uniform standard of dealing with the qualifications of the men in each district, so far as it can be done.

129. So that the only object of those men visiting these districts is to repeat this common standard and impress it upon the officers?—The object of their visit is to insure that the common standard will be worked up to and to see that the recommendations in regard to the individual members of the staff made each year are made on that standard.

130. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] Under the Classification Act as provided in the Government Railways Act do we get the most efficient standard?—No, we do not.

131. Is there any incentive under the classification for any man to do anything beyond keeping himself free of trouble?—No. That is the undoubted result of classification. Some of the original members of the old council of the institute recognized that at the outset, and