

10. How much does the relieving officer get under the present scale for the fourteen days: there are three days at 10s.—that is £1 10s.?—Yes.

11. And eleven days at 6s. would be £3 6s.?—His allowance falls to 6s. a day after the first three days.

12. And for the fourteen days how much would he get?—£4 4s.

13. In the majority of the country towns where the relieving officers go, how many hotels or accommodation-houses are there in each place, on the average?—I cannot say that, now that we have done away with the hotels in some places.

14. You have been a relieving officer?—Yes.

15. Have there been many occasions where you have gone to a country town where there has been only the one hotel?—Yes, many occasions.

16. How much have you paid, on the average, for board and lodging?—I have been charged from £1, £1 5s., up to £1 10s.; and that does not include washing and extras.

17. According to your evidence, you have paid from £1 up to £1 10s., and you draw £2 2s.?—Yes; but you must remember I had to retain my room in my own quarters. I was single in those days and was boarding. I was paying £1 a week, and extras for washing, and when I went away I had to pay 10s. a week to retain my room.

18. That is, 10s. for your room and £1 10s. for your expenses, making in all £2?—Yes.

19. And you drew £2 2s.?—Yes.

20. Were you out of pocket?—I do not think a man can go about a country place without spending 2s. in a week now and again for extras. He cannot bring it out in a voucher.

21. In which way?—If you want anything extra you have to tip a waiter or waitress, and I know what that costs me sometimes. If a Government servant wishes to uphold his dignity and to be efficient, like Mr. McVilly wants us to be—and I say he is quite right—we have got a certain position to keep up.

22. If in those places where there is only one hotel a Postal officer went relieving, where would he stay?—At the same place, and pay the same rate as myself; and why should I receive only 6s. to his 7s. 6d.?

23. I will put in the latest reduced Civil Service Travelling-allowance Regulations?—You are aware that the regulations were issued since this petition was framed.

24. *Mr. McVilly.*] In regard to the scale of travelling-allowance, Mr. McPherson, are you discussing now the general question of travelling-allowances or merely relieving officers' expenses?—I said we would take this clause on its own.

25. The schedule is headed "Comparison of Travelling-allowances." That is general?—"Comparison of Travelling-allowances paid to Relieving Officers in the Post and Telegraph Department and Railway Department."

26. Well, we will deal with them from the relieving officer's point of view. How long is it since you were relieving?—It must be nine years.

27. Now, was it not your experience that the relieving-expenses paid at that time were more than sufficient to cover the cost?—The relieving-expenses paid at that time were sufficient to cover the cost, as I stated to the Hon. Mr. Millar, with a few shillings to come and go on for extras. I may say that when you are putting that question it would be just as well to ask what the cost of living was in those days.

28. Now, if the Department allows its relieving officers a sufficient amount to cover their out-of-pocket expenses, what reason is there for incurring additional expenditure to provide them with luxuries?—Then I understand that Railway officers are not to have luxuries?

29. The question is the sufficiency of the relieving-allowance. You have admitted that the allowance is sufficient?—I admit that the allowance paid to me in those days was.

30. Then, can you tell me what the cost is to relieving officers at country hotels—at those places where you say they go relieving for from fourteen to twenty days?—No, I could not give you the cost at the different hotels. I know that in the no-license districts, such as Mataura, Gore, and Edendale, the cost of living at accommodation-houses at those places has gone up.

31. What is the charge per week?—The lowest charge that I know of was £1 2s. 6d., and that did not include washing.

32. To meet that charge of £1 2s. 6d. a relieving officer gets from the Department £2 2s.?—That is so.

33. Assuming he has to retain a room, an average of 10s. is a liberal estimate?—I say that is what I paid.

34. That brings the cost to £1 12s. 6d., and leaves 7s. 6d.?—Yes; and then there is washing.

35. 7s. 6d. a week will pay the washing bill of most of the relieving officers, will it not?—It may.

36. Do you not know from experience?—No. If I had thought this question would come up I should have gone into it.

37. At all events, you get £2 2s., your board is £1 2s. 6d., retention of room 10s., and you have 7s. 6d. left to pay washing and contingencies?—Yes, that is so.

38. You have quoted the Postal Civil Service Regulations?—Yes.

39. Now, are your arguments not in the direction of showing that the Post Office is too liberally paid?—Not at all. I did not say that at all. I say that the Post Office officials are not too liberally paid.

40. Then, if you admit, as you have done, that £2 2s. which is paid by the Railway Department leaves a margin of 7s. 6d. to meet contingencies, does it not follow that if the Post Office men are paid at the rate of 7s. 6d. per day that they are being too liberally paid?—You are talking now about single men.

41. We do not need to discuss the question whether a man is single or married?—Well, in my opinion we have.

42. The position is that if a man does not like to have the position of relieving officer he has only got to say so. If he takes it, so far as the Department is concerned, the fact that he is married does not need to enter into the question at all. If he is married he has not got to pay 10s. to retain his room?—No, but he has to pay for rent.