

37. Is that the regulation you are referring to?—Yes, I understand so.

38. *The Chairman.*] The question Mr. McVilly is asking you is, are those figures 21, 7, and 28 correct, or have they been altered by a new regulation?—I understand that they get twenty-one days, and get those seven other days throughout the year.

39. *Mr. McVilly.*] Then they are not added to the leave?—No.

40. Now, supposing an officer in the Postal Department works an hour on one of those days and gets paid overtime, does he get that day added—take New Year's Day for instance?—I could not say.

41. Supposing a man works for an hour on New Year's Day and gets paid, does that man get New Year's Day?—I suppose he would get the balance of the time. Of course, I do not know how the Post and Telegraph Department arrange that matter.

42. Now, Mr. McPherson, you spoke about the expense officers were put to in connection with going off on sick-leave?—I said that expense must necessarily follow.

43. Now, what expense does the Railway Department put an officer to when he goes off on sick-leave?—I do not say they put him to any expense barring a medical certificate, but what I meant to say was that I should not think an officer would pay a big doctor's bill and go off unless he was suffering from some complaint.

44. But does the furnishing of a certificate to the Railway Department when called upon involve a heavy expense or the payment of a doctor's bill?—No.

45. So far as you know, the only expense an officer would be put to to satisfy the Department in case of sickness would be the production of a medical certificate when called for?—Yes, that is so.

46. Well, can you tell me of any cases in which the Department has insisted on a medical certificate being produced before a man went off on sick-leave?—I could speak of a case that came under my own personal knowledge, and I think you know it as well as I do. I think you handled the correspondence.

47. I do not mean that sort of case. If a man said "I feel seedy," and tells his Manager so, is it not within your knowledge that the Department allows the man to go without first calling on him for a certificate?—The officer goes off duty and then produces a certificate.

48. If the Department asks?—Yes.

49. And the Department does not always ask?—No. I remember on one occasion I had to be off and I was not asked for a certificate.

50. Is it within your knowledge that the Department is more particular in regard to sick-leave now than it was?—Yes.

51. And it is since this regulation was passed that it is more strict?—That is so, I understand.

52. Now, is it within your knowledge that the Department regularly pays members who are off sick for a period of four weeks under the regulation?—Yes, I understand four weeks are paid for.

53. Do you know of any case in which sick-leave has been paid for up to six months?—No, not personally. I have heard of cases in a general way, but I do not think I could state any.

54. In those cases the only deduction made from the officer in respect of leave was his annual leave, whatever that was—we have not gone on deducting?—No, I do not know of any case.

55. Supposing a man had twelve days' leave due and he had been away and was paid for twenty-eight days or six months' sick-leave, he would simply forfeit his twelve days?—Yes.

56. Can you tell the Committee what was the arrangement when you first joined the service in 1890?—Well, I never had any experience then, and really could not say.

57. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] Do you think it a reasonable or fair thing betwixt the Department and its officers that after a man has been paid for four months' sick-leave that he should then come along as of right and claim fourteen days' holidays?—Not if he has been paid four months' sick-leave.

58. What would you think would be a fair average of the amount of pay for sick-leave and expenses of relieving men sick for 1,800 men?—I could not say.

59. Would you be surprised to know that the amount had totted up to £10,000 per annum at the time I met your deputation last year and informed them to that effect?—Well, Mr. Millar, I did not know that fact, but I can quote your own speech from *Hansard* in which you said that the cost was £10,000 for the First Division of 4,000 men, and there were only 1,884 men in the First Division when you made that statement, a difference of 2,116 men. It seems to me that the statement went forth in that way and it was a departmental error. I might say that it left an impression on the minds of everybody who read it that it was a very costly business, but the error has never been corrected so far as I know.

60. The Second Division do not get paid sick-leave at all, do they?—Not as far as I am aware, but they get paid for overtime.

61. The sick-pay can only apply to the 1,800-odd men in the First Division. At the time your deputation met me the Auckland office alone was close on 3,000-odd days' holiday leave in arrears through the men being off sick?—No, I always understood that it was through insufficient relieving officers in that district.

62. Well, the reason advanced at that time I think was that the climate was bad in Auckland. Do you think the climate has altered in Auckland in twelve months?—Well, in answering that question, the reason I have heard was that it was on account of the amount of overtime the men worked. I have never been in Auckland and cannot say as to the climate.

63. Of your own knowledge have you ever known within the last two years where a man has had extended leave for four weeks that his pay had been stopped?—I have no knowledge of a case one way or the other.

64. Because I can show you that wherever a recommendation has come to me for a clerk or any one else beyond four weeks it has always been paid for?—I have no doubt that is so.