

65. Has holiday leave been stopped from any man who has met with an accident?—I do not know.

66. If a member had to produce a doctor's certificate, what would be the cost to him?—I understand it would cost him 7s. 6d. I have not had to get one.

67. Well, that would be a very expensive process if the Railway Department insisted on that?—I would not consider it expensive.

68. At present an officer has only to produce a certificate after being away three days?—Yes, that is so.

69. And he is allowed twenty-eight days on full pay in one year?—That is so.

70. Are you aware that has been taken advantage of to a considerable extent?—No, I am not.

71. How do you deal with your staff: supposing you saw a man going off perhaps a day a month, he would neither have to produce a certificate then nor would he come in under any regulation for reduction of leave?—You are supposing this case?

72. Yes?—Well, I should first of all write to him and tell him that he would have to prove that he required this leave, and if he did not do that I would refer it to the District Manager and leave it in his hands. I may say that in one case, to show that we take sufficient steps, the management wrote and asked me if I considered a certain man I had under me should be given leave on account of his health, and I wrote and told them that as far as I could see he was in his normal condition of health. They then sent him to their own medical man to be dealt with, and that is how I should deal with the case you suppose.

73. And if that practice were adopted by all officers you could stamp out malingerers very quickly?—I should say so, and I should say the majority of officers do carry it out. I may say that the case I speak of can be proved, and I do not think I am harder on the men than any other officer.

74. I understand the institute would be quite prepared to accept any regulation which would stamp out malingering?—Yes. I have conferred with the officers of the institute on the subject, and I say that we should be only too pleased to stamp him out as early as possible, and also inefficient officers.

75. *Mr. Ross.*] If a man is off sick for three days are those three days deducted from his annual leave?—Yes, either one or three days is taken off his annual leave.

76. Can you tell me what advantage it is to the officers in having a regulation to the effect that if a man is off only three days that no certificate is required?—The only advantage that I can see is the saving of 7s. 6d.—there is no other advantage.

77. Are you of opinion that this regulation which does not call upon the men for a certificate when they are absent on leave owing to sickness for a period less than three days, instead of being in the interests of stamping out malingering, is distinctly in the other direction?—Yes. I should say that if a man was called upon to produce a certificate every time he went off sick it would be better, and malingering would be done away with.

78. There is no advantage in dealing with sick men off less than three days if it is not necessary for the men to produce a certificate?—No, it is no advantage.

79. Are you of opinion that a fair percentage of officers go off on account of ill health, that ill health or sickness being brought upon them on account of the long hours and the insanitary surroundings in which they are compelled to work?—Well, I can speak of one case which has been before the Department and the Minister where a man was called upon to work very long hours, and his overtime, taken at a reasonable rate for the year, worked out at something like 130 days, and he got no relief. He has to work in all sorts of weather, he has to run in and out, and the railway offices are not the best for the men to work in. This man I am speaking of went off on holiday and had to spend four days in bed. I can speak personally on this matter because I visited the man and I know it was not malingering on his part.

80. But still he lost his annual leave?—Yes, he lost portion of his annual leave through being off sick.

81. *Mr. Arnold.*] It is possible, is it not, for an officer to allow his leave to accumulate for three years?—No, two years, as far as I am aware.

82. If a man let the whole of his first and second year's leave accumulate and was taken ill, he would lose his first year's leave?—He would lose his first and second. I understand that it is the general opinion he would, and certain officers who used to accumulate their leave are now taking their leave annually so as to protect themselves.

83. *Mr. Witty.*] I understood you to say that a man has to produce a certificate every time if he is off one day?—No, I said he had to produce a certificate for any period he was off over three days.

84. I understand you wish to stamp out malingering?—Yes.

85. And you said a man had to produce a certificate after one day?—No, I did not say that.

86. If a person was ill for two months he would get no leave for four years ahead if a man's sickness was counted against his leave, and if a man was sick for two months, then that would take his leave for four years. The Department does not go that far?—No. I presume if a man had allowed his leave to accumulate that long that they would take the whole amount off.

87. It would be a bad policy to let the leave accumulate?—Yes, that is so.

88. *Mr. J. V. Brown.*] In the case of a man belonging to a friendly society and being off sick, I suppose there is no difference made in the pay—the Railway Department allows him full pay?—I understand so.

89. Then in the case of a man being insured and having an accident policy on his own account, do you think it would cause malingering if a man was getting a fair amount from such a society and also his pay from the Department—that it would pay him better?—I do not know any officer of the First Division whom it would pay to go off in that manner, because the superannuation takes all the spare cash.