

as a desire of the men to get as much money as they can—that is, to go on duty on Sunday because it is paid for specially, and when there is no real necessity for it.

49. But you would have the local officer to check that sort of thing?—I have always said that the Department is in the hands of the local officers to a very large extent in checking these matters.

50. But still, as the service increased, Sunday duty is almost bound to increase?—No, it is not, and it should not. If the public service necessitates the running of extra trains, then, of course, the Sunday work will correspondingly increase; but otherwise, so long as we are only running the present train service, there should be no necessity to increase the Sunday duty.

51. But the duty is increased by the North Island Main Trunk service running?—That does not affect the question.

52. *Mr. Nitty.*] Did I understand you to say, Mr. McVilly, that although the instructions with regard to guards' tickets are that they shall be entered up at night it is not necessarily done?—No, it is not necessarily done.

53. Well, in that case are they not breaking the instructions?—It is like all other instructions—a lot are not carried out in their entirety.

54. Does not the officer in charge of the various stations between Lyttelton and Christchurch have fourteen hours' work or over on Sunday?—They have frequent intervals off duty.

55. I think the trains are practically every hour?—No, I think there is a bigger break than that. I cannot tell now exactly, but I know the matter has been gone into.

56. I know there were complaints?—Yes, the signalmen have complained.

57. By the members of the first grade?—I do not remember the first grade speaking about it, but there are considerable intervals.

58. *Mr. Brown.*] In the larger stations where the cash is about on the Saturday or Sunday, does not the Stationmaster see that the booking clerk banks his cash each day?—The Stationmaster is supposed to see to that, and I think in a general way they do; but we know that, notwithstanding this check, one of the biggest frauds committed on the New Zealand Railways was worked at one of the largest stations on our system where the Stationmaster used to practically check the cash every day. He does not go through the books. The cash is brought in with a note, and he takes it as right. There is a sort of check.

59. How do you do at stations where there are no banks at all?—The cash is locked up in a bag and transmitted by a guard to the nearest place where a bank is.

60. *The Chairman.*] You stated, Mr. McVilly, that as a Stationmaster you used to have a field day in the office on Sundays?—I was relieving officer.

61. And although you had that field day on Sundays you considered it quite unnecessary?—Yes, I was very glad to have somewhere to go—somewhere to put my time in.

62. Well, that really suggests that you had plenty of time during the week during working-hours to do it?—Yes, there was plenty of time. The result of doing that on Sunday simply meant that on the Monday and Tuesday I had practically little to do except attend trains.

63. If you had another class of work during the week to fill in those days, then you would have to do that work during the week and the other work on Sunday?—No. My experience was that it was not necessary to do that work on the Sunday. I could have done it during the week or on the following Monday, but all I then had to do was the business that came in, and I had any amount of time on my hands.

64. How long ago was that?—A good many years ago. I have not been relieving officer for about twenty years.

65. Do you not think the conditions of the service are very different to-day from what they were twenty years ago?—At one particular station at which I was relieving the business was then £13,000, and it is now £5,000.

66. Is the monetary business a correct index of the work done?—It is in that case. It does not always follow, but it is so generally speaking.

67. What amount do you think is lost annually by fraud on the part of the First Division officers?—I do not know that it is any considerable sum at all—I am not suggesting that.

68. You suggested that there could be manipulation of the cash left if this alteration were brought in by which the period closed at 2 o'clock on Saturday instead of late at night on Saturday?—The position is this: if a man is £10 short on Saturday and he takes on the Saturday £20, he can make it up. As a general rule, the takings on Monday are smaller than on the Saturday. If he only takes £8 on the Monday he cannot make up Saturday's deficiency of £10 to balance by utilizing the cash for Monday's receipts.

69. *Mr. Brown.*] Then he has to bank on the Monday?—He banks day by day; the cash is made up and carried on daily. If there is an irregularity it is only discovered when the amount becomes so large that the floating capital you have got from the following day's receipts is not sufficient to meet the required balance; then, of course, discovery must ensue.

70. *The Chairman.*] I think you said you lose very little on the part of the officers of First Division?—I am not suggesting we lose a large amount, but there is the temptation.

71. But if the class of officers and their general conduct is good, would they not be able on an occasion like that to withstand the temptation?—Well, as long as I can remember the Railway Department has always taken the temptation into consideration, and has always been averse to increasing the temptation that is undoubtedly put in the way of officers under certain circumstances. It has always been maintained by the Department and those who have given the matter earnest consideration that any alteration in the system in the direction of allowing the men to have a larger amount of cash than they have would place additional temptation in their way; and, unfortunately, where irregularities have occurred they have been worked in the manner I have indicated—that is, by taking Saturday's or Monday's cash to meet deficiencies, and carrying on that system day by day.