

12. As a result of representations made by the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, exhaustive tests were made as to the actual time required for preparing and putting away locomotives, and the time-allowance now granted is considered to be ample for the purpose, and I am unable to see my way to recommend any extension.

13. The practice is to book guards on duty at least thirty minutes before the departure of their trains at busy stations and depots. In other cases time-allowance is granted according to the circumstances, each case being considered on its merits and determined by the local officer, sufficient time being allowed the guards to perform all necessary duties.

14. Lodging-allowance is already paid in accordance with Regulations 44, 45, and 46.

15. Sleeping-accommodation provided by the Department comprises a hut or other building suitable for members to lodge in.

16. This clause of the regulation is necessary, and I cannot recommend compliance with the request.

17. Regulation 73 simply gives effect to what has been the practice of the Department since the inception of the railways, and is essential.

18. The expenses of members transferred at the convenience of and to suit the exigencies of the Department are defrayed in terms of Regulation 48.

19. I regret I am unable to recommend compliance with this request. It involves a large expenditure.

20. The original arrangement in respect to passes was to grant members of the First Division first-class and members of the Second Division second-class passes. In 1896 this arrangement was altered, and first-class passes were granted to all members of the service; but a year or so afterwards the original practice was reverted to, owing to complaints from passengers respecting the railway staff monopolizing all the first-class accommodation.

21. Arrangements have already been made to grant free passes to members of the Railway service who are living in isolated places, to enable them to purchase all stores.

22. The Department already has this matter under consideration.

22A. Men employed in the dining-cars and railway sawmills are granted leave of absence, free passes, and privilege tickets in terms of the regulations. I am not, however, prepared to recommend that such men be placed on the permanent staff of the Department.

23. Effect has already been given to the promise made by the Hon. W. Hall-Jones as far as could be done. All men who were eligible under the Railway Regulations have been appointed to the permanent staff.

24. The position of juniors on the D.-3 is determined by the Government Railways Act, and they cannot be placed according to length of service.

25. All cases of punishment in which a man is suspended are dealt with as expeditiously as possible. Generally speaking, they involve the holding of inquiries, and afterwards the evidence has to be fully considered and adjudicated on by the Punishment Board. Men are not kept suspended any longer than can be avoided.

26. Punishments for offences committed by members of the Railway staff are made as light as the circumstances will permit.

27. Section 89 of the Government Railways Act covers this request. What is asked by this clause is a double benefit. This cannot be recommended.

28. This, in effect, is asking that members who have retired from the Railway service should be allowed to continue as contributors to the Superannuation Fund and afterwards participate in its benefits. I regret I cannot recommend compliance with this request.

29. The Government Railways Superannuation Fund is already carrying the maximum liability. This proposal, if given effect to, would increase the load of the fund. I therefore recommend that the request be declined.

30. This is a question of Government policy.

31. Departmental Boards of inquiry when set up are invariably composed of officers who have no connection whatever with the person at fault or the matter to be investigated. I am unable to recommend the adoption of either of the suggestions in this clause.

32. I am not prepared to recommend compliance with this request.

33. It is quite impracticable to embody in the Classification Act regulations for the working of the Department, the conditions of which alter every day.

34. In every walk of life a line of demarcation is drawn between the men who are directing the operations and those who are carrying them out, and it is not advisable to depart from this principle in the Railway service.

35. This matter has been under the consideration of the Department for some time, and the society has already been advised that arrangements have been made for supplying distance-tables as soon as they can be prepared.

36. Arrangements have already been made to supply shunters and goods-shed porters with uniforms.

37. I am not prepared, in the interests of the men themselves, to recommend any extension of the civil and political rights now enjoyed by members of the Railway service.

38. While the Department has no objection to members of the Railway service belonging to the various Railway unions, I regret my inability to recommend compliance with the request to give preference to unionists in the matter of employment or reduction of staff. A Government service must be open to all members of the community who can comply with the regulations laid down in respect to employment, and quite irrespective of whether they are unionists or non-unionists.

I have, &c.,

T. RONAYNE,
General Manager.

The Chairman, Railways Committee, House of Representatives