

*Head Office Organization.*

The evil starts at the very fountain-head, the General Manager and his assistant (the Chief Clerk) being often immersed in minutiae and routine duties that could very well be dealt with by an officer in a lower grade. It is most desirable that the officials named should be at greater liberty to devote themselves to matters that directly concern administration and general management, but to secure this end a reorganization of the Head Office staff is necessary.

The Chief Clerk's present designation is entirely a misnomer. He has been acting as, and had the responsibilities of, Assistant General Manager for several years, and his position should now be properly defined by giving him this title. There was an Assistant General Manager in 1901, since which time the volume and importance of the work of the Department has vastly increased.

The General Manager, as well as the branch officers, ought to travel frequently so as to keep in touch with the public and the railway staff, and be able to form, from direct personal observation, their own conclusions as to the manner in which the railway business is being conducted and the efficiency of the staff in different localities. The General Manager will require to spend at least four months out of every twelve away from Wellington attending to important railway questions that arise in the other business centres, and making himself conversant with the development of business in different portions of the Dominion. Although the more important correspondence is forwarded to the General Manager when absent on inspection duties, his Chief Clerk must of necessity carry on a portion of the business in the General Manager's name during his absence. It is essential that the position of the officer acting for the General Manager on these occasions should be defined beyond question; I therefore recommend that in the next amendment to the Act Mr. McVilly's title be altered from "Chief Clerk, General Management," to "Assistant General Manager."

The designation "Chief Clerk" compels the holder of the position to perform a large number of detail clerical duties, and it is not possible for even the most willing worker to combine the duties appertaining to the very heavy routine correspondence of the Head Office as well as assist with the more important administrative matters without resultant delays to the matters in hand. Correspondence is not dealt with as promptly as I should like. With a view to relieving the position and expediting the conduct of the Head Office business, I recommend the appointment of a Chief Clerk, Head Office, Grade 4, maximum salary £475 per annum, on whom will fall the supervision of the clerical staff and routine duties in the Head Office.

*Traffic Branch Organization.*

When reviewing the method of traffic management on the New Zealand railways I was forcibly struck by the lack of systematic outside supervision by responsible officers, yet in no branch of railway business is personal supervision so essential. In this branch the traffic has completely outgrown the existing organization, and the strengthening and remodelling of the Chief Traffic Manager's and District Traffic Managers' offices must be undertaken to put matters on a satisfactory footing. Under the existing arrangements not only is there an insufficiency of outside supervision, but control from indoors is restricted owing to the limited amount of information recorded regarding traffic operations.

In order to provide for improved outside supervision I recommend the strengthening of the staff of the Chief Traffic Manager's Office by the appointment of an Assistant Traffic Manager, a position that can be filled by Mr. Piper, at present Traffic Superintendent in the North Island. The appointment of an assistant will enable the necessary additional outside supervision to be given without interfering with the other important duties of the Chief Traffic Manager's Office.

I also recommend the strengthening of the District Traffic Managers' offices in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin by the appointment of Assistant District Traffic Managers, such officials to be regarded as Assistants for outdoor-traffic working.

I am confident the appointment of the Assistants referred to above will enable both the Chief Traffic Manager and District Traffic Managers to keep more closely in touch with the staff and the varying traffic movements throughout the districts. Inquiries in regard to traffic operations and other matters that constantly arise in connection with the everyday routine of departmental business can be more quickly settled, frequently on the spot, and certainly with less correspondence than is now involved. Quicker decisions and a curtailment of correspondence in Traffic offices are matters very much to be desired. The appointment of Assistant District Traffic Managers will give an additional avenue for promotion to ambitious young officers, and form an excellent training for future District Traffic Managers. These positions will be filled from the ranks of rising officers, the selection being made strictly on the score of suitability, merit, and general qualification for the particular offices. Unless such positions are filled by thoroughly capable officers the benefit of the rearrangement will be to a great extent nullified.

The Assistant District Traffic Managers will devote personal attention to train-running, engine loading and working, yard and station working, car and wagon distribution, &c. They will make weekly and monthly reports to the District Traffic Managers, which will be forwarded to the General Manager via the Chief Traffic Manager.

As soon as the Chief and District Traffic Managers' offices are reorganized and strengthened they will be in a position to keep complete records of traffic operations which are the necessary equipment of every Traffic Manager's office, and effectively control the movements of locomotives, cars, and wagons, and the loading of trains. The time-records of trains will be more closely watched, and more prompt action will be taken to ensure punctuality in running. The staffing of stations and economical conduct of business can also be more strictly supervised, as well as the