

208. When you get the hydraulic pig-breaker and the air hoist for lifting the metal to the stage, do you expect to reduce the cost of the castings?—It will save a man's wages.

209. Have you formed any idea as to how much per hundredweight it will reduce the cost?—I have not gone into that yet.

210. Do you use coaldust in the sand?—Yes.

211. Do you make allowance for that?—Yes, it is accounted for.

212. You said that the Dunedin Railway-station verandah was complicated and curved. Was it not made in separate principals, with a great number of principals alike?—There were a great number of principals, but very few were exactly alike.

213. There is no curve on the station?—No, but there are curves in the principals.

214. Are there not a number all the same?—Yes, but there are a great number that vary.

215. With regard to the taking-on and discharging of men, would it not be preferable if you had power to take on and discharge them yourself?—I think so.

216. *Mr. Niven.*] How do you charge patterns?—They are charged against a separate account.

217. Labour only?—Labour and material.

218. Do you show a profit on the labour?—That I am not prepared to say from memory. It is a separate order that we charge patternmaking to. Patternmaking shops are a separate branch.

219. *Mr. Hampton.*] Why do you think it is preferable that you should have the taking-on and discharging of men? Have you had any difficulty at any time in dispensing with a man?—No.

220. There can be no good reason, then, for making a change?—We cannot always get men.

221. You have had no difficulty in discharging them?—No, except that it takes too long.

222. I take it, however, that your remarks only refer to what are known as "emergency labourers"?—Casual labourers.

223. There are "casuals" who have been there for several years?—Yes.

224. You do not ask this power for them?—No, I really refer to "casuals."

225. You are perfectly satisfied with the present arrangements as regards the others?—Yes.

226. Who has charge of the fitting of cars and vans with the gas arrangements?—That comes under the jurisdiction of the foreman carpenter.

227. Who is the man who has the particular job of doing the work?—Fitter Turner.

228. Do you find him a capable man?—Yes.

229. Has he brought about any improvements in the gas-burners?—Several.

230. Are they working satisfactorily?—Yes.

231. Has he been recommended for any special consideration?—He has.

232. As regards the blacksmiths' shop, is there any necessity for a leading hand to assist the foreman?—I think there is now.

TUESDAY, 16th MARCH, 1909.

JAMES WILLIAM NICHOLS examined. (No. 22.)

1. *Mr. Beattie.*] What is your position?—Boiler-inspector for the New Zealand Government Railways.

2. How long have you been in the New Zealand Railway service?—About twenty-eight years.

3. How long have you occupied the position of Boiler-inspector?—For nearly twenty-one years.

4. Starting with your apprenticeship, what experience have you?—I have had about forty-four years' experience as a mechanical engineer, starting in the shops of the London and North-western Railway Company at Wolverton and Crewe.

5. Your duties take you all over the New Zealand railways?—Yes.

6. *The Chairman.*] Did you serve as a fitter or a boilermaker?—As a fitter. We did a certain amount of boiler-work all the same. We went into the shops occasionally.

7. *Mr. Beattie.*] During your inspection trips you have to visit Addington frequently, I suppose?—Yes.

8. On these visits to Addington have you noticed any of this reported idling?—I have seen no idling there.

9. Would you have had an opportunity of observing it had there been any going on?—Yes, I am moving amongst the men both in the boiler-shop and in the erecting-shop, and working amongst them.

10. In your opinion, are the men at Addington as industrious and as diligent, so far as you can judge, as they are in the other Railway Workshops?—Quite as much; I see no difference.

11. Will you state what, in your opinion, is the quality of the boiler-work?—The boiler-work is of the highest standard. It is made according to Board of Trade rules, and, of course, that is the highest standard.

12. Have you seen any evidences at Addington during any of your visits of any want of discipline?—None whatever.

13. Do you know Mr. Henderson, the foreman of the boiler-shop?—Very well indeed. I come into contact with him every time I visit there in the course of my duties.

14. How many years have you known him?—Ever since he has been at Addington.

15. From what you know of Mr. Henderson you would think he was a man who would enforce discipline?—I should say so.

16. Would you think, from what you know of him, that he would endeavour to get the maximum amount of work out of the men in the shop?—Yes, I am quite sure that he would, from what I have seen of him.

(This concluded the evidence called by Mr. Beattie.)