

- (c.) The emergency casuals—that is, men who are taken on to meet sudden demands for day to day or hour to hour, and whose employment may last for a longer or shorter period according to the exigencies of the Department. The engagement of these men is made by the responsible officer in charge of the Workshops—the Workshops Manager at Addington, for instance, may employ emergency labour. Such men, if suitable and satisfactory in every respect, not infrequently ultimately become members of the permanent staff.

In filling vacancies on the permanent staff the casuals or others whose applications have previously been recorded, and who possess the necessary qualifications, are first considered, and, if eligible, are put on the probationary staff. Their retention or otherwise depends entirely on the manner in which they comport themselves and carry out their respective duties; and in regard to this the Locomotive Engineer, or the Workshops Manager, or foremen immediately in charge of the men concerned are the judges of the men's qualifications and capabilities, and are expected to promptly report to the General Manager as to whether the men are suitable or unsuitable for retention. Men whose work is reported as being unsatisfactory are not retained.

In respect to filling vacancies for casuals, it is the practice to supply officers on whose staff the vacancies occur with the names of a number of men who, by reason of their application, are entitled to priority in regard to employment. This is done for the purpose of avoiding any delay that might arise in the event of No. 1 man not being suitable. It is expected that the local officer will have sufficient initiative to take steps to at once communicate with as many of the applicants as he considers advisable, and arrange for them to present themselves for his inspection, selecting the man or men who are the most suitable to fill existing vacancies.

It is obviously the duty of the local officer, in communicating with the applicants, to fix a time within which they shall present themselves, and to make his selection from the men who respond within the given time. If the first man selected does not turn out satisfactorily, the district officer has to advise Head Office, and communicate with the other men whose names remain on his list and select from these. Where the lists become exhausted the local officer is given authority to select eligible local men who offer themselves for employment, *and has an entirely free hand in that matter.*

With regard to additions to staff, it cannot be expected, nor would it be in the interests of the Department, to blindly approve every requisition for staff that emanates from a local officer. The General Manager, who is responsible for the general administration and the expenditure of the Department, must necessarily exercise his authority, and not infrequently decline to authorise additional staff when, in his judgment, the supplying of the same would unwarrantably increase the expenditure without sufficient cause. It is the almost invariable practice to confer with the Chief Mechanical Engineer, as head of the Locomotive Branch, in respect to the employment of additional staff or the filling of vacancies that occur in the various workshops under his control, and it is not an infrequent happening for the Chief Mechanical Engineer to decline, for good and sufficient reasons, to recommend the requisition of the local officer for additional staff. In such cases the staff is not supplied. In special cases, however, where the local officer renews the application and gives a good and sufficient reason for so doing, the necessary arrangements are made to fill the vacancies if circumstances warrant.

Recently a new boring-machine was supplied to Addington, and, although there are a large number of competent turners in the shop, an application was made to take on a new man to work the new machine. This application was properly declined, and instructions given that a competent turner in the workshop should be placed in charge of the machine. If it is contended that, whenever a new machine or appliance of any kind is installed in Addington or any other workshop in the Dominion, a new man is to be taken on to work the same, it follows that as soon as an old machine is displaced by a new one the man who has been working the old appliance, and who may be thoroughly competent and in every respect fitted to take charge of the new machine and have been in the service for many years, would have to be dispensed with, because there was no opportunity of further utilising his services. It is manifest that a position of this kind would be utterly untenable. In connection with this matter I have had recommendations to dispense with a few turners in Addington Workshops which fully justified the course I have indicated.

Regarding the punishment of the men for breaches of discipline, unsatisfactory work, or general misconduct, the various officers in charge, as stated at the outset, take different views as to the gravity of the offence. If, therefore, a free hand were given them, offences of a similar nature would be met by widely divergent punishment according to the view taken by the district officer. It is therefore essential that the power of meting out punishment should be in the hands of the General Manager. In this connection I may say that all offences are dealt with by the Punishment Board, who make their recommendations to me. I invariably agree with the recommendations, but there are exceptions. The Punishment Board is constituted in this way: The Chief Mechanical Engineer, the Chief Engineer, the Chief Traffic Manager, and the Stores Manager. The Chief Accountant was a member of the Board, but it was considered that he could no longer hold that position, as he had been appointed by the Department to represent them at the Appeal Board cases. You can quite understand that it would never do for an officer who was meting out punishment to deal with those cases afterwards when they came before the Appeal Board.

When a member of the service commits an offence the local officers are expected to obtain a detailed report of the facts of the case, and submit same with their recommendation to the General Manager. Frequently the details given are not such as, in the opinion of the General Manager, would enable the offence to be properly adjudicated on, and further information has in such cases to be obtained. When it is considered that the full facts have been obtained, the case is referred to the Punishment Board for a recommendation, and the Board's recommendation is finally reviewed by the General Manager, who confirms the recommendation or otherwise as he considers the circumstances