

take out a provisional patent. Of course, he will have to pay the fee himself, and if he has confidence in his own idea, and is willing to pay his fee, then I think he should be allowed that privilege. I would ask you, then, to carefully consider this matter. It is a matter in which the men are deeply interested, and I would ask you to make such recommendations as would bring about greater improvements in this respect.

There is just one other suggestion which has been made to me by some of the men. They have said that in factories or workshops in America there are suggestion-boxes placed round the works, and employees are invited to place suggestions in those boxes, and if they prove on investigation to be of any merit they are granted some bonus for the suggested improvements.

Under the heading of efficiency, and also of lack of discipline, I would draw your attention to the necessity which seems to exist, according to the evidence, for the appointment of a leading hand in the blacksmiths' shop. According to the evidence, Mr. Cole, the blacksmith foreman, has ninety-one men under him at present, and he has three hours' office-work a day to attend to. Mr. Richardson, the Workshops Manager, in the course of the cross-examination by myself, admitted the necessity for such an appointment. He saw the necessity now for the appointment of a leading hand in the blacksmiths' shop. I would ask you, then, to make such recommendation. Whilst I am on the question of leading hands, I would also like to refer to the case of Gasfitter Turner. Here we have a man who, according to his evidence, has charge of the fitting-up of the American and other cars with the water-service and Westinghouse brake. He did not do all this himself. Mr. Turner has had under him at one time as many as eleven men, and invariably has as many as two or three men under him—more often than not that is the case. Yet this man is only in receipt of the ordinary rate of pay. Why the Department has not previously recognised this man's services is a mystery to me and to many others.

Now I come to another question which has been touched upon a good deal during the evidence—the question of the engaging and discharging of the staff. As regards the engaging of the staff I am not concerned. There seems to be a difference of opinion on that question amongst the officers, and I am prepared to leave it to them to fight it out. But I am concerned with regard to any recommendation you may see your way to make regarding the discharging of men. Mr. Jenkinson and Mr. Scott both seemed to think that the officers should have some power as regards discharging the men. Now, sir, does there really exist any necessity for a change from the present system? I think, if we look through the evidence carefully and examine it, we shall find that there has not been shown any necessity for a change. Mr. Jackson stated, in the course of cross-examination by myself, that he had full powers, and that the Workshops Manager had power to suspend a man in the event of insubordination. Mr. Jackson further stated, in reply to a question by myself, that in the event of his reporting a man to Wellington for insubordination he would have no difficulty in ridding himself of him. Mr. Fox also stated that he found no difficulty whatever in enforcing discipline in the various shops which came under his control from time to time. As regards discipline, it is perfectly clear that there at the present time exists no necessity for a change. The Manager, as I have already said, has power to suspend a man for insubordination. During the time of suspension the man suffers complete loss of pay, and therefore he (the Manager) appears to possess full powers to enforce discipline. But, as regards the point of view of efficiency, it might be ruled that a change is necessary. I would, however, direct your attention to Mr. Beattie's evidence as given yesterday. Mr. Beattie did not remember experiencing any difficulty in the discharging of men during his time as Locomotive Engineer at Addington. Now, it is only fair to assume from that evidence that had Mr. Beattie laboured under any disadvantage in that respect he would not readily have forgotten it. Then, as against any change, I would further point out that Government men differ from men in private employment, and have a good deal more at stake. They have more to lose in the event of dismissal than a man in private employment. It is all very well for Mr. George Scott to say that the Manager should have more power, but I contend that a man in Addington is on a different footing altogether from a man in Mr. George Scott's employ. If a man is dismissed from Mr. Scott's employ he can go to some other employer and secure a situation, and that is the end of it; but a dismissal from the Government employ involves more than that. So far as I know, there is no private employer in the Dominion who makes any provision for the old age of his employees. That is a matter that is done privately by the employees themselves, and is unaffected by any dismissal from one employer. I would, however, point out with regard to the men at Addington that with their employment is bound up their provision for old age, and if they are dismissed that has a detrimental effect. I contend on that ground that the men should only be dismissed after very close investigation, and it should not be made possible for one individual to hastily dismiss any man, and perhaps unduly affect the provision which he is making for his old age.

Now, sir, it may be and possibly will be argued that there is no intention to in any way interfere with the permanent staff, and that it is only they who benefit under the provisions of the Superannuation Act. But I would point out that this is not so. There are casual men in the service who have hopes, and who indeed have already been promised by the Department, that they will be made permanent men, and who are looking forward to participate in the benefits of the Superannuation Act. Some of these men, to my own knowledge, have as much as eleven years' casual service. In the event of their being placed on the permanent staff the whole of that continuous eleven years will count for superannuation purposes when they have reached the age of sixty years. If one of these casual men with eleven years' service was hastily and unduly dismissed by his superior officer, it means a loss to that man—say he was in receipt of 10s. a day—at the age of sixty of 11s. per week. That being the case, I consider that casual men should only be dismissed after the position has been carefully reviewed and reconsidered. I would point out further that a casual man has no right of appeal. He would have no way of showing that an injustice had been done him. But it may be said that there is no likelihood of such an injustice being done. As against that I would direct you to Mr. Ronayne's evidence. Mr. Ronayne stated this in evidence yesterday, and I would particularly ask any officers present to