

JOHN FRANCIS MCCARTHY sworn and examined. (No. 3.)

1. *Mr. Myers.*] What is your position in the Department?—I am Workshops Manager at the Newmarket Railway Workshops.

2. How long have you been in that position?—Nine years in my present position; prior to that I was seven years at the Government shops at Addington, and Workshops Foreman at Newmarket.

3. How long altogether have you been in the service of the Department?—Approximately thirty-three years.

4. Having been about nine years Manager you can tell us whether there has been during the last three years any change in the methods so far as the work connected with the rolling-stock is concerned?—It is practically the same now as when I took charge nine years ago—absolutely the same.

5. You construct vehicles there, do you?—Yes, we construct carriages, wagons, and brake-vans, and also do repairs.

6. Do you find that you have been kept as busy during the last three years in the repairing-shops as previously?—Undoubtedly.

7. And with regard to new vehicles?—We keep a special staff for new vehicles.

8. You are in charge of the shops: who comes next to you?—The Foreman. We have several Foremen and a Foreman Fitter.

9. What is Mr. Holder's position?—Foreman Carpenter; he has charge of the rolling-stock.

10. We have been told by the Car and Wagon Inspector that he sometimes sends vehicles into the shops for repairs, and sometimes the train-examiners send them?—Yes.

11. When the vehicles are sent into the shops do you always see them before any repairs are effected?—I do not always see them before the repairs, but I see them during the course of repairs.

12. I suppose there is always somebody there to take charge?—Yes, the Foreman takes charge, and he has two leading carpenters with him.

13. You say you always see the vehicles during the progress of repairs?—Yes.

14. I suppose you carry out a general superintendence of the work being done?—Yes, I satisfy myself it is being properly done.

15. When the repairs are effected do you see the vehicle before it is sent out?—I see them casually; I do not make any inspection of them, but I insist on the leading hands and Foreman Carpenter making an inspection before the Car Inspector sees them.

16. They are all tested, then, by a competent hand in your works before the Car and Wagon Inspector sees them?—Yes.

17. Do you ever make an inspection yourself?—Yes; when they are lined up I generally have a look over them—not very minutely, just a casual inspection of them.

18. Do you find the men employed under you are men competent to effect repairs?—Yes, absolutely first-class men.

19. You have told us already that the methods employed have not varied substantially?—They have not gone back in any way; they are better if anything at the present time—we have better methods of testing brakes and that sort of thing.

20. You only see the vehicles that are brought into the shops for repairs: have you nothing to do with the vehicles outside?—Nothing whatever.

21. So that you can only speak of the condition of the rolling-stock which comes before you?—Yes, what passes through the workshops; over a hundred wagons a month pass through.

22. What about carriages?—I suppose about six, eight, or ten a week, sometimes less, according to the repairs connected with them. I think about three hundred cars went through last year.

23. Do you keep any stock of spares out there?—Yes. We have plenty of timber; we make our own castings instead of keeping a stock of them; we keep anything in the way of imported spares—axles, tires, springs, &c.

24. Who looks after that stock: is it under your jurisdiction?—I have to approve all orders before they are passed into stores. My Foreman makes out the orders.

25. Are you speaking of the stores kept by the Storekeeper?—No, the stores we keep at our own shops.

26. We have been told there is also a Storekeeper: is that at Newmarket?—Yes, separate from the shops altogether.

27. Do you draw on him or his stores?—I draw on his stores for everything except timber and castings, which we make in the shops; we hold the timber in stock and make the castings.

28. Have you during the last three years experienced any difficulty in obtaining supplies of spares required?—Not in the slightest. There was a shortage of springs in 1915 for a few months, that is all.

29. What springs are you referring to?—Draw-bar and bearing springs.

30. How did you manage?—We had a pretty good stock; we did not run short to any great extent in the shops, but on the Locomotive Engineer's instructions I loaned some to the Inspector—280 springs.

31. Did you take them from new stock?—Yes; I had a large quantity of stores and lent them 280.

32. Did you have any difficulty in supplying bearing-springs where they were required?—No, we were never short of bearing-springs.

33. [Spring produced.] Did this spring come from your shops?—Yes.

34. What is it?—It is a draw-bar spring.

35. Is that one of the type you have been using?—Yes, that is one of the latest type.