

with the Assistant Controller and one Inspector, should be able to organize the service and conduct all the necessary superintendence without the services of three Supervisors and their clerical staff. We are of opinion that a reduction approximating £1,500 per annum could be made in the control of this Branch.

As previously stated, this Branch acts as purchasing authority for all Government Departments for foodstuffs and groceries, employing a staff for this work costing approximately £1,100 per annum, but no charge is made for this service. The evidence before your Commission showed that the average purchases for other Government Departments totalled £167,000 per annum, and the purchases on behalf of the Refreshment Service amounted to £50,000 per annum. We are of opinion that a charge of  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. commission should be made for the service rendered. This would bring a revenue of £835 per annum.

With regard to the staffing of the various refreshment-rooms, some saving could be effected by making use of temporary employees for special services, provided due consideration was given to the reorganization of the tea-room staff as opportunity offers.

With regard to the catering for workshops, this shows a loss for the year ending 31st March, 1930, of £173 17s. 9d. No charge is made against the workshops catering for equipment or for the use of rooms, including rent, light, and fuel. If these charges were made the loss on this service would be correspondingly greater. From returns presented to the Commission it was shown that only 469 employees out of a total of 3,773 avail themselves of this service.

The capital expenditure on the workshop luncheon-rooms was £16,806, and consideration should be given by the Refreshment Service to an adjustment of prices so that no loss would be incurred by the Department in conducting these rooms. Inquiries should be made as to the reason why the rooms are not patronized by the workers, and whether or not the employees desire them to be continued.

Unless better results are obtained, it would be advisable to close down some of these rooms.

**(8) Whether the existing staff establishment, including casual employees, is such as to ensure a satisfactory standard of economy and efficiency, and whether staff conditions generally are reasonable.**

The rates of pay and conditions of employment are embodied in Orders in Council made under the Government Railways Act, 1926, and its amendments. The schedule of rates of pay and the regulations applicable to the staff are in conformity with the recommendations of respective Wages Boards and the agreements made from time to time between the Minister and the executive of the societies representing the railway staff.

The conditions are generous and have been liberally interpreted and applied to give the staff the fullest benefits. The staff establishment as at 31st March, 1930, comprised an average of 19,410 employees of all grades, of whom 108 were engaged in bus operations.

The following table shows the personnel of the respective branches and the total amount expended in payment of salaries, wages, and allowances each year :—

—	1924.	1925.	1926.	1927.	1928.	1929.	1930.
	Number.	Number.	Number.	Number.	Number.	Number.	Number.
Head and Departmental.. ..	652	714	760	822	851	881	849
Stores .. ..	160	327	381	428	454	395	426
Traffic .. ..	5,124	5,212	5,466	5,579	5,511	5,553	5,749
Maintenance .. ..	3,706	3,807	3,930	4,087	4,075	4,000	4,169
Architectural .. ..	104	190	176	155	147	95	..
Signals .. ..	381	387	386	404	455	496	470
Locomotive workshops .. ..	3,499	3,653	3,709	3,641	3,562	3,592	4,179
Locomotive running .. ..	2,496	2,692	2,878	3,021	3,059	3,023	3,031
Refreshment-rooms .. ..	231	264	294	321	329	339	356
Advertising .. ..	..	..	..	..	68	71	73
Road motor services .. ..	..	..	..	..	30	91	108
	16,353	17,246	17,980	18,458	18,541	18,536	19,410