

the proportion mentioned, or else say that, when a cadet arrives at twenty-one, at least he should be a clerk, and graduate in the proper way up to £110 or £140 a year. Restrict the number so that most of the cadets doing a real clerk's work shall be rated as a clerk—let a cadet do clerk's work when he has arrived at the proper time.

*Mr. Haden*: It is reasonable that a boy, after he has served his time, should receive a man's salary.

*Mr. McKerrow*: The fact is this: there are very few over twenty-one but what are clerks.

*Mr. Haden*: Admitting that that is the fact, we want to keep that in the same state, and that a cadet, after arriving at years of discretion, should receive a clerk's pay—that he should not be paid a cadet's wages.

*Mr. Winter*: You have left the cadets out of consideration as regards the workshop. The cases are exactly similar. You want the best men with the best brains—the most deserving.

*Mr. Haden*: All we ask is that when cadets have served their apprenticeships they shall go on to the other classes appointed, as some of us are confined to the £140 per annum. I have arrived at the £140 period and am stopping there. They should at least go up to that amount per annum. We want them to be considered as you have been considering the apprentices. I think they should be included in that restriction on the same grounds.

*Mr. Hannay*: You say he should be either discharged, if incompetent, or promoted? Your alternative to promotion is that his services should be dispensed with.

*Mr. Haden*: I do not say that. You have taken the responsibility of taking him on.

*Mr. Hannay*: There are always a certain number not competent.

*Mr. Haden*: But you should let him go on.

*Mr. Maxwell*: Whether he is worth it or not?

*Mr. Haden*: Would you not discover that before the last year of his apprenticeship?

*Mr. Maxwell*: We might not.

*Mr. Haden*: I should not recommend discharging him.

*Mr. Hannay*: That is the only alternative. Unfitness is very frequently the cause of the stoppage. Very often when they find that it affects them very seriously they pull themselves up, and become very useful men. I think it would not be a desirable thing, when incompetent, to dispense with them without further trial.

*Mr. Haden*: I do not say that.

*Mr. Hannay*: I do not see how else we are to do it. I think it would be very hard to let them rise to £120, and so on, as we should have to do if we made them clerks.

*Mr. Winter*: It would be a terrible thing to sack these young men, if not competent to rise from their cadetships. You must allow that those are exceptional cases. There cannot be a great number of cases where they would be unfit to take advantage of their chances. As far as I know them, I consider them a respectable lot of young fellows, and I think most of them make the best of their time and are fit for promotion when the time arrives. I do not think too much should be made of that.

*Mr. Maxwell*: The promotion of any man has always been dependent on his qualification for the work. That has been a very essential principle.

*Mr. Winter*: Would you prevent an apprentice getting his indentures when he has served his time because he is not a first-class mechanic?

*Mr. Maxwell*: No; but I might hesitate before putting him in a better position.

*Mr. Winter*: The same thing is carried on now in the shops. If a boy shows peculiar qualifications he gets a chance of being kept on. Ordinary boys do not get on if they neglect their opportunities. But under conditions where a boy neglects his opportunities he is not fit to take a man's place at the bench when he is out of his time. But you are discharging them: you are doing it in one department and not in another. I say it should not be done in either.

*Mr. Hannay*: A boy serving his time in a workshop can get work elsewhere after he has learned his trade: a clerk has practically lost his time in learning clerical work; he is unfitted for work outside. He cannot get into a bank or insurance office: he has not learned the business.

*Mr. Elvines*: A clerk graduates to the Post and Telegraph offices.

*Mr. Maxwell*: No.

*Mr. Elvines*: An apprentice who has not learned his trade thoroughly is at an equal disadvantage: instead of being a tradesman he is an ordinary labourer. A clerk or cadet, after coming out of his time, who is not fit to be kept in the service is not fit to be employed by any private employer. He must take an inferior position as clerk, the same as an apprentice would have to take an inferior position as a mechanic: the two positions are exactly the same.

*Mr. Hannay*: The very word "cadet" seems to confuse the position. We have three or four grades of clerks, £30 to £110, £120 to £140, £150 to £180, and £190 up to £250; there are only a certain number in each grade.

*Mr. Elvines*: Would it not do to try the proportion for a year or two, and if it does not work we might possibly agree with you. I do not think we can arrive at a conclusion now. Supposing there are no more cadets taken on over and above the proportion for the next few years, if you find the service is suffering by that process we will alter the arrangement.

*Mr. McKerrow*: In a growing service such as the railways you cannot make up lost time.

*Mr. Elvines*: As the service grows you want a greater proportion.

*Mr. McKerrow*: You say for three years not to employ any more?

*Mr. Elvines*: Than the proportion.

*Mr. Hannay*: It would not work.

*Mr. Maxwell*: We might want a boy one day, and we must take him.

*Mr. Hannay*: If we could not get a boy we should have to take on a man.