RAILWAY EMPLOYÉS.

(CORRESPONDENCE WITH AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF RAILWAY SERVANTS RESPECTING CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT, &c.)

Laid on the Table by the Hon. Mr. Fergus, with the Leave of the House.

No. 1.

The AMALGAMATED SOCIETY of RAILWAY SERVANTS to the RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS.

Amalgamated Society New Zealand Railway Servants,
Central Office, Hereford Street, Christchurch, 29th March, 1890.

GENTLEMEN,—

In accordance with the resolutions passed at the late conference of delegates from the various branches of the above-named society, the Executive Committee respectfully beg leave to bring under your notice the following facts in connection with the railway employés, and to submit to your favourable consideration certain proposals bearing thereon, namely,—

BOY-LABOUR.

The Executive Committee would draw your attention to the fact that the excessive employment of boys and youths under twenty-one years of age, as apprentices and at unskilled labour, will necessarily prevent adults from finding that amount of employment which is essential to the well-being of the community; it will gradually, but surely, reduce the wages, and throw a number of men who are now employed on the railways out of work. To obviate the possibility of such a result, the committee are compelled to ask that you will limit the proportion of boy-labour to adult-labour on the following scale:—

Apprentices.

For all kinds of mechanics and artisans except boilermakers, one apprentice to each department or shop, and an additional apprentice for every four journeymen employed. For boilermakers, one apprentice and one rivet-heater for every four journeymen employed. And that in no case more than one improver to every four journeymen employed in any one department or shop.

Unskilled Labour.

One boy or youth under twenty-one years of age to every four men employed at full wages: this to apply to porters, shunters, platelayers, workshop labourers, goods-shed men, and all other unskilled labour employed on the New Zealand railways excepting engine-cleaners, regarding whom the committee would impress on you the fact of the unhealthy nature of their employment, and request you to so fix the age at which they are employed as to reduce the risk of their general health being impaired to the minimum. The committee also wish to direct your attention to the fact that it is desirable to prohibit any person from doing any shunting unless he has been three years in the service or is over twenty-one years of age.

Cadets.

It is deemed necessary that there shall be not a greater number of cadets in the service at any time than one to every three Stationmasters and clerks, and that any person having served five years as a cadet shall be rated as a clerk, and receive his yearly increase of salary accordingly.

2. HOURS OF LABOUR.

In accordance with resolutions passed at the conference, the Executive Committee would respectfully point out that the hours of labour per diem in some departments are extremely excessive, such as engine-drivers, firemen, guards, porters, shunters, signalmen and others, some of whom are working fourteen, sixteen, and even eighteen hours per day without adequate remuneration. As this is highly injurious morally and physically to those so employed, and not at all conducive to the safety of the travelling public, it is deemed necessary to submit to you the following proposals for your approval: That no employé on the New Zealand railways shall work more than eight hours per diem, or forty-eight hours per week, excepting where absolutely necessary; and that all time worked over such forty-eight hours in any one week shall be paid for at overtime rates of time and a quarter for the first four hours over and above eight worked in one day, time and a half for all time worked over and above that, and time and a half for Sunday work; providing always that no overtime shall be paid for time worked in excess of eight hours in any one day unless the whole of the time for the week amounts to more than forty-eight hours.

The committee are anxious to impress you with the necessity of this reform, and also with the desirability of employing additional labour when required, instead of compelling men to work long hours at overtime rates; and that no man should be called upon to resume duty after a day's work unless he has had an interval of at least eight hours off, except in cases of urgent necessity.

3. PIECEWORK.

This pernicious system is universally condemned by all classes of workmen, as one which is sure to reduce the price of labour, has a demoralising effect upon those engaged at it, and must bring the worst side of human nature to the surface.

The committee do not deem it necessary to go into any further details on this matter, as the effects of piecework are thoroughly comprehended by both employers and employés, but will request you very earnestly to abolish the system at once.

As it is of the utmost importance to the employés and most essential to the improvement of their social condition that the foregoing proposals should be carried into effect at as early a date as possible, the Executive Committee trust that you will take the matter into your earnest and favourable consideration at once; they sincerely trust that you will see your way clear to comply with the request of your servants, the employés of the New Zealand Railways, as conveyed to you through their Executive Committee.

Hoping for the favour of an early reply, I have, &c.,

CHARLES J. RAE,
Treasurer and Acting General Secretary *pro tem.*

The Hon. the Commissioners of Railways, New Zealand.

No. 2.

The RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS to the AMALGAMATED SOCIETY of RAILWAY SERVANTS.

New Zealand Government Railways,
Head Office, Wellington, 2nd April, 1890.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter to the Railway Commissioners, dated 29th March, 1890, communicating resolutions of conference of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and am directed to inform you that the subject thereof will receive consideration.

I have, &c.,
E. G. PILCHER, Secretary.

Mr. C. J. Rae, Hereford Street, Christchurch.

No. 3.

The RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS to the AMALGAMATED SOCIETY of RAILWAY SERVANTS.

SIR,— 21st April, 1890.

With reference to your letter of the 29th ultimo, representing certain matters to the Railway Commissioners on behalf of the railway employés, the receipt of which was acknowledged on the 2nd instant, I am now directed to inform you, in reply, that the employés have the right to represent their views and grievances to the Commissioners, either individually or collectively, under proper conditions, at present.

The Commissioners infer from your letter that the employés, or some of them, have formed a society for the purpose of making known their views generally to the Commissioners, and the Commissioners think it may be found that there is no objection to such a course. At present, however, they have no information as to who constitute the society.

The views of the Commissioners are as follows: They have no objection to offer to the organization of the society upon proper lines, and are prepared to facilitate the movement under certain conditions. Such a society should be formed exclusively of railway employés. It should be open for all employés to join or withdraw from under reasonable regulations. It should not interfere with the privileges of individual employés, or prevent them from addressing the Commissioners about their individual interests, as is now provided.

Before the Commissioners could undertake to treat with the society or recognise it, particulars of the purposes of the society and of its regulations should be supplied, and full information should be given to indicate the extent, strength, and organization of the society, and to show that the Executive Committee has reasonable powers to act on behalf of the members collectively.

The Commissioners are prepared to facilitate the meeting of the representative members of the employés in Wellington by passes and leave, to enable them to discuss these suggestions, and, should the employés be disposed to fall in with these views, the Commissioners will then be prepared to consider such general representations as their Executive Committee may make.

I have, &c.,
E. G. PILCHER, Secretary.

The Acting General Secretary, Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants,
Hereford Street, Christchurch.

No. 4.

The AMALGAMATED SOCIETY of RAILWAY SERVANTS to the RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS.

Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of New Zealand,
Central Office, Christchurch, 28th April, 1890.

GENTLEMEN,—

Under instructions from the Executive Committee, I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication dated the 21st instant, R. 90/1021, No. 1,573.

Replying to the paragraphs of your letter *seriatim*, I am instructed most respectfully to say that the conditions under which individual employés have at present to approach the Commissioners is not considered satisfactory.

Paragraph 2 concludes with these words: "At present, however, they [the Commissioners] have no information as to who constitute the society." I must beg here to apologize for not having forwarded a copy of the rules of the society at an earlier date; but I was desirous of sending them in book-form. A proof copy was, however, posted on Saturday, the 26th instant. You will perceive that most of the conditions laid down as the views of the Commissioners are embodied in the rules of the society.

I am in a position to state that the entire muster-roll of the society exceeds four thousand. As the enrolment of new members is continually going on, I am justified in saying that this is well within the actual figures.

The first branch of the society was formed at Auckland about three and a half years ago, and the Canterbury Branch was inaugurated 13th October, 1889. Branches have also been established in the following places: Timaru, Oamaru, Dunedin, Invercargill, Westport, Greymouth, Nelson, Picton, Wellington, Wanganui, Palmerston North, and Napier; and the Executive have under consideration the issue of dispensations for the opening of other branches.

The Executive Committee desire to state most emphatically that they have no desire to place themselves in antagonism to the views and wishes of the Commissioners so long as the just claims of the employés are considered; and the Executive Committee are fully sensible of the grave responsibility of their position, and are prepared to accept it.

Accompanying this I am instructed to forward a letter written on the evening of the 21st instant, which would have been posted to you before the receipt of yours of the same date but for my unavoidable absence through illness. The committee also desire to thank you for the facilities you have kindly offered to afford the representatives of the society should the committee decide that a personal interview is desirable, in which case they will place themselves in communication with you to appoint the time and place.

You will please find herewith a copy of the by-laws of the Canterbury Branch, of which I am the Secretary.

Should you require any further information, I shall be most happy, under instruction from the Executive, to furnish you with the same. I have, &c.,

CHARLES J. RAE,
Treasurer and Acting General Secretary *pro tem.*

The Hon. the Commissioners of Railways for New Zealand.

No. 5.

The AMALGAMATED SOCIETY of RAILWAY SERVANTS to the RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS.

Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of New Zealand,
Central Office, Hereford Street, Christchurch, 21st April, 1890.

GENTLEMEN,—

I am instructed by my committee to forward for your information the following copy of a resolution passed at a meeting of the said committee on Tuesday evening, the 15th instant: "That the Secretary write to the Commissioners, pointing out to them the fact that, notwithstanding the letter recently sent to them by the Executive *re* boy-labour, a large number of boys are still being taken on at Invercargill and other places, and to request them not to add to the number of boys already employed until they have finally disposed of the question as submitted to them by this committee."

In the interests not only of the employés but of the colony at large, the Executive Committee most respectfully beg leave to urge upon you the great desirability of attending to this matter at once, and to request you to give a definite assurance that the matter is under consideration, and that no more boys will be taken on in the meantime; otherwise the committee will have to adopt more efficient means to procure for the unanimous wish of the whole of the railway servants that consideration which the question undoubtedly deserves.

I have, &c.,
CHARLES J. RAE,
Treasurer and Acting General Secretary, A.S.R.S.N.Z.

The Hon. the Commissioners for Railways for New Zealand.

No. 6.

The RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS to the AMALGAMATED SOCIETY of RAILWAY SERVANTS.

3rd May, 1890.

SIR,—

I have the honour, by direction of the Railway Commissioners, to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 28th April, with which I also received your previous letter dated the 21st April, together with a copy of the general rules of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of New Zealand.

The Railway Commissioners have perused the regulations, and think that for the most part they are reasonable and proper; but in some respects they are not appropriate for official recognition, having regard to the fact that the railway servants are employed under the provisions of "The Government Railways Act, 1887," by which Act also the duties of the Commissioners are regulated.

The society appears to admit honorary members not necessarily railway servants, who would not be amenable to "The Government Railways Act, 1887," nor in any way responsible for the economical conduct of the public services. Thus in many respects the operations of the society might not be in keeping with either the spirit or letter of the Act passed by the Legislature for the conduct of the railway service.

The Railway Commissioners are therefore of opinion that the railway servants, on whose behalf you are engaged to write, should send representative members who are themselves railway servants to Wellington, who can fully set forth and discuss such matters as they desire.

The Railway Commissioners will give careful consideration to any representations they may make, and will, as previously indicated to you, facilitate such a meeting upon application to do so.

In any case, the matters you have referred to will receive careful consideration from the Commissioners.

I have, &c.,
E. G. PILCHER, Secretary.

The Acting General Secretary, Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants,
Hereford Street, Christchurch.

No. 7.

The AMALGAMATED SOCIETY of RAILWAY SERVANTS to the RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS.

SIRS,— Canterbury Chambers, Hereford Street, Christchurch, 8th May, 1890.

I have the honour, by instructions of the Executive of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of New Zealand, to acknowledge receipt of your communication of the 3rd May, No. 1,726.

In reply, I beg to inform you that the society is formed for the purpose of protecting the interests and bettering the condition of all classes of railway servants in New Zealand, irrespective of any Acts of Parliament. Taking for granted that the Act of 1887 regulates the duties of the Commissioners, then it is evident, judging by facts, that that Act provides for the introduction of excessive boy-labour, to the terrible risk of railway-men and the general public; it provides for an indirect reduction of wages, and it must be apparent that a reduction of wages in so large a Government department will act as a precedent in reducing wages generally throughout the colony; it provides for the iniquitous system of piecework, even to the disgraceful extent of compelling men on day-wages to work with those who are given labour on piecework; it provides for the maintaining of excessively long hours of labour and the non-payment for overtime, the utter disregard of an impartial and just system of promotion, the illegal extortion of the hard-earned wages of the railway-men in the name of fines; it provides, in short, for the demoralisation of the service; and, as the object of the society is to abolish these things, and bring about a better condition of service for the humanity employed in railway-working, its operations must to a certain extent be contrary to the spirit of the Act of 1887, in so far as that Act affects the social condition of the employés.

Honorary members are admitted into the society, but have no vote upon any question whatever with regard to the society. Although such would not be amenable to "The Government Railways Act, 1887," in such a way as an ordinary railway employé might be, yet the majority of the honorary members of this society are directly responsible for the economical conduct of the public services upon just and fair lines, in that they are members of the House of Representatives.

Relative to the suggestion that a conference of representatives of the society (themselves being railway servants) should meet in Wellington, I have to state that the Executive Council does not see the necessity of such special conference in face of the general conference held in February last, and again to be held in February, 1891, at Auckland.

No reply having been so far received to the communication dated from here 29th March last, dealing with the questions of boy-labour, apprentices, unskilled labour, cadets, hours of labour, piecework, &c., together with the communication of the 21st April, I have the honour to ask that those communications be replied to definitely by the 18th of the present month.

I have, &c.,
W. J. EDWARDS, General Secretary, A.S.R.S.

The Commissioners of New Zealand Railways, Wellington.

No. 8.

The RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS to the AMALGAMATED SOCIETY of RAILWAY SERVANTS.

SIR,— 13th May, 1890.

I have the honour, by direction of the New Zealand Railway Commissioners, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th May, in further reference to the constitution and objects of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and am desired to express regret that the suggestion made in my previous letters of the 21st April and 3rd May, to send representative members of the railway service to Wellington to discuss with the Commissioners personally such matters as it is desired to bring forward, has not met with the concurrence of your Executive.

I have, &c.,
E. G. PILCHER, Secretary.

The General Secretary, Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, Christchurch.

No. 9.

The AMALGAMATED SOCIETY of RAILWAY SERVANTS to the RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS.

SIRS,— Christchurch, 16th May, 1890.

In reply to your communication of the 13th May, I am instructed by the Executive of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of New Zealand to inform you that it is impossible for the Executive to alter the constitution, and objects of the society, as laid down by the recent conference held in Christchurch. It therefore declines to hold a general conference in Wellington, and refers the Commissioners to the conference to be held in Auckland in February, 1891.

The Executive Committee, so far from being averse to meeting the Commissioners openly and fairly for the purpose of discussing grievances, or sending a deputation to Wellington to do so, are only too anxious to bring about that result; but it objects to the condition that such deputation must consist purely of railway servants, inasmuch as compliance with such a condition would materially endanger the fair, fearless, and impartial investigation and discussion of the grievances under which all classes of railway servants are labouring at the present time, and it must certainly reserve the right to itself to send such deputation as may seem to it most advisable.

Will you kindly inform the Executive Council whether you are prepared to meet such a deputation?

I have, &c.,
W. J. Edwards, General Secretary, A.S.R.S.

No. 10.

The Railway Commissioners to the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants.

Sir,— Wellington, 23rd May, 1890.

In reply to the inquiry in your letter of the 16th instant, received on the 21st instant, as to whether the Railway Commissioners are prepared to meet a deputation at Wellington from the society you represent, I am directed to say that the Commissioners are willing to do so. They will be obliged by your naming a date when it will be convenient for the deputation to attend.

The Commissioners would like it to be understood that this should not be held to imply that they withdraw their invitation to the railway employés to send delegates to Wellington from all parts of the colony at an early date.

I have, &c.,
E. G. Pilcher, Secretary.

No. 11.

The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants to the Railway Commissioners.

Sirs,— Christchurch, 28th May, 1890.

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your Memorandum 1315, under date 23rd instant, which has been duly considered by the Executive.

In reply, I am instructed to inform you that a deputation from the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of New Zealand will be prepared to meet the Commissioners on the 16th June next, to consider the points at issue as set forth in the society's communication to you of the 27th March last, dealing with the questions of boy labour, apprentices, unskilled labour, cadets, hours of labour, and piecework.

With regard to the remarks in the latter part of your communication—viz.: "The Commissioners would like it to be understood that this should not be held to imply that they withdraw their invitation to the railway employés to send delegates to Wellington from all parts of the colony at an early date"—I beg respectfully to inform you that the employés have already decided upon the plan they intend to adopt to get their grievances brought before your notice, and seek to obtain reform; and the deputation from this society which will wait upon the Commissioners will be in strict keeping with the ruling of the employés.

I have, &c.,
W. J. Edwards, General Secretary, A.S.R.S.

No. 12.

The Railway Commissioners to the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants.

Sir,— 25th June, 1890.

In pursuance of the understanding arrived at during the recent conference with the representatives of your society, I am directed by the Railway Commissioners to recapitulate the decisions mutually agreed upon with reference to the proposals brought under notice in the letter from your General Secretary of 29th March last, namely,—

1. Boy-labour.

Apprentices.—The number of apprentices to be regulated in accordance with the request of the Executive Committee.

Where the present apprentices in any specific shop exceed that number, no more are to be taken on for two years, and if still in excess after that term one apprentice may be taken on for every three who leave.

Unskilled Labour.—That not more than one youth shall be employed for every four men among platelayers and workshop labourers.

That not more than one youth shall be employed in the Traffic Department to every four men, exclusive of clerical staff.

It is agreed that no youths under twenty-one, unless they have had three years' service, shall be employed as shunters in large yards or at important junctions.

Cleaners.—The age at which cleaners may be taken on to be from eighteen to twenty-one years, the pay, as per scale, to rise 6d. per day each year until it reaches 7s. a day.

Cadets.—Cadets shall be taken on as required, and they are promoted to clerkships after six years' service if eligible and if not previously promoted.

2. Hours of Labour.

Eight hours' continuous work is to constitute a day's work, as at present. Intermittent services are to be treated as the case may require, the following modified rules being adopted;—

Working-hours.

Workmen are required to work eight hours per day or forty-eight hours per week for the authorised daily wages. The regular hours of work are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on working-days, with one hour off.

Extra pay will be allowed to labourers and tradesmen for time worked in excess of eight hours per day, subject to existing regulations.

Locomotive-running.

Fifty-four hours to count as one week's work for a driver or fireman.

Overtime to be counted at the rate of time and a quarter.

Traffic.

Traffic employés generally will be required to work all trains on the advertised time-table without allowance for overtime. But, as far as possible, duties to be arranged to avoid overtime.

Fifty-four hours to count as one week's work for guards; overtime to be counted at the rate of time and a quarter.

GENERAL.

Half-pay will be allowed to employés suffering accident when on duty, if from causes beyond their own control, for the first three months, and quarter-pay for an additional three months.

As far as can be arranged consistently with economy and public convenience, in the case of employés generally the working-time is not to exceed eight hours per day, or forty-eight hours per week of six working-days.

Drivers, firemen, and guards will have the whole time counted from first coming on duty until finally leaving, except in cases where they are standing for more than three hours at a spell. Time standing for more than three hours at a spell will not be counted.

Special cases on branch lines, &c., where the limit of a week's work must of necessity be exceeded, will be treated on their merits.

The Commissioners will restrict all excessive hours of working, employing extra hands as a rule in preference.

The workmen as a general rule cannot be paid for the time going to or coming from their work, but in extreme and exceptional cases special allowance will be made according to the merits of the case.

PIECEWORK.

Piecework to be abolished, except in the case of such work as can be properly let by contract.

The new regulations will be brought into operation as from the commencement of next four-weekly period, the 20th July.

I have, &c.,

W. Hoban, Esq., President, Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, Christchurch.

E. G. PILCHER, Secretary.

APPENDIX.

PROCEEDINGS OF CONFERENCE BETWEEN THE NEW ZEALAND RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF RAILWAY SERVANTS.

MOMDAY, 16TH JUNE, 1890.

At 11 o'clock a.m. on Monday, the 16th June, the Railway Commissioners—Messrs. J. McKerrow (Chief Commissioner), J. P. Maxwell, and W. M. Hannay—were waited upon by the following deputation appointed by the Executive of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of New Zealand: Messrs. W. Hoban (President), W. J. Owen (Vice-President), F. Elvines, R. Winter, W. Haden, and W. J. Edwards (General Secretary).

Messrs. T. F. Rotheram, Locomotive Superintendent; J. H. Lowe, Engineer; and E. G. Pilcher, Secretary, were also in attendance.

The proceedings were opened by Mr. Hoban, who read the following statement: Gentlemen, permit me, as President of the Executive Council of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of New Zealand, to introduce to you the deputation from Christchurch—Messrs. Owen (Vice-President), Edwards (General Secretary), Winter, Haden, and Elvines. I should here like to correct an erroneous impression which seems to be implanted in your minds. In forming our union we had no desire to interfere with any employé's individual rights, neither had we any desire to raise difficulties between employer and employé. The railway men throughout the length and breadth of the land have felt for some time past that it was absolutely necessary for the protection of their interests, and to preserve the scales evenly-balanced, to have some channel through which to proceed, and for that purpose, and for their own social comfort, desired and formed a union amongst themselves. You must admit that their action already has been productive of good, because since the formation several grievances have been redressed, and several changes for the better have been effected, which have been conducive to the welfare of the employés generally. *Re* your correspondence, and your first communication, and with reference to society's rules, you will see it was quite impossible for the Executive to meet you on the matter, because the annual conference, held in February last, representing employés of the whole colony, had framed them, and further decided that no alterations should be made until the next annual conference.

Further, you will remember that you yourselves stated, in a subsequent communication, that they were for the most part fair and just, but should be framed so as to be consistent with the Act of 1887. But, gentlemen, they are not inconsistent with the Act, except so far that, if anything were attempted thereunder which would be unjust or unfair, or press unduly on the employés, the Executive, under its rules, would have power to call your attention to the matter or lay before you its injustice and, if possible, see it removed. It is not the object of the Executive to be antagonistic to the Commissioners, but, on the contrary, to create good-feeling between all concerned; and, whilst opposing any unjust treatment and redressing grievances, the Executive, at the same time, counsel obedience to superiors, strict attention to duty, and an honest performance of work. Further, it is quite evident if the union is properly managed a great benefit will be conferred on the Commissioners, because it will be the means of saving the Commissioners being harassed with frivolous complaints, and will promote a firm bond of unity between employer and employé, and you will then have a contented and well-treated body of employés, who will do more to advance the working of the railways to a successful result than a discontented lot. Before concluding, I would like to draw your attention to one matter. You will notice the majority of the deputation here are railway employés. Some people have tried to intimidate the employés by the remarks, "Oh, you go to Wellington, you will be marked." "Your wings will be clipped. The Commissioners may not do so directly, but indirectly through their officers." These remarks the Executive have treated with contempt, and placed reliance on your assurance as Railway Commissioners and as men of honour that the employés would not be marked, nor in the least prejudice themselves by attending as delegates, and accordingly requested the employés present to come here as delegates in order to see justice done to themselves and their fellow-employés. *Mr. Hoban* added: I deemed it necessary to make some explanation, and that is the explanation, so far.

Mr. McKerrow: Then I suppose the questions your fellow-deputationists wish to bring forward are those detailed in your letter of the 29th of March, relating to boy-labour, apprentices, unskilled labour, cadets, hours of labour, and piecework? These were the points specially touched on.

Mr. Hoban: Yes; but there is one thing I should say beforehand. We wish the Commissioners to recognise the Executive as the proper medium for the employés with regard to grievances. That is the first question we desire to put to you. We are only here as representatives of the Executive, and that is our first instruction from it to you. You will see it is quite evident that some channel is necessary. Hitherto the employés have dealt with the Commissioners, but you know as well as I do that there are any number of cases that have never been brought under your notice, where men received unjust treatment. We have considered this matter carefully, and I think it is to your interest as well as ours. We are only carrying out the wishes of the men, and, with the exception of very few, we have the whole of the men in the railway service in our society. We want to be recognised as the power to deal with these men, though, at the same time, we do not wish to act antagonistically to the Commissioners. We wish to work together, and do what is just for the service generally.

Mr. McKerrow: The fact of your presence here to-day, and our receiving you, is proof of our willingness to receive you on large questions regulating the relations between employers and employés; but, if I understand from your remarks that every one who has got a petty grievance, not affecting the general staff, must go to your Executive and act through them—if that is to come through you—we shall think twice before agreeing to it, because it would be a great hindrance to the administration of the department. I think it would be unworkable. If every individual case must come before the Executive, it would simply mean this: that there would be two sets of Commissioners. The Commissioners were really appointed for that very purpose, to see justice done between the heads of departments and employés: and there is a regular channel of communication leading right up to the Commissioners. Every other day, almost, we have communications from the workmen stating these matters, and we have also the statements of the officers; and it is upon these representations and statements that the Commissioners decide. But if such things are to come through another body, it would simplify the thing very much indeed if Parliament would at once appoint more Commissioners—appoint you Commissioners as well. It would be really a double set of Commissioners. But on all general subjects such as you have indicated in your letter we are extremely glad to meet you and take up general principles which regulate relations between employer and employed.

Mr. Hoban: When I said a proper medium, I did not mean that every little paltry thing should be included. A man may have a complaint: there is the officer. If he cannot get his redress there, he will come to us. We always impress it on our men that they must first complain to the officer, and then come to us if they do not get redress.

Mr. McKerrow: Before coming to the Commissioners?

Mr. Hoban: If a man likes to place the matter before the Commissioners, we cannot interfere with the employé. But we suggest that the correspondence should be through the Executive to the Commissioners.

Mr. McKerrow: I may tell you at once that we could not possibly agree to that, if that is what you mean? If an employé makes his complaint through the foreman and officers, and it comes to the Commissioners, and after they have dealt with it he still thinks he has a grievance, he can go anywhere he likes with it; we cannot interfere with the liberty of a person, and we do not want to interfere with what is right and due to him. But all our employés must first exhaust the arrangements of the regulations already provided.

Mr. Hoban: I do not mean in every case, but that if the man desired it it should come through the Executive, which is a proper medium. If a man likes to take his case straight to the Commissioners we cannot stop him—our rules do not prevent him; but I say we are the proper medium for him to come through.

Mr. McKerrow: We cannot agree to that.

Mr. Winter: If I might be allowed I should like to point out that a number of men are under the impression that when they applied for redress of a grievance, and the application went in through the officers above them, in any number of instances, in all probability they did not come before you. Indeed, we always advise every man to try to get redress through the proper channel —apply to his foreman, who would forward it to his superior officer, who, if he can adjudicate upon the matter, will do so, or else get instructions from the Commissioners; but, supposing that any application is repressed by the superior officer, who sends back that the application cannot be entertained, must the man write direct to the Commissioners? We are under the impression that we can only approach you through our officers—first, the foreman, then the officer above him, and so on; but there are so many ways and means of suppressing applications which might be obnoxious to officials that the possibility is that they would be suppressed. We think you ought to give us some means of redress if we cannot get it otherwise. We do not mean to say that a man should come direct to the society with a little grievance. Many a little thing brought before the Executive has been referred back to the man who brought it, or, through the secretary, we have laid the case before the officer. That has been our policy throughout. As far as appointing two sets of Commissioners goes, that is very keen sarcasm, I admit; but we have no desire to go contrary to the Commissioners in any respect whatever. We wish simply to facilitate the work of the Commissioners, which will obviate the Commissioners being worried by every little detail. If the case goes before the Executive they will first of all sit in judgment upon it and see whether it is worth while considering; if not, it will go no further. We do not wish to say "So-and-so must be done;" all we ask is that we should be recognised as a medium of communication between yourself and the employés, and as the medium for correspondence.

Mr. McKerrow: Regarding your statement about the suppression of grievances, it is not within the personal knowledge of the Commissioners that any such case has occurred. If so, the officer has placed himself in a most unfortunate position. Are you prepared to name any one who has done it?

Mr. Winter: No, I am not. I do not mean to say definitely that such a thing has been done. I only say it is the men's impression.

Mr. McKerrow: Well, I think it is a very false one.

Mr. Winter: Yes, it may be; but, on the other hand, it is equally possible that it is a correct one. It is within the range of possibility.

Mr. McKerrow: Anything is conceivable, but may not be within the range of probabilities. With regard to what you have stated, I go further and say it is not done.

Mr. Winter: Not as far as you are aware.

Mr. McKerrow: I am sure no officer would take upon himself to put himself in such an unfavourable position—so unfavourable to his own status and chances of being kept in the service. As an officer of thirty years' standing, I never heard of such a thing.

Mr. Winter: Well, we will assume such a thing has never taken place. It must be admitted that it might take place in the future, and all we want is that the men should have a proper channel.

Mr. McKerrow: I have already stated that the proper channel for the employé, and the one now provided, is through the foreman on to the Commissioners. If he fails, it is his matter where he goes afterwards with the case. With regard to your society, I see no objection to any one going to the secretary or president and taking advice; but what I want to make clear is that we cannot agree to your Executive being the first to receive official information, getting our officers before you to give evidence and statements, and taking up the whole matter and adjudicating upon it. It is taking up our functions. Bear in mind that the Commissioners are appointed for this purpose by Act; it is not an arrangement on our part; we work according to the statute-book. I could not agree to such a thing; it would show a want of knowledge on our part. Of course, if Parliament chooses to make a new Act and provide that as one of the stipulations, well and good. But in the present state of the Act we cannot make law—the law is there, we have to administer it.

Mr. Owen: I might say that the intention of the society, as far as I understand it, is, that we wish to express ourselves in this way: If a man has exhausted, or thinks he has exhausted, all his measures of redress of grievance, having gone through the proper channel, then that you would receive from the Executive or society a communication on that case, as the proper channel, if the man considers he has not received redress of his grievance, but only after he has gone through the proper channel.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes; I think that would be reasonable.

Mr. Edwards: That is really what we want. A man has a grievance, this grievance may be imposed upon him by one of his superior officers, and he (the person aggrieved) appeals against it to his superior officer, who may have done something against him for spite. Is it likely that that officer is going to refer it to the officer above him? It is against human nature. So that we can assume that the complaint will go no further.

Mr. McKerrow: I have already stated that it is not within the knowledge of the Commissioners that that is done. I asked Mr. Winter to mention a case, and he said he only thought it was possible.

Mr. Edwards: Well, we do not come here to bring forward individual cases, but to establish principles; and it is admitted that you know of no such case, and you are almost certain that no such case would occur. Then it would be nothing out of the way to accede to our request—that is, to recognise our society as a proper channel if every other means of redress is exhausted. We do not wish to put ourselves in the way of the Commissioners; but, as a society of railwaymen, every case that is brought up is well gone into, and we would certainly satisfy ourselves that every other means had failed before we took up the case. We should only injure our position by

doing otherwise. In cases where men having grievances, who have found every other means had failed, would you be prepared to accept any communication from our society—would you recognise the status of the Executive as the medium on the men's behalf?

Mr. McKerrow: As a sort of Appeal Court, you mean?

Mr. Edwards: Yes.

Mr. McKerrow: I have already stated that if men exhausted the means already available, and have not got satisfaction from the Commissioners, it is really their matter as to whether they will proceed further or not. If they think that the Executive of your society can assist them in any way, of course it is quite legitimate to avail themselves of that means of redress.

Mr. Winter: And you are fully prepared to recognise any statement that may come from the Executive?

Mr. McKerrow: Yes.

Mr. Hoban: I am very glad that little matter is settled. Perhaps I was not explicit enough in it.

Mr. McKerrow: I think Mr. Owen put it very nicely.

Mr. Hoban: Well, gentlemen, pursuant to your request, our Executive have conferred, and have sent up delegates to meet you. You have our programme before you. We thought it necessary to draw up something for your guidance, and we are here to give any information and answer any questions you may put. We trust that our meeting here this morning will settle everything to the satisfaction of the Commissioners and the employés.

Mr. McKerrow: You have copies of your letter of the 29th March?

Mr. Hoban: Yes.

1. Boy-labour.

Mr. McKerrow: The first subject you draw attention to is that of boy-labour. That includes of course, apprentices and all labour of boys?

Mr. Hoban: Yes; all under the same heading.

Mr. McKerrow: I would like to ask this question: What is your objection to the employment, or what you call the excessive employment, of boys and youths under twenty-one years of age? What do you fear from it?

Mr. Hoban: What we fear is this: That by-and-by there will be all boys in the railway-service, and adults will be thrown out on charity. You must recognise that since you took office numbers of lads have been placed on the railway, and at very low pay indeed. Lads of about nineteen years get 3s. or 4s. a day. We must admit that some of them are able to do a man's work, but they will never get to the proper wage, because they are started at 3s.

Mr. Hannay: A lad of nineteen gets 4s. 6d. a day.

Mr. Hoban: Well, boys are started at 3s. 6d., and these young fellows of nineteen, who have been three or four years in the service, are placed on the casual staff. I understand from the men themselves (I am not a railway-man myself) that no one will be placed on the permanent staff henceforth unless he enters under the age of nineteen. There are any number of men, casual hands, now on the railway who have been there for years, and have no show whatever of getting on to the permanent staff. Of course, matters of this kind I leave to my colleagues, as practical men. I am here simply as President of the society, and they will supply any deficiency.

Mr. Winter: We have the rate of pay here for boys. Boys of sixteen receive 3s. per day. Now, that is not the fact; it might be the intention, but it is not carried into practice. We have boys working at 10s. a week.

Mr. Maxwell: Apprentices, perhaps, taken on before this regulation of the Commissioners?

Mr. Winter: No, taken on since it came into force. If they had been taken on before this regulation their wages ought to have been raised by this time to a higher figure, so it amounts to the same thing, because the age increases the salary. According to the scale laid down here, in the second year they ought to get 3s. 6d. a day, but they do not. Unfortunately, the scale is not adhered to, and in Addington there are boys working for 10s. a week.

Mr. Maxwell: Mechanical apprentices?

Mr. Winter: No; rivet boys, for instance; boys working in the carriage-shop.

Mr. McKerrow: Of what age?

Mr. Winter: Nineteen: one I know of, who gets 10s. a week, unless he has been increased recently. I know there was some talk of increasing his wages. I can quote his name—Blazey.

Mr. McKerrow: But the work could possibly be done by a boy of sixteen years.

Mr. Winter: He has been doing a man's work at the drilling machine; but he has been doing the ordinary boys' work in the carpenters' shop. He has been in the service two years.

Mr. McKerrow: Is it characteristic of the whole arrangement?

Mr. Winter: I would not say it is, but it is a case in point.

Mr. McKerrow: Because this statement is what regulates the employment of youths. There may be some single case in which the circumstances do not apply.

Mr. Winter: Of course, it would take too long to bring up all the instances; I simply quote this as one of my own personal knowledge, by working alongside the lad.

Mr. Maxwell: Is it an exceptional case?

Mr. Winter: I do not think it is. I know that the whole tendency has been to give them as little wages as possible, and refrain from giving them the rises which are due to them according to this statement here. As far as possible, this has been evaded.

Mr. McKerrow: Is that so, Mr. Rotheram?

Mr. Rotheram: No; absolutely untrue. Blazey was eighteen years of age last May, and has received 15s. per week since April, 1889.

Mr. Winter: Well, we have the facts.

Mr. Rotheram: About a dozen boys were taken on before the Commissioners' scale of pay was issued.

Mr. Winter: But there is the fact of the Commissioners taking these youths on, and bringing them below the usual rate of wages.

Mr. McKerrow: I know in such a large department cases of the kind may arise occasionally. There are exceptional circumstances which do not come within the regulations, and I presume what you are now stating is one of them. However, Mr. Rotheram, the head of the locomotive department, says it is not at all the rule, and I am bound to take his word for it.

Mr. Winter: Well, on that point, of course, I only quote the case to show that the regulations are not carried out. We object principally to boy-labour because it has a tendency to elbow adult-labour out of existence. The work that is done and ought to be done by men will be done by boys. Although we admit that profitable employment should be found for boys, we think it should not be done to the detriment of the men. If some one must be idle, the boy or the man, it should be the boy, not the man, who has got to win the bread for the family. It is no benefit to me if my boy is working for 10s. a week if I am out of work. The rest of my family will simply be starving, unless I find employment somewhere else; and if the boys rush in in this manner it will come to this state of affairs: that the boys and women will have to go out and work, while the men stay at home to cook the dinner and mend the stockings. Men want to obviate that, if possible, and we are here to persuade you that the thing should not go any further, and that boy-labour should be limited to a certain proportion. We have fixed it in our letter, and if you can agree to that we may come to an amicable understanding right off. We are fully convinced that it must be fixed at such a proportion that it will not affect adult-labour. Adult-labour must not suffer to the extent it will unless this limit is made. If it is desirable that all boys should be employed, there are two ways of accomplishing that, two courses open: Either you must employ more men, and be allowed a greater proportion of boys (and if you want more men you must reduce the hours of labour); or there is another way, which does not come within the bounds of your jurisdiction, and that is to give proper facilities to people to settle on the land, and get the boys away from the workshops and railway-stations—give them employment at something more profitable, and in that way you will help to make the whole community better. With the present great surfeit of boys, we have come to the conclusion that boys are better idle than men, and we must ask you to limit the number of boys to the proportion laid down in our letter.

Mr. Haden: Following up the remarks of Mr. Winter. I am in the clerical staff, and in Lyttelton we have nine cadets to seventeen clerks (including the stationmaster). That seems a very unfair proportion, and what proves that it is so is that these young fellows, when they get to the maximum salary of a cadetship, £105, stop for two years at that. If they are any good at all they will have learned the trade during the five years, and be accomplished penmen, good at accounts, and so on; but yet there is not the slightest vacancy left for them to take up a superior grade. It really points to the fact that cadets are taken on in excess of the vacancies made by deaths or resignations. The next grade is £140, and that is not an extravagant salary for a man who has to keep up a respectable appearance, and possibly maintain a wife and family. He stops there about four and a half years. I do not think I need refer to it any more clearly; I just wish to point out that boys are taken on greatly in excess of the vacancies that occur. For £140, with a respectable appearance and position to keep up, is a poor lookout for a man if his ambition is limited to that; and then there is the fact that the young man must stop at £105 for two years and over.

Mr. McKerrow: How do you arrive at your proportion of one in four. On what principle?

Mr. Winter: I must admit it is more a speculative principle than a firmly-established basis. If you find that the number is not answerable, there is not the slightest doubt we should be prepared to meet you. But, so far as we can gather, other societies at Home and in Australia adopted that, and we gave them credit for having tried that system and found it satisfactory. We thought it advisable, therefore, to try it here, and if we find it is not answerable, if you find you cannot train up a staff to meet your requirements by it, we shall be willing to alter it.

Mr. McKerrow: I may tell you at once that the principle which regulates the department in this matter is to appoint cadets, apprentices, and youths just sufficient to keep up the supply. There is no intention on the part of the Commissioners to oust adult-labour, as you seem to imply. So long as the adult workman is efficient and conducts himself properly he will not be ousted to make way for young men. In the mechanical and locomotive branches it does not follow that the Commissioners can find a journeyman's place for the young man. The apprentice, when he goes into the shop, goes to school, as it were, to learn his trade. We do not at all undertake to find work for them when their time is up. Now, taking the thing in a very general way, in the traffic and general department we have some 1,553 employés, for which, under your proportion, we should have 388 boys; but the actual fact is that we have only 327. In the permanent-way and works we have 1,703 employés, and your proportion would give us 340 boys, but we have only 91 under twenty-one years of age. In the locomotive and running department there are 488 employés, which, according to your proportion, would give us 97 boys, whereas we have only 81. In the mechanical shops we have 798 employés, for whom we could have 196 boys, while really we have only 181; so that in every case we are under what your maximum fixes. But I should like to say that, practically, we are agreed upon that point; your limit is so wide that we are not likely to exceed it; but we do not want to bind ourselves by a cast-iron rule that no more than this proportion shall be in any one shop or department. The thing would hardly work. We are quite agreeable, however, to do this—take this as a sort of directory to guide us, knowing full well that, on the principle we have been working on, to keep up the supply of workmen, we shall not exceed it. At the same time, we should not like it to be laid down as an unalterable cast-iron rule that we must not in any case overstep it. Let me point out to you that a great many things come into consideration. At Invercargill, for instance, two or three very

eligible young men may come forward there to be trained as mechanics, or to go into the department. There may be vacancies under the proportion at Dunedin, but you must admit that it would be extremely undesirable to take lads of such tender age away from their homes. In such a case we would have to overstep the limit. But over the whole department—supposing we could put all the departments under one roof—we could carry this out to perfection and keep within it; in fact, as it is, keeping the whole of our men together, we are within it. Mr. Hannay has just drawn my attention to the fact that under your scale we may have 1,021 young men, but we have only 680.

Mr. Elvines: That may be right enough, but the reason why we really want the boys to be proportioned to each department is, that in any particular spot they shall not over-run the number of men. In the mechanical department you really have a larger number of boys in proportion to the men in any one particular shop. Well, the men in that shop are in duty bound, if they act as men, to teach these boys their trade, and the boys are expected to learn their trade; but it is really impossible that you can teach the boys their trade with so few men, and it is a great injustice to bring boys up to a certain age with their trade unlearned, and then throw them out into the world to get their living as common labourers, after spending the early part of their lives in getting an education. The education of these boys should be perfected, and I know that it is not. Some of them are kept on as improvers, at the rate of perhaps 1s. a day more than they had as apprentices. You must see that that is really unfair to the men and the boys to be compelled to work with men who are not getting the wages. This is a great reason why we wish the number of boys in any one shop or department to be restricted to one to four—that is what it amounts to; and when they are out of their time, if they really have not been taught their trade—which is a great injustice—we do not object to your continuing one in four as an improver. That really gives you a proportion of two to four; but of course we could not expect improvers to keep on very long at the low rate of wages in our own department.

Mr. McKerrow: What is your department?

Mr. Elvines: Works. In our department we have had some young men who served their time there, and many of them have gone out into the world again, and had to take work at reduced rates. After learning their trade outside, which they should have learned in, they have come back and got full wages. Some of them had the manliness to go out who were not getting full men's wages, and try something else—young men of twenty-five, some of them married. That is the injustice to the boys; you take them on, and you have to turn them out into the world without learning a trade. That is what we want restricted in the department.

Mr. McKerrow: You mean in each workshop?

Mr. Elvines: In each workshop or department. Take the fitters or blacksmiths at Addington: in the fitting-shop the boys are really excessive; and we know for a fact that down the line from Ashburton to Culverden, and the branches, the cadets there number twenty-eight to forty-three. That is a far larger proportion of cadets than there should be; and some of them are full-grown men, and married. This is where we say there is a great injustice: you get them, as you say, to keep up the supply, and make use of them in the end to reduce the staff, because you put a cadet, who should be getting a higher salary if he has served three or four years, on as a clerk or stationmaster. That is, we want a certain proportion agreed to. We do not ask you to restrict the cadets to any certain place—we know they must be spread all over the line—but the workshops are the principal places where we want the proportion curtailed. And our proportion is far more liberal than in most trades. Boilermakers only allow one boy to five men, shoemakers one to five, and so on; but we give you the opportunity of taking two boys to four men, three to eight, and so on. You see, we have been very liberal, and you say you leave a large margin; but what we contend is this: that all the boys are put into one place. If you could spread them out we should not object; and that is the point we want you to concede to us.

Mr. Edwards: You have 680 boys, I understand?

Mr. McKerrow: It is hadly fair to call them boys, although all are under the age of twenty-one.

Mr. Edwards: Well, they are getting boys' wages: that is why we style them boys.

Mr. McKerrow: They are not getting full men's wages.

Mr. Edwards: By the arrangement we propose you would have 1,021 boys, and that would be considerably to the advantage of your department; therefore nothing would be lost in agreeing to our request. In the Addington fitting-shops at present you have twenty-five apprentices and seven improvers to forty-eight mechanics. It is only within the last year or two that the proportion has been so great. In the boilermakers' shops there are seven apprentices and six improvers to nineteen mechanics, a proportion of five to twelve; in the tarpaulin shed, four boys to fourteen men; in the carpenters' shop, five apprentices, seven boys, two improvers, to twenty-nine mechanics; and in the painters' shop, seven boys to ten tradesmen. That is an instance that the proportion of boys to men is too large, and apt to prevent a great number of men earning a fair wage. Then, the boys are men, many of them, so far as age is concerned, but get boys' wages. That is how it affects us; and it would be greatly to the advantage of the department to alter that, because you would have a larger number of boys, and they would be distributed. When boys are found in large numbers in any one shop it greatly affects the wages.

Mr. McKerrow: Would you have the boys paid off in the Addington shops, for instance?

Mr. Edwards: Where these things occur. We do not expect it to be done immediately; it is a matter of time.

Mr. McKerrow: You expect us to work in your direction?

Mr. Edwards: Yes; if you agree to what we request, we depend on the Commissioners seeking to bring the proportion within the limits we have arranged.

Mr. McKerrow: I have already stated that we see no practical difficulty, only about the distribution, and I have tried to explain that. In regard to your remarks, I quite differ from you in this

respect: you seem to think it is necessary to have a certain proportion of men to teach the lads their trade. I know a little about trades, and my observation has been this: that the best workmen often come from the smaller shops, where they have to exercise their ingenuity to get over difficulties, and are not assisted so much as in the large shops. In the large shops everything goes on regular scale lines, and the opportunities for the apprentice to try his ingenuity and skill are fewer, and so are the difficulties. He is proficient probably in a particular line, but is not generally so good a workman as those from the smaller shop. I have observed that both in the Old Country and out here.

Mr. Elvines: But you are bound to teach an apprentice his trade, not one particular branch of it; and perhaps that particular shop is the only one in the country where he could learn that branch. You see the fitting-shop, the locomotive engineering shop, and so on, are so very different that if you teach the boy one branch in that shop the chances are that if he has to leave that at the end of his term he could get no opportunity of earning a living elsewhere; and the consequence is that he has to go to Australia, to get a job in that department he has been brought up to. Every boy should be taught his trade thoroughly throughout, so that he can go and earn his living wherever he has to go. That is the reason why we contend that the number of boys should be limited to the number of men, and we give you a very large proportion compared with other trades.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes; there is some force in your remarks.

Mr. Winter: The very fact that you do not apprentice these boys particularly to employ them as journeymen tells against the undue proportion of boys employed. Boys are rushed into the shops at such a rate that the officers are compelled to make them do labourers' work, and the only branch the boys really become proficient in is that of a labourer. There are twenty-five apprentices in the fitting-shop at Addington. What do they do the whole day? Simply carrying the work to and fro, and using the ratchet and drills—labourers' work! They are kept at that for two or three years, and in the last two years, perhaps, put at a better class of work, when there is no time for them to learn it. The consequence is, when the boy's time is up, the department is glad to get rid of him. At Addington the other day a boy got notice the day his time was up, simply because they could not keep him. But who was to blame that that boy did not learn his trade—that he was not able to go and earn his living?

Mr. McKerrow: But perhaps there may be some deficiency in the boy himself.

Mr. Winter: Unfortunately all the boys are in the same way. We find it every day.

Mr. McKerrow: Do you bear in mind that by law we cannot have apprentices over twenty-one years of age?

Mr. Winter: Oh, yes.

Mr. McKerrow: Well, of course, there is a great deal for a man to learn after twenty-one.

Mr. Winter: Yes, we quite agree that he should stay on as an improver, but that should be limited. At present boys are kept on as improvers for four years. They apply for more money, and the answer is, their "application cannot be entertained at present." Now, these young men who have come to man's estate, should, in reality, be married and have families.

Mr. McKerrow: Are they good workmen?

Mr. Winter: Yes; fairly good workmen, or they would not be kept there, even as improvers. Now, we simply acknowledge and recognise the fact that this is an indirect way of reducing wages. You can fill that shop with improvers and foremen—improvers as good as men—and the department has this benefit: that it only pays improvers' wages.

Mr. Maxwell: That hardly bears out your contention that we are not educating lads properly, and, on the other hand, if they are being turned off unfit for the work at the age of twenty-one, it hardly bears out the statement in your letter of 29th March, which says that the excessive employment of boys and youths prevents adults from getting employment. If the boys put into the shops are turned out at twenty-one not competent fitters and mechanics, that does not appear to support your argument that we are supplanting skilled labour by these lads?

Mr. Winter: You will supply skilled labour by the process of improvers. The improver will supply the man's place.

Mr. Maxwell: But I understand that the argument you have been using does not apply—that we employ a number of boys who at the age of twenty-one are turned out as not being competent workmen.

Mr. Winter: Yes; turned out so badly that you will not keep them.

Mr. Maxwell: But they do not get into the service and act prejudicially to those who are within it. Your complaint is that the boys, as they grow up to manhood, are to supplant the men in the skilled-labour field; but, according to your showing now, these boys are not being turned out skilled mechanics, and therefore cannot supplant them.

Mr. Winter: That is not exactly the case as it is represented. We say that boys are doing work adults should do, as far as skilled labour is concerned, and that they do work which labourers should do on the apprentice line, and there again interfere with skilled labour.

Mr. McKerrow: I should like to ask you, Mr. Rotheram, if the apprentices do not get a fair opportunity of learning the trade?

Mr. Rotheram: If there is anything in the boys they get a fair opportunity of learning their trade. It depends on what is in the boy; you cannot drive it into him.

Mr. Elvines: In answer to Mr. Maxwell, I should like to say that when a boy is turned out of the Addington shops, or any other, not a fully competent journeyman, having served his time, Mr. Maxwell says that has not a tendency to reduce wages; but if that boy has moderately learned his trade, and is turned out from the shop in which they had agreed to teach him his trade incompetent to take a position as a journeyman, he goes out into the world, and there reduces the rate of wages among men. I really think it is a disgrace to any body of men who would foster such a thing in a young and growing country like New Zealand.

Mr. Owen: With regard to the locomotive department—cleaners—the Executive think that the age of cleaners should not be less than eighteen and firemen twenty-one. It is a very awkward thing to get a lad on an engine with you to go out, say, on a goods-train. We think twenty-one years is quite young enough for a lad to turn fireman as a rule, and that the pay of a lad or cleaner when he reaches the age of twenty-one, or verging on it, which is supposed to be man's estate, should not be less than 7s. a day. That is according to the scale of pay that was in vogue.

Mr. McKerrow: Five shillings and sixpence a day.

Mr. Owen: I mean previous to that being issued. I do not think you will find it an unreasonable request. To clean an engine is dirty work, and ruins the boys' clothes, because a boy would do it as much with his clothes as with his hands. Another thing is that you do not treat all the boys alike in your service. Take the boy in the traffic department, you give him a suit of clothes; in the cleaning department you give him the same pay, dirtier work, and nothing extra. This work is so thoroughly dirty that the boy of sixteen, who ought to be at school, cleans his engine with his clothes instead of with waste, which he does not know how to use—in fact, he is too young altogether. And you see you handicap the boy in the locomotive department by giving him the same pay as you give another lad who is employed in a clean capacity. Those boys are not fairly treated, and we would impress on the Commissioners that the age of a cleaner should be not less than eighteen years, and that of a fireman not less than twenty-one. I think 7s. a day for cleaners at the age of twenty-one is nothing more than reasonable.

Mr. McKerrow: Your suggestions will be considered.

Mr. Maxwell: I suppose you know it has never been the practice to put on men as firemen under twenty-one years.

Mr. Owen: It has been done.

Mr. Maxwell: It must have been very rare.

Mr. Owen: Well, there are instances of it. I do not say that it is made a practice of.

Mr. Maxwell: I do not think any one could ever have intended to make a practice of it.

Mr. Owen: No, but it has been done.

Mr. Rotheram: Only under great emergency.

Mr. Owen: It is all very well, in the interests of economy, to cut things very fine, but sometimes they are cut so fine that there are very few men about, and that is why that question cropped up. It has been started, and that may be the thin end of the wedge. I do not say it has been done with Mr. Rotheram's sanction, or that of the head of the department; but there are many things done, I assure you, that the heads do not know anything about.

Mr. Maxwell: I do not think there should be any difficulty about keeping up the ages of firemen, and cleaners too. Our former regulations made the age seventeen; sixteen is too young. I think, in a general way, if any one has been put as a fireman under the age of twenty-one it has been a mistake, or done under very great pressure.

Mr. Rotheram: Only in cases of great emergency.

Mr. McKerrow: I think we shall be able to meet you there.

Mr. Elvines: And with regard to cleaners?

Mr. McKerrow: Yes; I think that is very reasonable.

Mr. Hoban: In New South Wales they will not take a cleaner under the age of eighteen years. Of course it is very evident that when a young fellow goes into an engine-shed it is dirty work; and there can be no question work of that kind should be given to men, who are able to stand greater hardship. I am told it is very hard work. Boys may do it after a fashion, but they ought to have somebody to look after them. The traffic department object to boy-labour being employed in shunting, which is very dangerous work; and we refer you to the decision of the jury in the matter of the boy recently killed in Dunedin.

Mr. Maxwell: He was not a shunter.

Mr. Hoban: This is what we have received from Dunedin. I do not know it of my own knowledge, but I simply put it before you as what we have been informed. In Dunedin, in the smiths' shops there are eleven adults and twelve boys; in the fitting-shop, nineteen adults and nineteen boys; and in the boilermakers' shop, five men and six boys; and in the painters' shop the proportion of boys is three to two. Boys and apprentices are all counted together, evidently. If this is so, it is manifestly unfair.

Mr. Maxwell: Do you know what the nineteen adults are in the fitters' shop—are they nineteen fitters?

Mr. Hoban: That I could not say. I simply give you the information as I got it.

Mr. Haden: There is a clause in our letter of the 29th of March relating to cadets: "It is deemed necessary that there shall not be a greater number of cadets in the service at any time than one to every three stationmasters and clerks, and that any person having served five years as a cadet shall be rated as a clerk, and receive his salary accordingly." As I pointed out, the lads are taken on at £30 a year, and go up, by increases of £15, to £105.

Mr. Hannay: £110 now. It has been £110 for two or three years.

Mr. Haden: Well, I have got a list here, and I have spoken to these young fellows, who told me it was £105 they stopped at.

Mr. Hannay: Yes, but they started at £50.

Mr. Haden: I am told that they are paid as I say, and get £105 when they arrive at maturity.

Mr. Hannay: Yes; but they started at £50 a year, not £30.

Mr. Haden Well, that is immaterial; but in these cases they stop at £105. If they do not it is not too much to say that they have got a friend at court that gets the increase for them. Our letter asks that when they have served five years they should be rated as clerks, and paid accordingly; and, as it takes them five years to get to £140 a year, when a young fellow will be about twenty-five years of age, I think if the man has not proved his worth for the salary by the time it

is a cruel kindness to keep him in the service. At present if one man is not competent another one has to bolster him up and keep him going. It is manifestly unjust that those who can do superior work should only receive the same pay as those who are manifestly lacking. It is not a great concession either to ask for, that they shall receive £140 when they have concluded their apprenticeship. It will take four years.

Mr. Hannay: No, it will take three years.

Mr. Haden: Then they stop an indefinite time at £140. I do not come here to state my own personal case, but I am familiar with it, of course, and it is in point. I have stopped now four years and a half; I have asked my superiors for a rise, and I am told I could not get it because four or five men are getting £180. When you take into consideration that it would take four years to reach that maximum, I do not think we are asking too much. Of course you will understand I am not pleading my case, but simply stating it as an instance.

Mr. Maxwell: Quite so. Did you serve your cadetship in the service?

Mr. Haden: No; I came on in Mr. Back's time.

Mr. Maxwell: But you did not serve as cadet?

Mr. Haden: No; but I served in the Old Country, and I think that is as good.

Mr. Maxwell: I do not call in question your qualification.

Mr. Haden: I think they should go up by annual increases. It is evident that the staff has to keep the work of a certain station going, and if they are dovetailed in (those who are incompetent with the competent men) it stands to reason that the competent men are bolstering up the incompetent ones. If a cadet has not got the necessary mental capacity he had better seek another field of labour, instead of living by the superior endowments of his fellows.

Mr. McKerrow: In all large services only a few can come out at the top; many must be in the rank and file. What you point out happens in all classes. No doubt a competent man may be found in the fourth class—a man who may be more capable than the head of the department; but the fact of the matter is this: he joined the service and cannot overstep others, and it is a case of wait. It is very trying, no doubt, to yourself and others in the lower grades, but there is no help for it. Length of service, efficiency, and so on, must count. Mr. Hannay might make a few remarks on this subject, with which he is familiar.

Mr. Hannay: I have nothing special to say, except that I do not take the same view as Mr. Haden as to taking too many cadets, or that the outcome of the work shows that we have too many. As a matter of fact—and this would answer Mr. Elvines' complaint as to country stations—every stationmaster in the country needs a lad. He does not need a man, though, as a matter of fact, we keep the lad on until he gets the salary of a man; and therefore it is not that we have too many lads, but that we are really paying lads a much higher salary than is justified by the work they are doing. Instead of a lad at a country station doing a man's work, as a rule, though he may be getting £105 or £110 a year, he is only doing a lad's work. With regard to Mr. Owen's remark about shunting, of course we do not allow a shunter in charge of a yard to be a boy. He laid great stress on young men not being employed as shunters until they are twenty-one years old; but it is something like what applies to the cleaners—we would never put a man into a large yard in charge of shunting unless he had had very great experience, and I do not imagine that it is the case.

Mr. Owen: It is not so much the case in yards as in the outside stations. There are junctions and stations where the stationmaster has to remain on the platform, and he has to be responsible for the actions of a lad shunter, and you have lad shunters at these outside stations who have to turn trains in on junctions, and the stationmasters feel aggrieved at having to be held responsible for the actions of these boys. A boy should not have control of a pair of points where a train may be turned over on its side.

Mr. Hannay: I do not agree that no one under twenty-one years of age, or who has not had two or three years' experience, should hold a set of points.

Mr. Owen: And act as shunter.

Mr. Hannay: But they are not, practically, acting as shunters. Now, you, as a driver, would rather go to a station where there is a lad with a year or two's experience shunting than where there is a man off the streets.

Mr. Owen: Yes, I should think so; but I think twenty-one years of age is reasonable for a man to begin to order others, because it simply means that the driver of an engine takes his orders from the shunter, and in some instances the boys or lads make themselves very obnoxious. One man can say a thing to another—for instance, you could say something to me, and I would go away quite contented, not in the least hurt; but somebody else might say the very same words and I might feel very sorely cut, and you know boys will be boys ——

Mr. McKerrow: Bumptious?

Mr. Owen: Yes; —— and, instead of speaking courteously as one man would do to another, actually bounce men, and it is rather hard for a man who has reached man's estate and got boys of his own older than the one talking to him to be bounced by these boys.

Mr. McKerrow: Certainly. But we are quite against the idea of having boys at that responsible duty as a regular thing in the large yards. In the junctions and little country stations, however, it would be very expensive to have a man there, where a lad could do the work. I think that is what Mr. Hannay wants to bring out.

Mr. Owen: In some instances boys have taken the places of porters and shunters, and have caused derailments.

Mr. McKerrow: Unfortunately, derailments happen with men as well.

Mr. Owen: Yes, but men look out; if it occurs with lads it may be on account of carelessness.

Mr. Hannay: This last month or two half a dozen have occurred, and not a boy concerned. If there had been it would have been blamed on him, I suppose. They were all experienced men.

Mr. Maxwell: There is a great difference between employing a boy as a shunter and employing a boy at a country station to hold the points for an hour or two in the day. There is a difference between a shunter in a busy yard and one at a country station where the train comes through once or twice in a day.

Mr. McKerrow: I am sure Mr. Owen, with his practical experience, recognises that.

Mr. Owen: I think the age of twenty-one should be established. You see, the boys who are doing this work at the present time have replaced men. That will bear out the argument of my colleague here, that the boys are pushing men out of the service.

Mr. McKerrow: But many men have to be paid off.

Mr. Owen: I do not wish to infer that, but that they have been removed—a man has been removed and a boy taken on in his place.

Mr. McKerrow: But was it the practice formerly that a man was associated with the station-master?

Mr. Owen: Yes.

Mr. Maxwell: Where there is a man's work there is a man. Men have been taken away where there is no work for them; but we do not put boys to men's work, nor do we wish to put a man to do a boy's work.

Mr. Hannay: A lad porter is frequently appointed at the request of the country people.

Mr. Maxwell: A lad porter does many things. His work is various, and one of his duties may be for ten minutes in the course of a day to hold the points; but that is not shunters' work in the sense we understand it generally. We could not keep a man at a station for a quarter of an hour's or ten minutes' work a day. He would be useless for the rest of the day.

Mr. Owen: But in the case I have in my mind's eye there has always been a man there, and now a lad is doing the work—that is, he turns trains in, wagons, and so on; and when you get in in the dark with sixty wagons on a train, and the boy is there handling that sort of thing, I think you will admit it is rather beyond a boy's capacity, unless he is an extraordinarily good one.

Mr. Maxwell: But what age do you speak of?

Mr. Owen: Under twenty-one.

Mr. Maxwell: Many boys of nineteen or twenty are as good as men, for the matter of that.

Mr. Owen: Train a lad up in a big yard, and when there is shunting to do there a man of twenty-one is quite young enough.

Mr. Hannay: But you do not seem to recognise that in country stations all a lad would have to do would be to hold a set of points occasionally. There is no particular danger at any junction down your way, for instance. You would not debar a lad at a country station because it was a junction?

Mr. Owen: Take Rolleston, for instance. The points there are a considerable distance from the station, and the lad has to go there to turn the branch train in. In many instances I have seen a lad turn a big train in with one hand, and I assure you it makes one feel something here [in one's breast] to see him standing so carelessly.

Mr. McKerrow: At all events, we are with you in this, that shunters ought to be experienced before they are intrusted with important points. We go with you there.

Mr. Maxwell: I wish to mention to you, with regard to what Mr. Haden said about cadets and their pay, that cadets are taken on not under fourteen or over seventeen years old, and the cadet is very fairly paid. £110 a year is enough for a young man to live upon. I do not see that cadets have a grievance, and, if they have to stand at the sum mentioned for a year or two, compared with young men in banks and insurance offices, and so on, they are fairly well paid. Young men of nineteen to twenty-one years who are getting £105 or £110 have enough to live upon.

Mr. Haden: You have rather mistaken the point of my contention. As lads they are paid very well; but my contention is that they have to stop at that after learning their trade—at £105 or £110—and they are put into the work of a man who has been getting £140, while the £140 men go into the place of men who have been getting £180. There is a man getting £140, and doing work for which his predecessor got £180; and, perhaps, boys are put in to do the work of the £140 man. So that it does bring down the wages. A man resigns who has been getting £180 for a number of years. No appointment is made in his place, but a man is put into the position who gets £140, and has perhaps been there three or four years. His predecessor got promoted to £180 on the strength of his predecessor having that amount; but this young man has to do the same work for £140 on the strength of which work his predecessor was promoted to the second rank. That is where these boys cut down the wages to take men's places.

Mr. McKerrow: But the £180 man had gradually worked up to that?

Mr. Haden: Yes; but what I want to point out is that the young man is at the maximum of the £140 class. I told the man I am referring to that I thought he had a very good case, and that he would get it if he applied to you, seeing what his predecessor was paid because he had to do that work. That is where I say the employment of boys cuts against the wages. I do not say that a young lad is put into a man's responsible position at once, but it gradually amounts to that.

Mr. Winter: I would draw your attention to the fact that in the workshops boys are put on at unskilled labour at a low rate of wages. The height of a labourer's ambition is to become a machinist, and if he is a good man, attentive to his duties, and shows average capacity, he ought to have the opportunity of getting a machine, and consequently an increase of pay. Unfortunately, it is not the case. We have boys here who are not put to labouring. If we are going to have labour cadets, let them start at the bottom, at labourer's work, prove their efficiency, and run the chances of every man getting a machine in time. Then we have boys put to labourers' work and at a machine at a very low figure. Machinist's work is not very laborious, and, physically, a boy may be able to do it, but that boy would require a mechanic to look after him, whereas a man come to years of discretion does not need any one to look after him—he knows that if he does not do his work

properly he will be hauled over the coals, fined, or dismissed. Our contention is that non-skilled men ought to start at the bottom, and get a machine in course of time; and that when one is put to a machine his wages should at once be raised to those of a machinist. At present every man put on a machine remains at labourers' wages. If we wish to fire a man's ambition to rise as high as he can rise, he must be assured of having benefits when he shows his capacity. If we are good workmen as labourers, and become machinists, we should know that we shall also have machinists' money; but for a long time past that has not been the case—boys have been put on machines, and labourers who have got machines have worked them at labourer's wages. The old answer has always been, "We can't give you a rise at present."

Mr. Hoban: I think, gentlemen, we have gone into the subject pretty deeply. I do not know when you propose to give us an answer.

Mr. McKerrow: Not until after the interview is over. After the report is written down in manuscript each gentleman will have the opportunity of looking over it, as to its correctness and otherwise; and it is just possible that reading it over may suggest something one would like to bring forward. As to boy-labour, we are practically agreed upon it. We cannot follow all the details you have brought forward—it is difficult to follow them all through, but the principle is pretty well established between us—that we will restrict the boy-labour—in other words, will not flood the workshops with the idea of superseding men whom we may call skilled workmen.

Mr. Elvines: But would you restrict them to the proportion?

Mr. Maxwell: Yes; we are under the proportion now.

Mr. Elvines: But in the particular shops?

Mr. McKerrow: I tried to explain that also; that it would be inconvenient to confine it to each particular shop. There might be, as you seem to have evidence to show, a great deal over it at Addington and Hillside, but it is just possible that the other shops may be less.

Mr. Elvines: But you can control them.

Mr. McKerrow: There is a good deal of force in what you say. If there are too many apprentices they only stand in each others way. I think, if you leave it in our hands, we will work it in a reasonable way, and this discussion will help very much to carry it out. The interchange of opinions will have a very good effect. For myself, I acknowledge I have had a good deal of information that I was not possessed of before. But I should not like for us to part in any undecided understanding that we should have a "cast-iron rule," which must not be infringed.

Mr. Elvines: We have pointed out that our allowance is a more liberal one than in other trades. If you take that into consideration you might give us the "cast-iron rule."

Mr. McKerrow: Well, I will ask Mr. Rotheram; he is the gentleman who works the mechanical branch. I apprehend there would be no difficulty in it if the deputation keep within the limit they have assigned. They have stated very reasonably and fairly that they do not expect us immediately to recognise it, but to work towards it.

Mr. Rotheram: We can do it quite easily if the whole of the shops are combined, but we cannot do it very well if we take each individual shop.

Mr. McKerrow: But we can keep it as a principle to try and work up to. I do not think you can ask us more.

Mr. Elvines: Well, we make you a very liberal allowance.

Mr. McKerrow: There is a difficulty in the smaller shops, not in the large ones.

Mr. Winter: Regarding Mr. Rotheram's statement, if it is practicable in the whole of the shops, why not in any one? Our letter states that we are quite willing that the smaller shops shall have one apprentice, and only one additional apprentice to every four men.

Mr. McKerrow: So that with five men there are two apprentices?

Mr. Winter: Yes.

Mr. Elvines: And one improver.

Mr. Winter: We do not want to run any risk whatever, but we realise that if we want to keep our positions as workmen we must limit the number of boys.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes; I think we understand each other, and I promise we shall work towards it. Will you leave it in that way?

Mr. Elvines: But we may leave it, and you will go beyond it.

Mr. McKerrow: But you must remind us.

Mr. Edwards: If you recognise that as the proportion, do all in your power to come to it, and accept the society to point out these matters to you, I think there is no difficulty.

Mr. Maxwell: With reference to cadets: one to every three stationmasters would not work in practice. The stationmaster at a country station requires a lad. We cannot put a man to do a boy's work.

Mr. Elvines: We class stationmasters and clerks together. The boys could learn their work with the stationmasters at small stations, and when they are sufficiently advanced be drafted into the goods-sheds as clerks. I think you will find, if you work it out as we have done, that it is really a thing you can carry out very well. Instead of having a large number of boys in the offices in the large centres you have them in the small stations, and when they come to the age of clerks you draft them back to the goods-sheds as clerks.

Mr. Maxwell: I think we shall have to work in the opposite direction. As far as my experience goes, it is not convenient to send the boy to the country station where his parents do not live. In most cases we draw our cadets from the towns, where they live with their parents. When they have learned their duties they are sent up to the country stations, but we cannot get lads in the country as a general rule.

Mr. Edwards: The apprentices and unskilled labour are in a different position to the cadets. We do not say they must be in that proportion in every station. There are plenty of stations where a great number of clerks are employed, and when you come to put these stationmasters and clerks together you will find that leaves plenty of boys for the stations you speak of. The proportion of cadets is taking the service as a whole.

Mr. Hannay: How do you arrive at this proportion as a reasonable number? I think you know that the reason we have these cadets is to train them to the work. I mean, how do you arrive at the conclusion that that is a proper number? You must bear in mind the cadets are not like apprentices; we are really taking lads for the service who may be all their lives in it; and, speaking from experience of twenty-five years, I say there is no other way of training a man to railway work. All railway corporations have come to that conclusion—that you must take the lads and teach them their business—and we certainly take no lads that we do not want to have as men. We do not pay them off when their time is up, and one of the greatest difficulties we have had is this: that a dozen years ago, when we could not get lads to train, we had to take men who had not the necessary experience, and could not be trained like lads who are learning their trade, and are not such good railway men. I have a strong opinion on this matter—that in the railway business, as in all others, you must learn it.

Mr. Haden: My contention is that there seems to be too many of them. When they have finished their time they stop at that. I cannot swear to it, but instances have been given to me as facts where cadets were kept two years at the one rate. That points to the fact that when they have arrived at maturity—when you have trained them up—you are obliged to keep them two years stationary because you have not got vacancies. It shows you are in excess. In Lyttelton, as I mentioned, we have nine cadets, and when an extra clerk is wanted to tally at the ship's side one of the cadets walking about looking for a job is sent, and takes a man's place. Had there been sufficient work he would have been drafted away as soon as there was a vacancy.

Mr. Maxwell: In many cases young men are not promoted from cadetships because they have not done their work satisfactorily, and have not improved so as to be fit to be promoted. They must stop until they are fit to be promoted, though there are not very many of these instances.

Mr. Haden: Even so; that points to what I said—that it is a cruel kindness to keep some of them on—and if they show these faults while they are actually learning their trade I do not think they will improve. The greatest kindness to such a boy would be to tell him he has mistaken his vocation, and let him apply elsewhere.

Mr. Maxwell: You think he ought to be discharged at once?

Mr. Haden: I think so. I think it is cruel to bring him up to a trade which his disposition shows he will never get on at.

Mr. Maxwell: That is a matter of opinion; we must always use discretionary power. It does not follow because a lad has not behaved himself while he was growing up that he will be vicious and bad as a man. Every lad must have a chance.

Mr. Hannay: You will find in actual experience and practice that the parents and guardians of these lads, and the lads themselves, would feel very much aggrieved if we were so hard as you think us. We have got the name of being hard with the men, but you would have us whip them with scorpions.

Mr. Haden: I was replying to Mr. Maxwell.

Mr. Maxwell: In many cases lads who have completed their cadetships are promoted immediately. There are wide differences between men.

Mr. Haden: I can only speak of those who have come under my notice. I never saw anything like that.

Mr. Maxwell: Have you ever been in charge of any cadets yourself?

Mr. Haden: No.

Mr. Maxwell: Well, those who have been in charge must be the judges.

Mr. Hoban: I think the proportion is a very fair one. If a young fellow at £105 is shifted on to do higher work, and does not get higher pay——

Mr. Hannay: Not necessarily.

Mr. Hoban: Well, it does happen, I know, because the young fellows have told me, and I have made inquiries and found it to be so. As Mr Haden says, an instance happened only the other day, and that was in one particular spot. There are instances all over the colony. We say one to every three stationmasters and clerks is a fair proportion—that is a third, and I do not think that is unfair.

Mr. Hannay: No; only a fourth.

Mr. Hoban: Yes; a fourth. I do not think it is unreasonable.

The Conference adjourned at 1 o'clock and resumed at 3.

Mr. Hoban: With respect to boy-labour, have we any understanding between ourselves as to what you intend to do?

Mr. McKerrow: I thought we agreed before we left off that we would see all the report in manuscript—or print, which would perhaps be better—so that each one could look over what he had stated, and if he wished to make any further remarks he would do so. So that, for the present, we leave it at that stage, until you have seen the printed report.

Mr. Hoban: Yes; our business here is to see this matter settled.

2. Hours of Labour.

Mr. McKerrow: As to hours of labour, we have before us what you wish to be adopted.

Mr. Hoban: Well, that is what we say should be adopted. Of course, we do not care to go into instances which we might quote to show whether the thing is fair or not. We know long hours have been worked, but we do not want to quote instances of men who have been working fifteen or sixteen hours a day, because we know it has been done. We want to have some universal system established, and suggest that the eight hours system be adopted on the railways, as in other places.

Mr. McKerrow: Do you mean by eight hours, from the beginning until the man finishes off—from his going on up to his coming off? There are engine-drivers and firemen, for instance: do you mean eight hours work? They sometimes work ten.

Mr. Hoban: If you ask a driver to go on at 8 in the morning, and he is away from his home, and does not return until 8 at night, we expect that he should be paid for the time he is away. A man in a private firm, if he goes away on a journey, is paid for that. You may keep a man standing, but you are keeping him here. He may not have anything to do for a time, but you are keeping him on duty, and he ought to be paid. Take a driver, for instance: he stands a certain time, but if anything happens to his engine during that time you will suspend him or dismiss him. If a man is held responsible, why should you not pay him?

Mr. McKerrow: I quite admit the force of what you say. The present arrangement is this: that this work of driving and standing, and so forth, is intermittent work; it is not continuous work like that of a blacksmith, a carpenter, or a fitter. It is not of such an arduous nature; and the department hitherto has deemed the day to be ten hours, and any extra has been paid for time and a quarter, deducting in some instances standing time, because it does happen in some instances —branch services—that there is nearly as much standing time as running time. This is the regulation: "As far as can be arranged consistently with economy and public convenience in the case of employés generally, the working time is not to exceed eight hours per day, or forty-eight hours per week of six working days. In the case of locomotive drivers and firemen, the working time is as far as practicable to be limited to ten hours a day, or sixty hours per week of six working days. Men engaged on intermittent services who are paid extra for overtime, as in the case of drivers and firemen, will not have their whole time counted from first coming on duty until finally leaving, but only such time as the officer in charge may in each case determine may be fairly counted as working time."

Mr. Hoban: Do you, as a Commissioner, think that it is a fair regulation?

Mr. McKerrow: I think it is, if it is fairly applied.

Mr. Hoban: You mean to tell us that if a man—an engine-driver—goes on at 8 in the morning, and is away all day, returning at 8 at night, you consider that a fair day's work?

Mr. McKerrow: You know before you engage that the exigencies of the service require that time. I have several services in my mind at this moment which it is only possible to work by the driver being on duty sometimes twelve hours a day. If it were otherwise, supposing there was an unalterable rule that the man should only work eight hours a day, we would actually require to send a special train to bring the man home at the end of that time, and find another man to take his place.

Mr. Hoban: That would be absurd. But if you keep a man on from 8 to 8 you should pay him: that is our contention.

Mr. McKerrow: I will show you how that would work. It is only in the branch services that these long hours are required. Take the time as fourteen hours. The engine-driver and fireman only work six hours, say; their off time is seven hours. On the main line, say an express run, which requires men of greater experience, this run will be perhaps eight hours, and he has no standing time at all; but this man, who does the most important work, would be paid 12s. for eight hours; the other man, on duty fourteen hours, would be paid 8s. for eight hours, four hours at time and a quarter, and two hours time and a half. He would be paid two days' wages as against a more important man's one day.

Mr. Hoban: You are proceeding on the basis of paying according to work done.

Mr. McKerrow: No; I am taking it on the basis of eight hours on duty constituting a day's work, and showing how it will work out.

Mr. Hoban: Yes; but the other man will only be at work eight hours. The standing time ought not to be stopped: that is the fault of the locomotive department.

Mr. McKerrow: Take a common-sense view of it. The public must be served. We simply say standing time is not work, and we are not going to bring such an inequality into the service as to pay a less experienced man more than we pay the experienced one. It is quite true that the man is away from his home and his wife and family, and is deprived of his liberty for a time, but there is a little allowance made in respect of that occupation of his private time. It is alleviated in this way in many services: that we alternate the fourteen hours a day with the six hours man. That is done. A man will put fourteen hours in on Monday, but on Tuesday he will only work six. At the week's end his work is sixty hours intermittent work.

Mr. Hoban: I understand exactly what you mean. If a man only works six hours a day, if he is on duty fourteen, he should only get his pay for those six hours. We say that is wrong. If I employ a man, and leave him to sit in that corner all day long, I have got to pay him.

Mr. McKerrow: It depends on what arrangement you make.

Mr. Hoban: If I employ a man in my office he may be only working two hours, but he has got to be there all day; if I want him at any time I can call on him, and so I must pay him. It is the same with the drivers, you can call on them any time you like.

Mr. McKerrow: But we give them what you call in your profession a retaining fee. The man gets 12s. a day because, before he enters the service, he knows that this is one of the conditions of it. Take a domestic servant, she begins her work when she rises, and is not done until she goes to bed; but she is not working all the time, though she is there to answer the bell, be at the beck of her mistress, and so on. So with sailors.

Mr. Hoban: But sailors have certain hours or watches; and, then, their ship is their home.

Mr. McKerrow: If a man stands at a station for four or five hours we do not see that it would be fair to pay him full wages for that time, and, moreover, pay him time and a quarter and time and a half, according to your proposed scale.

Mr. Hoban: Then, I infer this from your remarks: that, although you keep a man standing fourteen hours in a certain place, though he is not doing any work, you would only pay him for a day's work.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes. The next day he would only work two or three hours.

Mr. Hoban: Well, we remedy that by saying the men shall work forty-eight hours a week. We do not care how it is made up. If a man is on fourteen hours to-day and ten to-morrow, that is twenty-four. But to say that a man shall work fourteen hours a day, we do not agree to that. We have thought this matter out in all its bearings, and we have consulted large employers of labour in Christchurch and elsewhere, and they all agree with us that this is right, and, moreover, they say they could see their way to working it. What is to prevent you allowing a man to go home after doing his forty-eight hours' work? Instead of getting 3 per cent. profit on the railway you would let the people spend it amongst themselves. Instead of one man getting a lot of overtime, let him spend it among the community, many of whom are living on charitable aid at the present time. Do not think I am putting this in an antagonistic spirit. I am simply putting it in a fair light. I have spoken, as I say, to competent men on the subject, and there is no reason why an evil which has existed for years should not now be redressed.

Mr. McKerrow: Is it an evil?

Mr. Hoban: If you keep a man staying at work for fourteen hours a day, and that is not an evil, what is? If any fair-minded man, or the public, say it is not, the railway service will not say it is.

Mr. McKerrow: But the man only works four or six hours next day.

Mr. Hoban: But in Christchurch they do not do that. Of course we do not mention names.

Mr. McKerrow: I may tell you, with reference to the fourteen hours' man I mentioned, the driver got his 12s. a day and 2s. 9d. per day extra, in consideration of partially standing and extra duty. His pay was 14s. 9d. per day for the month of March last.

Mr. Hoban: Well, I assure you I could give you instances that would make even the Commissioners blush, and you would be surprised at such instances. I have the men's sheets before me, and I know of instances where men have earned overtime, and for perhaps twelve hours have received a couple of shillings. We do not wish to mention any of the men by name. We desire to go on a broad principle. The eight hours' system has been recognised everywhere, even by the great Emperor of Germany; and when we find employers all over the world taking up this principle, I think it is time we in the colonies took it up. We do not want our men to be oppressed.

Mr. McKerrow: Notwithstanding the disabilities under which you think the drivers are placed, the men themselves are very glad to get this opportunity of serving the department, and they prefer the longer day of fourteen hours to the short one.

Mr. Hoban: I do not wish to contradict that statement, but I can assure you we have correspondence with the different branches—and we include nearly the whole of the railway men in the colony—and I do not think that throughout the whole length and breadth of New Zealand you would find that so. Of course, if an individual driver is asked by his foreman, "What do you want?" it is not likely he will tell him, because the men have been afraid to speak their minds.

Mr. McKerrow: It is a great pity that they should be.

Mr. Hoban: Well, it is an acknowledged fact, I can assure you. You are under a wrong impression, for the drivers are prepared to work eight hours, and do not want to make overtime. They do not want to make money. They say, "Give us eight hours a day, and, if you want twelve hours a day, pay us overtime;" but what they want is that, if you desire men to work sixteen hours a day, you should give eight to them, and employ some other man for the other eight.

Mr. McKerrow: I will ask you this question, Mr. Rotheram: Is it not a fact that the men prefer the overtime, so far as is known to you?

Mr. Rotheram: It is a fact throughout the colony.

Mr. Hoban: The Sweating Commission which went round the colony sat at Christchurch, and the evidence then given would have surprised you. These men stated facts, and they would tell you now that they prefer the eight hours. Although the foreman speaks what he thinks is right, I assure you they do want eight hours, and do not care about the overtime. I speak of what I know; I come into contact with these men.

Mr. McKerrow: I do not doubt that, but your information is different from ours.

Mr. Hoban: We who mix with the men are in a different circle. You, if you will allow me to say so, are on a high pedestal. When the men have a grievance naturally they come to us. Suppose they went to Mr. Rotheram and said, "We want eight hours a day." He would say, "Who are you? The service cannot stand it. Certainly not." They know they are in that position.

Mr. Owen: With regard to eight hours, it has been adopted by some railways, and I say what has been adopted we in New Zealand surely will not be behind. It was quite different years ago. I can remember well enough when it was "eight hours' work, eight hours' play, and 8s. a day." Eight hours is constituted a legal day in the colony, and why should it not be adopted in all departments? I can remember when ten hours a day was adopted for the drivers and firemen on account of the intermittent services, and they were paid two hours extra to make up what was considered an equal day with the man working eight hours. But those days have gone by, and we are progressing. Eight hours has been adopted in other countries.

Mr. McKerrow: What do you mean by "other countries"?

Mr. Owen: Other railway countries.

Mr. McKerrow: England?

Mr. Owen: Well, we came out here to better our position, and when we left England we left Old-Country associations behind. No doubt we all came out here—or some of us did—to better ourselves, and we would rather leave the Old Country behind us in this as we did when we got on board ship. I think it is hardly fair to introduce that now.

Mr. McKerrow: I thought of England as the great railway country.

Mr. Owen: There are bigger railway countries than England. Do you know what they are doing in New South Wales, compared with our request? There they ask for 120 miles to be paid for

a day's pay, passenger-trains, the first twenty-five miles after that to be paid as a quarter of a day, and the next twenty-five or fraction of twenty-five to be paid as another quarter. If I may be allowed to quote an instance, we run from Christchurch to Oamaru with the express: if you pay that by what I have said the New South Wales men are asking for, you would pay a day and a half for that 153 miles. But we are not asking that; we do not want anything unreasonable; we simply want what we think is a fair thing; if it is not fair, we leave it to any one else to say so. We only ask for a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, in keeping with the progress of the times. In New South Wales they want 90 miles with a mixed train or goods to count as a day's work; the first twenty miles after that to be paid for as another quarter, and the next twenty or fraction of twenty as another quarter. If you will follow me, that is 130 miles for a day and a half. We ask for nothing of that sort. We do not ask you to raise our wages, and you will admit that on the other side of the water, which is not so very far off, the men are more highly paid.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes.

Mr. Owen: With regard to intermittent time, it is not stopped elsewhere. You have quoted England, but it is not stopped there.

Mr. McKerrow: But the English service is very different from a colonial one—in this respect, that there you are able to employ a man all the time, and there is very little stopping time: here we have so many branch-lines that intermittent service is forced on the management; we cannot help it.

Mr. Owen: No doubt it is reasonable to a certain extent. These lines have not been built on commercial principles, and certainly it is very difficult to run them on commercial principles.

Mr. McKerrow: I am glad you admit that.

Mr. Owen: We can all acknowledge that, and see that the difficulty of your position as Commissioners is mightily enhanced thereby. A railway in England is built more as a commercial transaction, and run accordingly. Out here the railways have been built to a certain extent by politics, and partly, no doubt, to open up the country and obviate the necessity of making roads. Of course, it is very difficult to make a dividend or profit from such lines. We recognise the difficulties, but the difficulties do not undermine the principle, which is, a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. We do not ask you to increase the pay, and I think you will admit that we are not overpaid compared with men on the other side of the water. I have here an engine-man's sheet from New South Wales, where a man runs five hours ten minutes, stands five hours fifty minutes, has an hour (which the Commissioners have admitted is a reasonable time) to prepare his engine for the road, that totals up to twelve hours (This is a tramway sheet: tramway-men are not paid at the same rate as the men on the railway-lines), and he receives for that twelve hours one day and a third. You will notice that they stop nothing for standing. The same thing in America. We can show instances there where a man working five days of eight hours in the week receives £36 for the month's work. We do not ask for any of these big things, but we are to a certain extent unselfish. If overtime is required then employ another man. We would rather that, in place of paying a man a day and a half for a long run, you should employ another man and pay him.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes, I understand.

Mr. Owen: We do not ask you to increase the pay in any way at all; we are prepared to let it go as it is; but we want you to allow us some little time. I dare say you gentlemen have read "Looking Backward"?

The Commissioners: Yes.

Mr. Owen: Well, we would like to have a little time with our families. It is not a nice thing being away so much.

Mr. McKerrow: I have explained that this is arranged by the man having time off. If he has a long run, he runs five days a week, and has two days off.

Mr. Owen: But I think you will find, if you make inquiries, that there is not much of that.

Mr. McKerrow: The men do not like time off, I am informed.

Mr. Owen: I do not want to gainsay any statement; I simply state facts, and you will find we shall be well satisfied if you give us what we ask—not an increase, but a fair day's pay and a fair day's work—and you will have no grievances or grumbling. We will all do our best, as far as possible, in every item—as must be done in a large concern—and try to push the thing along to a paying point. I should like to ask the Locomotive Superintendent, through you, if his locomotives are not run as economically, and if the men do not do their work as well, as in any line that he can quote in the world—and that is a big thing to say. If you go over our running, there is a statement of work for the month; you compare that with your first-class lines in any part of the world, and I think you will find that we stand favourably in comparison with the running expenses per mile. The smaller the wheel the greater the speed, we know—or, rather, the greater number of revolutions there must be, and the greater the wear-and-tear. Piston-speed is the thing that kills the locomotive. Thus we run harder, the wheels run quicker per mile, than on other lines; and, consequently, to a certaint extent the expenses may be expected to be higher. But I think you will admit that they compare favourably with other parts of the world, which, with all due respect and credit to the officers at the head of departments, proves that their staff endeavour to second their efforts to run the thing economically.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes. I know we have an excellent lot of men. We all admit that.

Mr. Owen: If you take that into consideration, and take all the points that can be brought to bear, you will earn a name from posterity for yourself. You will find that the general public are with us on this question—that all over New Zealand eight hours a day should be considered a day's work. One member of Parliament even went so far as to say he would make it seven hours before long, but of course that is beside the question.

Mr. McKerrow: That is "looking forward."

Mr. Owen: We wish to look forward. Of course, platform utterances are not to be taken as genuine: they are catch-votes; but I think eight hours a day ought to be established. The

Emperor of Germany, as my colleague says, has agreed to that, and taken the matter up, and no doubt he knows best why, but the fact remains that he has done it. And we all know that there is a general movement in this direction all over the world, that eight hours' work shall constitute a day.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes, that is the point. What is the eight hours' work? Standing still is not work.

Mr. Owen: If you send a carter out with a dray for a load of cement: he goes to the store, and has to wait his turn there—it may be an hour, it may be half-an-hour, or more. You would not think of stopping that man's time?

Mr. McKerrow: Certainly not, for one day; but if I should employ a carter for every one of the 313 working days of the year, and he had to stand each day waiting an hour or two, I should make some arrangement with him. I should say to him beforehand, "You will have this time off; that I expect you to make up. For anything that I know, you may be asleep in your cart; at all events, you are not working, and what I require is that you give me a fair day's work for a fair day's pay." That would be a matter of common understanding.

Mr. Owen: Now, in regard to locomotive men, I do not wish to press hardly on any of my superior officers, but there is a column in our sheets where one shows his shunting and running, and standing. I think Mr. Rotheram will bear me out when I say that although an engine may be standing the man may not be. In some instances, a man is cleaning his engine, or, in the case of a branch man, coaling, and so on. There are many cases in which men have to clean as well as to coal, water, and oil their engines; so that in the time that is booked as "standing" the engine-man may be at work. When the engine comes in, the man has to move it to the turn-table, go to the water-column, take water, and coal, clean his fire ash-pan and smoke-box, &c., before he goes into the shed. I think every one will admit that coaling, and so on, is work, not play.

Mr. McKerrow: Is there any allowance made for this, Mr. Rotheram?

Mr. Rotheram: Yes; it is all reckoned in the day's work, and an allowance is made for this kind of thing. The matter Mr. Owen refers to is that of the men in Christchurch, who have been in the habit of putting down "Shunting" when they were not shunting, and it has made the returns all false. It made no difference to their pay.

Mr. Owen: It was never intended to book the returns falsely. It has simply been the practice since the railway was a railway, and it has been always done up to the present time. In this particular day's work, the engine was moving, and was considered as shunting by the men. There was no column to show the work in, and consequently it was entered in the shunting column. It was no gain to the men to show it, but they considered it only fair to the engine, and to the men, as the engine was moving. That brings up another matter, which is, that the engines are not credited with the amount of work they do, as compared with other parts of the world. We are only allowed six miles for shunting, and—the practical gentlemen present can speak to this—I think that in other parts of the world ten miles an hour is allowed, and in some cases twelve. If you watch an engine shunting you will see that six miles is a very moderate allowance. If an engine in a big yard was only working six miles an hour, we should very soon have the officers wanting to know what was the matter.

Mr. Maxwell: That does not affect the pay.

Mr. Owen: No; it is only brought in by Mr. Rotheram's remark. That is all I can say in the matter. We do not want to bring in particular instances if we can possibly avoid anything of the kind. We do not want to create feeling in these matters; we want to live as a happy family if possible, and we would like you to assist us to do that, if you can only see your way clear, by establishing the principle of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. Make eight hours the day's work. You will not be alone in doing that. You are not stepping out of a straight line, but you will be doing what has been adopted on other railways, following in the steps of others in the old countries and the new ones.

Mr. McKerrow: I am new in the department, but, as I understand it, ten hours was fixed, and the wages accordingly, some time ago after careful consideration, and if we must drop that, for eight hours it might mean a proportional reduction of wages, though it would come to the same thing as regards the actual payment of the men. If we make such a great concession, giving the same wage as at present, it would very much increase the cost of the service to the country. However, I will call on Mr. Maxwell, who is *au fait* in these matters, having devised the regulations under which you have been working, to explain them.

Mr. Owen: Compare the service with New South Wales and Victoria, and see the pay in those colonies. You speak of lowering the pay for eight hours; but compare our pay with what they are receiving on the other side. Contrast a man going on and doing six hours' duty from the time he goes on with his engine until he comes away, and receiving £1 for that, with what you pay. We have not asked for anything like that, which is a fact on the other side. A man goes on there and runs an express train: he runs, on mileage, 150 miles, which is a day and a quarter, at 16s.—that is £1.

Mr. McKerrow: There are some of our services where an engine-driver only does thirty-six miles a day. I have a case in my mind. How would you arrange that?

Mr. Owen: That is, going by the hours.

Mr. McKerrow: Then, you would apply the mileage in one case and not in the other, where it will suit the employer?

Mr. Owen: Even in England there are pilot-engines that never turn a wheel during the day, but the man gets his pay: he stands the whole time.

Mr. McKerrow: But let us confine ourselves to the New Zealand service. Supposing we take your plan of paying by mileage, how would you pay this man?

Mr. Owen: I do not quote it as a plan, but only to show what is paid on the other side.

Mr. McKerrow: I thought you said it would be fair if we had the same here.

Mr. Owen: No; we only ask eight hours a day. You will equalise the thing in that way. Take the Oamaru run, which I quote as familiar to me. There are dozens of others where the same principle of a long run and short hours comes in.

Mr. McKerrow: That is a six hours' run from Christchurch to Oamaru.

Mr. Owen: That is the running time, but it does not include getting the engine ready and putting it away. Of course, that is all time occupied.

Mr. McKerrow: Of course.

Mr. Owen: Then, according to the Victorian or New South Wales' principle, you would be the gainer, would you not?

Mr. McKerrow: Yes.

Mr. Owen: Take the other man, who only does the thirty, and curtail his hours.

Mr. McKerrow: I am very glad you mention the words "curtail the hours." That is quite impracticable. He runs down from a country station to the port or main line, and stays there, simply because the traffic will not admit of more trains than one down and one up. Therefore he waits all the day, and takes his engine home at night.

Mr. Owen: I can see you are quoting extreme cases.

Mr. McKerrow: Say what you like, Mr. Owen; the more candid you are the better for me.

Mr. Owen: Well, the expense of running that engine back would not be very much, and it might induce traffic.

Mr. McKerrow: Not in the case I am thinking of.

Mr. Owen: Well, I am not in a position to judge; I am only a working-man.

Mr. McKerrow: But you are a very intelligent one, though. It is just as you say, the railways run into the country to develop settlement in it. There is a certain amount of stuff to go through on a line, and I think you will admit a train would not increase it.

Mr. Owen: In some cases the trains are rushed (though I do not wish to criticize the management in any way). The traffic in some cases is so light that, as you say, it does not pay to run the engine back. Might not that engine run three days a week, start later, and catch the second train

Mr. McKerrow: Then you infringe upon the public convenience, and the Commissioners know by experience what the result of that is. If you diminish the convenience of any country district in the least there is a great clamour and complaint. In fact we have only just had to rectify a case of that sort. The thing that the Commissioners have really to consider primarily is the convenience of the public, and we must all subordinate our wishes and feelings to that.

Mr. Owen: Certainly. The other remedy is that you should have a third man to relieve the driver and the fireman each two days in the week; of course it would not work in all cases.

Mr. McKerrow: That is done in some cases; it is what is called a three-legged service.

Mr. Owen: I am only quoting what is done in some cases, and in many it would cover the difficulty, in other cases it would not; but I think if the expense were taken all through it would not be very much out of the way.

Mr. McKerrow: It would be very great. Although I have not gone into the thing minutely, I find that to carry out what is stated here in your letter would mean an extra cost probably approaching £25,000 a year on engine-drivers and firemen alone. If eight hours was adopted generally for intermittent services it would mean about £50,000 a year. That is a very serious affair, and we have to bear in mind that this £50,000 is to be paid by the people in the way of taxation. The railways are not paying the interest that has to be remitted Home; so that, whatever we may think about it, it is for Parliament to consider the matter. Parliament votes the money, and we have to make the best disposition we can of it. Parliament looks very closely over the estimates, and for the last few years it has been trying—and very properly, no doubt, looking at the circumstances of the country—to reduce them; and it will be a very serious thing if we have to propose such a great increase as I have named.

Mr. Owen: I cannot say I am in a position to make any statement about calculations, but I think you are on the safe side, sir—a long way on the safe side.

Mr. McKerrow: What would be your estimate? I may help you by saying there are about 260 engine-drivers and firemen.

Mr. Owen: In many instances their time does not exceed it, or they would be worked not to exceed it, and no extra hands would be wanted at all. I do not know how the estimate has been got out, and I do not wish to question it in any shape or form, but no doubt it has been taken exactly as it is standing now.

Mr. McKerrow: I worked out one case myself. A man is on fifteen hours a day, and "stands" a great deal of that time; but he was paid 14s. 9d. a day for the month of March last. Applying this [the society's letter of the 29th March], his pay would have been 24s. 9d. per day.

Mr. Owen: But we do not ask you to apply that and pay overtime. We thought the thing out, and I assure you it has cost a great deal of trouble to get it out, but we have satisfied the men all through the length and breadth of New Zealand, and what we want now is forty-eight hours a week. You can run a man sixteen hours a day, if you like; but we ask for forty-eight hours a week, and eight hours off duty.

Mr. McKerrow: Take your own illustration of what I have stated. It would simply mean that, if we adhered to the eight hours and no extra pay, we should have two sets of firemen and drivers. One would do the first three days of the week and the other the next three days.

Mr. Owen: But if you paid the man for the hours he is on duty, how much more would that add to it?

Mr. McKerrow: It would just double it.

Mr. Owen: But if you pay the man time and quarter for his eight hours?

Mr. McKerrow: The man actually averaged nine hours forty minutes' what is termed "work" per day, but he was allowed about two hours forty minutes extra, overtime, and was paid time and a quar-

ter, so that his pay came to 14s. 9d. a day. But had he been paid for the fourteen as you suggest—that is to say, eight hours for the day, time and a quarter for four hours, and time and a half for two hours forty minutes, his pay would have been 24s. 9d. per day; and the fireman would also have to have proportionate increases. The difference per month is that in the one case £30 was paid to the engine-man and fireman, and under the new scale it would be a little over £50. In your case you say the man would prefer eight hours and no overtime. I say that would simply double the expenses, because we would require two sets of men.

Mr. Owen: In that one instance.

Mr. McKerrow: Well, it is a typical instance, because it is not at all exceptional. This is a case of a branch-line running down to a main-line.

Mr. Maxwell: Have you any limit to put to the day's work, the number of hours per day, in a general way?

Mr. Owen: We simply ask that the man should not be asked to go on duty again until he has had eight hours' rest.

Mr. Maxwell: But what is the extreme limit you allow a man to work in the ordinary way—the extreme length of the day? You propose eight hours a day, but you are also proposing they should work overtime. What is the largest day's work you allow a man?

Mr. Owen: We leave that to the Commissioners. Forty-eight hours a week is what we stipulate. They work it in Sydney, and give the man eight hours off.

Mr. Maxwell: There are four questions involved—What is the greatest number of hours per day a man should work, what number of hours constitute a day's work, what number of hours of this intermittent work should constitute "working-time," and what shall be the rate of pay. As to the first, are you going to run the man fifteen or sixteen hours.

Mr. Owen: Yes, provided you work him only forty-eight hours in the week.

Mr. Maxwell: You let him work any reasonable number of hours per day.

Mr. Owen: Yes.

Mr. Maxwell: You only limit it to forty-eight hours per week? The second question is what should be the number of hours per day that constitute a day's work, and you have answered that you say eight. Now, I have listened to you, and you have been referring specially to drivers' time. Of course, this is a large question that you are on. Eight hours' continuous work is recognised as a day's work, but that does not apply to intermittent work: eight hours is a day's work in the shops, and eight hours' continuous work is recognised all round. But the intermittent services—those of drivers, firemen, stationmasters, and some other employés who work time on and take time off—are different. Do you propose to have all those men who work intermittent services paid on eight hours a day, the same as those who are working continuously?

Mr. Owen: I was speaking principally with regard to drivers and firemen.

Mr. Maxwell: But I want to get to this question. Do you want us to make the intermittent workers who work broken time count eight hours a day as if they were working continuously? They have many intervals in which there is nothing to do. Are you proposing that the time for those men shall be reduced to eight hours a day?

Mr. Owen: It has been done in some stations in this way, that some go on at a certain hour, others come on later, and so on. Before that, the men would be working ten or eleven hours a day.

Mr. Maxwell: But what is the general principle you demand? I do not want to ask about what we are doing or what we may have altered. Is that the general principle you want us to adopt—that intermittent workers are to be limited to eight hours?

Mr. Owen: To a great extent that is the principle. By re-arranging the work many intermittent workers could be kept continuously at work.

Mr. Maxwell: That does not affect the question. We must have a very large number of men who are on and off during the day, and you are proposing that these intermittent workers shall only have eight hours, the same as those who are working continuously—such as mechanics in the workshop, and so on?

Mr. Owen: It is for you to employ the men.

Mr. Maxwell: But I ask, is it a general principle?

Mr. Owen: Perhaps some of my colleagues would like to answer you.

Mr. Maxwell: There is the blacksmith, he works like a nigger for eight hours. It is different with the porter at the station, who only works an hour or two together throughout the day, with five or six trains passing in and out. It is just the same with the stationmaster. He is made to reside at his station, as a rule, and some of them go on at six in the morning, and are off and on at different times during the day.

Mr. Hoban: We want them all to be treated the same. When a man goes on to work, you are keeping him there all the time. You give him a couple of hours off, but you practically keep him going all day, and that is what we say is unfair. The service could be so arranged, I think, that a man could do his eight hours' work properly, and not impair it a bit. With regard to this £50,000, if the 3 per cent. you folks have saved had been placed in the direction we indicate, the public would not have blamed you a bit, because they would have seen you were relieving men who deserved it. The public are with us from one end of the colony to the other—the Maritime Council, the Trades and Labour Council, they are all with us. Every member of the House and every right-thinking man will say that eight hours should be a day's work; and, if the Commissioners like to apply the money they have saved in this way, these people would not blame them at all. If the Commissioners persist in not giving them relief, you will find it will be very hot work before the session is over. Of course, understand I do not want to threaten at all, but I am simply putting what is the fact.

Mr. Maxwell: Yes, that answers the question. It does not matter whether it is broken time or whether the man is working continuously—you apply the principle to all classes.

Mr. Hoban: That is the instruction we received from our Executive.

Mr. Maxwell: That it is to be for all classes?

Mr. Hoban: Yes.

Mr. Maxwell: How can you do that without increasing the cost of working?

Mr. Hoban: It may increase it for the present, but by-and-by the men will be so contented with it that it will come back to you again. At the present time the men are very dissatisfied, and a great number of things are lost to the colony. If they could be relieved, there would be a difference in many things you do not know of.

Mr. Maxwell: You spoke of the Trades and Labour Council. I see by the newspapers—and I suppose it is correctly reported—in connection with the tramways running here there has been some difficulty, and the Trades and Labour Council has claimed that the tramway drivers shall work 66 hours a week, for which they are to be paid £2 5s. Now, that is a very great difference when compared with what we have been demanding from our drivers, who get £3 to £3 12s. for 60 hours. I mention that because I noticed it, and think that the Trades and Labour Council realise that broken work should not be treated on the eight hours' system. It has never been the practice to treat it on that system, and it is pretty well recognised by the outside public that it should not be so treated. For instance, I understand if we brought an engine-man on duty in the morning and he had to run a train, and was taken off, and put on again in the evening, you would consider that he was to be paid for all the time he was booked off?

Mr. Hoban: We say that from the time he is booked on till he is booked off he should be paid.

Mr. Maxwell: If a man goes to a country station where there is a room for him to wait in, and he is booked off, you will surely not say he ought to be paid for his whole time?

Mr. Hoban: You will very seldom find that a man gets a room to wait in. Take Culverden: if you send a man to Timaru for two hours, you would book him off two hours and let him roam about Timaru?

Mr. Maxwell: Not necessarily; but where a man has to "stand" six or seven hours, and then has to take his engine back, you say he ought to be paid for the time he is standing?

Mr. Hoban: Yes; I think you should pay him for the time he is away, as I pay my clerk for the time I keep him.

Mr. Maxwell: But do not you pay your clerk by the year?

Mr. Hoban: No; by the week. If he works over his regular hours he is paid overtime.

Mr. Hannay: You mean that there is to be no booking-off in the middle of the day?

Mr. Hoban: No.

Mr. Maxwell: You include stationmasters, porters, and all intermittent workers under that heading? The stationmaster goes on at 7 a.m., say, to see trains off. He leaves at 10 at night, and is to be counted as doing three days' work, or something of that sort?

Mr. Hoban: Of course there is a difficulty with regard to stationmasters, which had not struck me, and which I did not try to solve. But even they could be worked. In the country it is a very difficult thing, I admit.

Mr. Maxwell: How would you do it?

Mr. Hoban: I have never thought the thing out.

Mr. McKerrow: With respect to Mr. Maxwell's illustration, that a stationmaster starts at 7 and is there till 10 at night.

Mr. Hoban: If his work requires him to be about the station all day long, I should say he ought to be paid.

Mr. McKerrow: But he has a great deal of leisure time, which he can go and spend with his family if he likes.

Mr. Hoban: I admit that I am in a difficulty with regard to that.

Mr. Hannay: What about porters?

Mr. Hoban: Well, they are different; but, at any rate, my instructions are to demand eight hours for the whole of the employés. Little things like this would have to be arranged; but as to the men themselves, their hours can be remedied—there is no question at all about that. No doubt there are cases where exceptions would have to be made, but they are exceptional cases.

Mr. Winter: We acknowledge there is some difficulty about country stationmasters, which will have to be overcome by mutual consent. Our principal object is to establish the principle—eight hours a day or forty-eight hours a week must be recognised. But of course we have this fact: that the rule, if it is enforced, may be injurious to some employés—crossing-keepers, for instance. Therefore we say that in these cases, where we find it is not workable, we should have to come to a mutual understanding. If you say, "We will establish the principle of forty-eight hours a week, except that there are instances where it is not practicable," we should be queer men indeed not to say that you are correct, admit it, and give way. There need not be the slightest difficulty about that. But, as far as porters and stationmasters are concerned, there is a rule that men must give the whole of their time to the service, and not engage in any other work—if they do they are to go out. Now, if you claim a man's body and soul for the whole of the time, then you should be prepared to pay him, with the exception of a few very rare instances where it is shown to be impracticable.

Mr. McKerrow: These are not rare instances. The country stations are in a majority; there are not many like Christchurch.

Mr. Winter: We would make a concession immediately. We would be the very first to meet you. I cannot admit that porters are exceptions.

Mr. McKerrow: At country stations?

Mr. Winter: At any station.

Mr. McKerrow: Then, you would require two porters at each country station, because the train generally goes away in the morning and comes in at night.

Mr. Winter: But there is certainly a stationmaster, and in all probability a clerk and a cadet.

Mr. Hannay: No; not at many of the stations.

Mr. Winter: Well, there is one of them, and it may be possible to work the thing in between the two, who could relieve each other to such an extent as to bring the hours down to forty-eight. When the principle is established there will be no difficulty.

Mr. McKerrow: But we have established it already.

Mr. Winter: Not in intermittent work. We hold that if you claim a man's whole time you should pay him. You will not allow him to engage in any other employment.

Mr. McKerrow: Certainly; that is the rule in the whole Civil Service of the colony.

Mr. Winter: Well, then, you should pay accordingly. It should not be a question whether the railways are paying sufficient money. This is a State affair, and the duty of the State is to see that the people are happy. Working long hours is quite incompatible with the welfare of the people as a whole. Every man should have time for the recreation of his faculties, and for mental progress. We are all progressing—civilisation is progressive, and the very fact that we are here asking you to change the hours from something indefinite to forty-eight hours per week shows that we are progressing. We want to be better off than we have been.

Mr. Maxwell: In your particular line forty-eight hours has always been recognised?

Mr. Winter: I should like it to be understood I am not here to represent any particular line We are all here as a deputation from the Executive Committee to represent the whole.

Mr. Maxwell: Quite so; and you want the whole reduced to forty-eight hours.

Mr. Winter: Yes. Of course, it would be unfair for the workshop-men to say, "Oh, we have forty-eight hours; we do not care what the others get." We are representative, and it is not because workshops have eight hours a day that we should not try our best to get the other men's hours reduced to the same extent.

Mr. Maxwell: You wish time to be paid for irrespective of whether the men are working or not. You look upon that as the employer's business, and you say if he cannot keep them employed he must pay them nevertheless?

Mr. Winter: Exactly. You should see that every man's time whom you employ is fully occupied. You say that the exigencies of the service, and the public, demand certain things. Of course, if the public demands certain things it must be prepared to pay for them. We, as a portion of the public, are a sort of partner in this affair. If the public suffers we suffer proportionately. We have to pay a portion of the taxation which burdens down the country at present. It is a recognised fact that the hours of labour should be reduced—that men, if they have to work so long, have not the time for anything else, and, although it may be true that in many cases the men are not working, the fact that they are kept on remains. We do not wish the men to receive overtime. We want to see the surplus labour employed, so that there will be very few out of work. That ought to be one of the principal aims, to see the surplus labour employed, for those people must live, and the workers have to keep them.

Mr. Maxwell: Are you in any way connected with the Trades and Labour Council?

Mr. Winter: Yes; one branch is, so far, and I believe the Wellington branch is.

Mr. Maxwell: How is it that the Trades and Labour Council agree to sixty-six hours a week?

Mr. Winter: Well, you see the Trades and Labour Councils are local affairs, so far; there is no thorough combination between them. We have one in Christchurch; there will be one in here, one in Auckland, and so on. They manage their affairs locally. We have not yet come to that stage of perfection when the whole is combined, but I hope that before long we shall arrive at it, and then these discrepancies will be done away with, and such a question as this you refer to will be submitted to the central body.

Mr. Maxwell: They seem to recognise that there are intermittent services which they cannot treat as eight hours.

Mr. Haden: I presume they work on Sundays.

Mr. Maxwell: Yes, from 2 to 6, I think.

Mr. Winter: I believe Dr. Grace stated, when the tramway position was under discussion, that the thing was not paying, and that a concession is made rather to meet that point. But we can hardly say that New Zealand is bankrupt yet, and that it cannot afford to pay its employés. When the country is prepared to say that, I think the railway employés will be the first to come forward and say, "We will work for half wages until things are better."

Mr. Maxwell: I suppose, to follow on this question, that you would require all the traffic employés who are now working intermittent services over eight hours to be paid overtime for work over the eight hours.

Mr. Winter: No; we would rather you employed so many men as to reduce their hours to eight.

Mr. Maxwell: Or the other thing, which is just the same.

Mr. Winter: No; one holds out inducement to a man to work more than he should, and the other is to employ more men.

Mr. Maxwell: In a country station there will not be five hours' continuous work for a porter, but he is on duty ten hours. Are you going to employ two men to do that work? Because that is the sort of thing we have to meet and deal with. It is not one case—there are a hundred or two hundred.

Mr. Winter: I think you are quoting extreme cases, simply because we have not thought this matter out. It requires a little thinking out. I might make a statement here, and you would "have" me on it immediately.

Mr. Maxwell: You will have as many days as you require to reply to me. I do not want to trap you.

Mr. McKerrow: I have given some little attention to the subject, and nothing is being said to you, I assure you, in the nature of a "catch" at all. This is really the difficulty we are confronted with. If this eight hours is to be enforced, you lay down that each man in the service is only to work eight hours a day; and you do not want overtime, but to increase the number of employés. It will double them all over the country stations.

Mr. Maxwell: It is the time on duty that is to be paid for.

Mr. McKerrow: If a train leaves at 9 a.m., and comes in at 9 o'clock at night, the stationmaster has to be there before and after, so that he may actually be on duty, say, fourteen or sixteen hours; so that to carry your suggestion out in its integrity we should require to have two porters and two stationmasters.

Mr. Winter: I have said these are exceptional cases, and I am firmly convinced we should be prepared to treat them as such.

Mr. McKerrow: But it is one of the features of the service; it is not exceptional at all. You just take my suggestion and look over the time-table to-night. You will see there are a great number of stations in that position.

Mr. Winter: And these people have nothing to do in between times?

Mr. McKerrow: Well, there are many hours they have very little to do.

Mr. Winter: But I say the country can better afford to pay for one or two hours a day where very little is done than to pay for a system which keeps men at work all hours.

Mr. Maxwell: In other words, you will have two men on.

Mr. Winter: We will leave it to you, and, without any flattery, I may say you are quite capable of doing it.

Mr. Owen: Say there is a cadet porter, not a stationmaster. Will that meet it?

Mr. Maxwell: No. Take that as an ideal station. They are all occupied when the train comes in. You mean to say the stationmaster can take the morning train, say, and leave the evening train to the cadet.

Mr. Owen: Yes; it is done in some cases.

Mr. Maxwell thought the stationmaster must be there, being the responsible officer in charge.

Mr. Edwards: It has been stated that continuous work, such as in the shops, is paid for at eight hours per day, but it has not been so in some departments. For instance, the platelayers walk miles they are not paid for. The stationmaster, as you must admit, is put at a station because there is sufficient work to keep one occupied. He may have a few hours during the day, but he has certain work to perform in between—accounts to keep, and various duties to perform. Many of them have to clean out their latrines. I know it is done. Then, as the work increases, and a post or telegraph or telephone office is established, the stationmaster will perhaps only have two trains a day, but he has these other departments, which keep him almost continuously employed. He is likely to be called on for letters or telegraph messages any time between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. He has to come down late at night, and make-up his work for the day; and as the work increases a porter is put on, who could share the work with the stationmaster; but at many of these stations the stationmaster is not called "officer in charge," but "porter in charge." At a majority of the small stations a porter is in charge.

Mr. Maxwell: No, not a great many; very few. We have been doing away with them gradually. It was originally so, but by degrees we are wiping them out.

Mr. Edwards: I know at the time I was in the service the majority of them were called "porters in charge." Many of them, no doubt, were competent enough to do it: and where there is a porter and a stationmaster at a station the work could be divided between them.

Mr. McKerrow: In what way?

Mr. Edwards: The porter could do the work of one portion of the day, and the stationmaster the other.

Mr. McKerrow: Do you think that could be done to the public convenience—for that is the principal object?

Mr. Edwards: Yes.

Mr McKerrow: That is, if the porter is competent to do the work?

Mr. Edwards: Some suburban stations are being closed for a portion of the day, and made flag-stations the remainder. There are many country stations that could be so worked, where the work is not large enough to keep a stationmaster occupied all day.

Mr. Hannay: You surely do not mean to say that the country station should be closed, and the people have no benefit from it?

Mr. Edwards: If it is done at suburban stations, why not at the country ones.

Mr. McKerrow: Take the place where you were employed—in the Waikato, I believe. If that rule had been applied there, would it not have been to the great inconvenience of the settlers? When did your first train start?

Mr. Edwards: I had some trains before nine.

Mr. McKerrow: That would bring you to five in the afternoon, and the train passes, say, an hour and a half later. The thing would be absurd.

Mr. Edwards: If it would be an inconvenience to the public that I should not be on duty after serving eight hours, it would be in the interests of the department to pay me overtime for the extra work.

Mr. McKerrow: That is what you mean?

Mr. Edwards: Yes. Our letter says here—"Exceptional cases:" "That no employé on the New Zealand railways shall work more than eight hours per diem or forty-eight hours per week, excepting where absolutely necessary." So that if it is possible for a man to leave off his duty he can do so. If he worked for the eight he would get paid for it.

Mr. Maxwell: But Mr. Winter laid it down that it is not a question of work, but of time. Eight hours is the time the man is to be paid for, irrespective of what he is doing or whether he works.

The stationmaster is to be available for eight hours, whether he is working or not That is how I understand his interpretation.

Mr. Winter: I say, if the man is not at work he has to be on hand.

Mr. Maxwell: And he is to be paid for that time?

Mr. Winter: Yes.

Mr. Hoban: What we want to establish here is the principle that eight hours is a proper day's work. There are cases, as Mr. Winter has said, where exceptions will have to be made. Even supposing there are numerous cases, we are quite prepared to meet the Commissioners. We ask you to apply the principle broadly to the men who are working as engine-drivers, and so on. You can easily adopt the principle.

Mr. Maxwell: Eight hours' continuous time?

Mr. Hoban: Yes.

Mr. Maxwell: But that is not work.

Mr. Hoban: But we wish to recognise the principle. Where there are these cases in which you could not do it, it would be unreasonable to ask.

Mr. Maxwell: Of course, eight hours' continuous labour is what we do recognise, and we have always gone on it.

Mr. Hoban: Yes, but I think I could quote cases where eight hours' work has not been gone on.

Mr. Maxwell: No doubt the rule has been stretched sometimes, but it is our principle.

Mr. Elvines: Take the Works men. Their time is taken up from the time when they start in the morning, and have to cart their tools to the station, go away to the train, put their tools in, get them down again at night and put them away. That is really all work, and we have no compensation whatever. The rule is that you will get a shilling if you are over twelve hours, but the trains are so nicely timed that it is exactly eleven hours fifty-five minutes when you get back, so that we lose that shilling, and have done for years. What we really wish is to be brought under the eight hours' system, and to consider that work the same as that of any other class of men that has been spoken of. With regard to platelayers, many of them have to go seven to eleven miles to work. I have seen them at 7 o'clock in the morning. They have to load their trolly, get their tools on, and start at 7 to push the trolly to the work; and they have to be there to start at 8. We contend that all that is work for an hour before 8 o'clock. It is a well-known fact that the men are discontented throughout the length and breadth of the colony. Wherever I go I find it is so; and I receive letters to the same effect. You should consider the time these men are going to their work, for it is hard work going up a heavy grade with a trolly in the face of a stiff nor'-wester. I have known men have to pull up at a station and wait for the train.

Mr. Maxwell: You claim that the men should be paid for all the time they are away?

Mr. Elvines: Yes, the same as is done in other departments. Those who do the most work are left out of consideration, of course; and it is those who do the least that get paid.

Mr. Maxwell: What department do you refer to?

Mr. Elvines: The engineering and carriage department.

Mr. Maxwell: Do not they do more work in that department than you do?

Mr. Elvines: I do not know that they do; but they do not go out so often, and, of course, they do less of that particular class of work; that is where the point comes in. Those who are continually at it do more of that class of work, and get no pay for it.

Mr. Maxwell: You say some platelayers go eleven miles?

Mr. Lowe: I know there are some cases where they have to go twelve miles.

Mr. Elvines mentioned the Methven and Mount Somers line.

Mr. McKerrow: In that very district, if the farmer is going to thresh out his oats, some of his men have to go two or three miles to their work.

Mr. Elvines: In that district they would have to keep the labourers on the work; they would not get them from afar. The very large farmers keep their men at the work. Some of them do it, I know.

Mr. McKerrow: Walking to and from work is not considered a part of the day's work, so far as payment is concerned, though I grant you it is very fatiguing; it is not customary to pay for it.

Mr. Elvines: It is not the walking; it is pushing the trolly.

Mr. Maxwell: On the Methven line it is not very difficult. It is an easy grade.

Mr. Elvines: Well, it is easy one way, but very hard the other.

Mr. McKerrow: You have stated an extreme case. I have just been looking the thing up, and I find that, as a rule, a man has very much less than eleven miles to walk.

Mr. Elvines: Take the Little River Branch. The man on Rabbit Island has to go every morning, leave his home at 7 o'clock, and pull over the length, and round the curves, up to Little River.

Mr. McKerrow: There are some cases of men being paid for overlooking the line.

Mr. Elvines: Yes, I know. There is one at Waikari. The ganger gets that.

Mr. McKerrow: Would you ask that they should be paid from the time they leave their house until they get back?

Mr. Elvines: I would like that when they leave home their time should count, and that they should go back in their own time.

Mr. McKerrow: Half-time?

Mr. Elvines: Yes; allow time one way. If they are more than four miles from home they are allowed a quarter of an hour to go. It is the loading up of the tools and material and pushing the trolly that I refer to. With regard to stationmasters, it is a well-known fact that some of them in the country have to be at work very early. The train goes out at, say, 7 and they have to make up the mail, get the parcels ready, and so on. Then they go to breakfast, and do not come back until 9, when they have to attend to the post and telegraph work. They are there till 12, and

then from 1 to 5. Then they go home. I do not think they have very much that they complain of. They cannot go away, and they are perfectly satisfied, apparently, to go home and stay there. I do not think we need make any particular quibble about them, because the most of them would be satisfied to have it arranged that they should have some time off. It is when the man is away from home. Take the guard on the Methven Branch: he leaves at ten minutes to 7, and gets to Rakaia at 8. That is his guard's work. From 8 he takes up the porter's work at Rakaia and does it during the day, starting back at 6·25 to go back to Methven. His day's work is not done till 9 at night.

Mr. McKerrow: A long day!

Mr. Elvines: Yes, and a continuous day's work, or two days' work. He gets no extra pay for it. I know that if he does not like it he can leave it. I do not say it was done in the Commissioners' time. At the Mount Somers Branch the man there is really porter acting guard, and he has the sole charge of the branch. He goes down in the morning, does the work of the porter at Ashburton Station, and goes home at night.

Mr. Maxwell: The man does not do such hard work as many men who work less hours. It is not full work.

Mr. Elvines: Do you mean to tell me it is not hard work? I would rather be at my bench than sitting in the train any time, because I have to sit close to the door, and it gives me rheumatics in my legs. After one trip I was laid up three days with lumbago, and they did not pay me for that, although my time was taken up with the lumbago.

Mr. Maxwell: Men who trolly to their work do not do so entirely for the purpose of carrying materials; it is more convenient for them to go to work that way than to walk, is it not?

Mr. Elvines: Well, yes; but the trolly is to carry materials. They could not carry rails, and walk.

Mr. Maxwell: But carrying rails and trollying is not like walking. I have had to trolly many a mile, and, unless it is on a bad line and with a steep grade, you can trolly along with very great comfort.

Mr. Elvines: I know it is easy with a velocipede.

Mr. Edwards: This subject was brought up before the South Australian Commissioners (they have a society there), who decided that "Permanent-way hands shall be paid for pumping the trolly one way, to or from the scene of the day's work."

Mr. Haden: Mr. Maxwell has spoken of the difficulty of arranging intermittent work so as to cut it down to eight hours. There is a case in which a man is working twelve hours continuously six nights in the week, and nine on the seventh. He is a watchman.

Mr. McKerrow: But you would hardly call that work.

Mr. Haden: Well, this is a comparatively recent part of his job; but he has to go round to the sheds and into them and turn his tell-tale. He cannot go to sleep, and if he continues faithful to his post, and awake for twelve hours in the night, he cannot do much in the day.

Mr. McKerrow: It is not like continuous arduous work.

Mr. Haden: But it takes up the whole of his energies.

Mr. McKerrow: Such men, as a rule, are men not very fit for hard work, who are glad to get these positions.

Mr. Haden: This man is aged, but he is able-bodied, has been there a number of years, and was, of course, far younger when he started. I merely mention it as a case of continuous labour. It tots up to eighty-one hours a week.

Mr. McKerrow: I have no doubt the work is regulated according to the duties he performs. If when he entered the service he had said, "My hours are eight a day, and I am prepared to work in the night or day," his wages would have been less.

Mr. Haden: What would you think his wages are?

Mr. McKerrow: 6s. 6d. or 7s. a day.

Mr. Haden: 6s. a day for eighty-one hours a week! He was taken at 8s., but when the 10-per-cent. reduction was made he was reduced to 6s.

Mr. Hannay: I suppose the deputation understands that in fixing the scale of pay for such men as porters, guards, and so on, whether it was fixed properly or not, it was done in consideration that their hours were intermittent, and that the wage or salary should be accordingly?

Mr. Hoban: I understand that ever since the union has been formed—though we have not had the credit for it—in Christchurch they have two shifts of men, and are pretty well satisfied as far as the hours are concerned. Two or three young fellows who were working eleven and twelve hours are now only working eight hours and a quarter. Of course, there are cases which cannot be avoided, but there is no doubt we shall get that settled.

Mr. Hannay: You said you thought the men were not working contentedly; I have a much better opinion of them than that. I do not say they are all contented, but I believe our men are not losing us anything.

Mr. Hoban: Far be it from me to throw dirty water on our society, but you can quite understand that a contented body of men is far better than a discontented body.

Mr. Owen: About men being paid for doing nothing—stationmasters?

Mr. Maxwell: You have laid it down that all employés should have forty-eight hours—that none shall work more than eight hours a day, or forty-eight hours a week.

Mr. Hoban: Excepting where it is absolutely necessary.

Mr. Maxwell: That is making the exception the rule?

Mr. Winter: I think my colleagues have fairly expressed themselves in that respect, that with these exceptional matters we are prepared to adopt exceptional measures and come to a mutual understanding.

Mr. Owen: Does that meet your question, that where it is impossible for a man to be kept to the eight hours—say, a stationmaster getting up for an early train, and there is only the one there—that must be arranged by mutual consent?

Mr. Maxwell: There would be such a large number of cases that the exception would become the rule.

Mr. Winter: Of course, all parties would have to judge whether the case was exceptional.

Mr. Hannay: I want you to clearly understand that not only were the men's duties fixed upon consideration, but the salary attaching to the duties was also considered from time to time.

Mr. Hoban: When we go to salaries, I do not think we can say any of them get too much.

The Conference adjourned at 5 p.m.

TUESDAY, 17TH JUNE, 1890.

The Conference resumed at 11 a.m.

Mr. McKerrow: I think we have got to piecework now?

Mr. Hoban: I think so.

Mr. Maxwell: I wanted to ask one or two more questions, so that I may clearly understand the line which is to be taken up. This question about men being paid for the time they are on, when we were talking about it yesterday, I took the case of a stationmaster, and we were talking of a train service the first train going out at 6 a.m. and the last coming in at 7.30 p.m., that is, thirteen hours and a half from the first train to the last. He has altogether eight trains to work during the day, and some other duties to perform, but his work is not particularly heavy—not hard work—although, from first to last, it is thirteen hours and a half. What I want to know is, how do you propose to meet that case as regards his time? How is he to be paid, if you are going to adopt the eight hours' system? Of course, he is tied to his station, although he gets two or three hours' spell in the day, once or twice, and his home is at the station. His duties are intermittent, and he is obliged to be there till 7.30 p.m.

Mr. Hoban: I understand there is only one man at that station, the stationmaster?

Mr. Maxwell: The stationmaster is responsible, and he has to be there. We expect him to be there.

Mr. Hoban: As I said yesterday, you are pointing out exceptional cases for exceptional treatment. In several cases we cannot have men working eight hours a day, and there will have to be mutual concessions. We are going on broad principles. This point was put yesterday, and I think we all understood that there might be exceptional cases.

Mr. Maxwell: I have taken out the particular instance, because I wish to be careful what we are about. It is not an exceptional case. There are so many what you call exceptions that they practically become the rule. You say this must be exceptionally treated—that is to say, that he will get no extra pay for his thirteen hours and a half. He will just get his fixed pay as stationmaster?

Mr. Hoban: It is not for us to point out difficulties of that kind, but if this man had a porter and a cadet his duties might be lighter than at present. These are matters of departmental arrangement, and I am sure that with the experience you have you might arrange them. We have not brought a plan with us. We say that there is a universal principle of eight hours all over the world, and we do not see why it should not be adopted on the railways.

Mr. Maxwell: You are quite right—eight hours' continuous work; but eight hours' intermittent service is nowhere recognised; it is quite a different thing. I bring a typical case, not an exceptional one, but a case frequently occurring, in which a man, from first to last, is tied to his station thirteen hours and a half, and I ask you on what basis do you pay that man? On the eight hours' basis?

Mr. Hoban: Yes, if it is possible to carry it out. If it is found impossible we should have to make an exception of it.

Mr. Maxwell: You would not wish two men to be kept there?

Mr. Hoban: No, we are not so unreasonable.

Mr. Maxwell: And you would not apply your rule of overtime wages as laid down in your letter to this case?

Mr. Hoban: If it is found impracticable to keep him within eight hours, we could not possibly compel the department to pay him. Some arrangement would have to be made.

Mr. Maxwell: I will go on to take another case. I have done with the stationmaster, and now I will make some comparison between the drivers.

As Mr. Elvines rose to speak,

Mr. McKerrow suggested that Mr. Maxwell should finish, and then other gentlemen should follow.

Mr. Hoban: I might ask that my colleagues should give their answers at the same time as myself. They are railway-men, and understand these details pretty well. I understand them fairly well, but they can give better answers than I can, of course; and an idea which strikes them now may go out of their heads if they have to wait.

Mr. McKerrow: Very well.

Mr. Elvines: At Heathcote Valley the stationmaster has a porter with him, and during the afternoon the porter takes charge of the station while the stationmaster is away, simply because they have long hours between them. I think it would answer, if there is a porter or cadet, to let him be acting-stationmaster for a short time during the day.

Mr. Maxwell: The case of the driver, which is also to illustrate this principle: Is he to be paid for the time, not for the work?

Mr. Winter: I think, as far as stationmasters, crossing-keepers, and similar men are concerned, a system of relieving might meet their case. A man working thirteen hours for six days might possibly be relieved.

Mr. Maxwell: Not working. Do not misunderstand me. Probably he is not at work more than eight hours, but he is tied to his station for that time.

Mr. Winter: I think we have met that question. As long as you compel a man to be at his station he is at work.

Mr. Maxwell: There is a difference between being available and being at work. You wish to treat them as though they were at work, I know.

Mr. Winter: I think a man is at work if he is on duty. If a man was to get some concessions—be relieved for half a day or a day a week, or something like that—it would meet the case. One or two relieving officers added to the service to relieve these men would give them time to make up for the long hours they are on duty.

Mr. Maxwell: Would you do that in preference to paying for overtime?

Mr. Winter: Certainly. We have affirmed all along that we do not wish to have overtime. There may be individual cases, of course, where a man would study his pocket: it is human nature, to a great extent; but there is no question that the employés individually, if they were asked, "Would you rather have eight hours or the opportunity of making more money by overtime?" would probably say, "Well, I should like a little overtime now and again;" but if they were asked as a body they would say that it is far better not to take overtime, and have more men employed. We do not wish stationmasters to have excessive pay more than any other class of labour, but to have some recompense for the long hours they have to work.

Mr. McKerrow: I may tell you this: that the stationmasters are entitled to seventeen days' holiday during the year. That is considered an alleviation of what you evidently think is the hardship in working so many hours.

Mr. Winter: I think that alleviation is more in this direction: that a man in that position is supposed to be on duty when other people are enjoying themselves, at holiday-time, and have not the opportunity of that recreation which it is admitted we should all have occasionally. That would hardly compensate him for the thirteen hours and a half.

Mr. Owen: With regard to, say, a cadet at a station, it has been done in some cases; and I draw attention to what has been done because it might be done here. Say there is a stationmaster and a cadet at the station you speak of. The stationmaster overnight enters up all his correspondence, his cash-book, and so on, and leaves everything ready and locked up. The cadet in the morning simply has to open the station, take a few tickets, label the parcels, &c. The correspondence is all ready, and he hands it to the guard, and despatches the train. Then the stationmaster comes on later in the day, and the cadet goes to his breakfast, while the stationmaster looks after the goods-sheds, and so on, for a certain time, along with the post and telegraph work. Then the cadet comes on again, and goes off, and the stationmaster finishes up the duty. That is a division of labour. With regard to men wanting overtime, I think you will admit that New Zealand is progressing in education. We have a fine educational system, and the more educated a man gets the less avaricious he is. With regard to overtime, if a man is educated his education teaches him good principles, one of which is that one man should not have a larger amount of money than another one. That is the teaching of the nineteenth century.

Mr. Maxwell: What you say is quite right about the cadets; but bear in mind that you have been objecting to young cadets having anything to do with trains. No doubt, what you suggest is one way of getting over some portion of the difficulty; but you must not forget you are one of those who object to it.

Mr. Owen: That is not the point. I do not object to a cadet issuing tickets or doing work of that class; but I do object to a lad handling points and shunting trains.

Mr. Maxwell: Suppose they are doing it at this train in the morning?

Mr. Owen: There is no occasion. You have a guard; he does that work. The guard fetches the engine from the locomotive road, takes it to the train, and simply places the train at the platform.

Mr. Maxwell: But the guard is under the instruction of the stationmaster while he is at the station.

Mr. Owen: Of course, that goes without saying; but when the guard goes on duty he does not go to the stationmaster and ask what he is to do; he knows what to do. It would be impossible, in most cases, to work with a set of locomotive-men who had to go to their foreman to know what to do. The same with the guard; he knows when he goes on in the morning that he has to take the train to the platform, and go through the usual routine.

Mr. Maxwell: But the guard has to take his orders from the stationmaster; and, if there is only a cadet in charge of the station, then you have the guard under the cadet.

Mr. Owen: That is the case in many instances; you have got cadets where there is no one else.

Mr. Edwards: We must all agree that the case of the stationmaster must be given a certain amount of latitude; but where there is assistance at a station it can easily be arranged to obviate the work. We recognise the fact that, although a porter or a cadet takes the place of the stationmaster for a time, the stationmaster is really the responsible party. At stations where there are no assistants, the stationmaster is there from the first train till the last, and gets no more pay than the one who has assistance. Where there is simply one officer, it can easily be got over by making an allowance which would be satisfactory to all parties concerned. There is no difficulty in it. If we had the relieving system, it would work very awkwardly, considering the man is in charge all that time. I think it is quite right that he should have some allowance made him; but it is one of those peculiar cases which have to be dealt with peculiarly.

Mr. Maxwell: Then I will go on to the next point—drivers. There is a case where a man runs into town in the morning, the time of his run being three hours and a half, and out in the evening, three hours—seven hours and a half running and shunting. During the day he is standing six hours, which makes thirteen and a half hours, and most of the six hours he is booked off altogether. His total run is only eighty-eight miles; but if I have understood you aright you would pay him overtime after eight hours.

Mr. Owen: No; that is contrary to the principle altogether. I thought it was put very clearly. I must have been very dense if I did not make it clear. The man should work forty-eight hours per week.

Mr. Maxwell: But he does this every day in the week.

Mr. Owen: He works thirteen hours and a half each day? Then, that thirteen hours and a half counts each day.

Mr. Maxwell: Of course, that is far more than forty-eight hours. I want to get at this: What would you pay him? Would you pay him for all time over forty-eight hours.

Mr. Owen: Yes. In many instances it could be met by what is called a three-legged service.

Mr. Maxwell: No, not this case.

Mr. Owen: But you could make it a case.

Mr. Maxwell: I want to know how you would pay this case?

Mr. Owen: You are laying down a hard-and-fast rule that, I think, is hardly in keeping with what we ask at all. We ask you not to work this man six days a week.

Mr. Maxwell: What would you do, then, in that case? Only work the man three days a week?

Mr. Owen: I am not prepared to say what I would pay him. At the end of his forty-eight hours let him be relieved from duty.

Mr. Maxwell: But you would have to put on a second gang to work the next three days?

Mr. Owen: That is easily done. There are cases in point at the present time where they are strictly working to the scale you speak of. That is to say, it is six hours beyond his time. Pay that man for his six hours, and have a third man in the service. He is not a very expensive man.

Mr. Maxwell: Make it a three-legged service?

Mr. Owen: Yes; have a fireman that can take the engine as a fireman or driver.

Mr. Maxwell: You think that the time he is standing should count?

Mr. Owen: It is done in all parts of the world.

Mr. Maxwell: That was what I wanted you to tell me.

Mr. Owen: I dare say you have the parliamentary reports from the Old Country, and if you turn up——

Mr. Maxwell: I know what they do. I am not finding fault; I simply want to know how you would treat this case?

Mr. Owen: But you are rather placing me at a disadvantage. I am not a locomotive engineer or foreman. I am only one man. Perhaps you will say, "Oh, he is looking at it from a selfish point of view,—what he would do."

Mr. Maxwell: No; I want to know what the Association says, what you would lay down, and the solution you say would be a three-legged service, counting the six hours' standing time as working time.

Mr. Owen: Not to make too hard-and-fast a rule, you could take one hour out of the man's time for his meal-hour.

Mr. Maxwell: Well, of course, we would allow that.

Mr. Owen: We do not wish to ask you anything unreasonable, or even go sailing close to the line of unreasonableness. We want a fair thing.

Mr. Maxwell: But I want you to keep to this point: take off the meal-hour, and say five hours: you would count that working time, because the man is away from home?

Mr. Owen: Yes; and if he is running, say, into Wellington, there is plenty of work for him to do.

Mr. Maxwell: But there is not in this case.

Mr. Owen: Nothing you can find him?

Mr. Maxwell: No. He has very long hours, is away from home, and there is nothing for him to do.

Mr. Owen: Well, I do not know whether I made it clear.

Mr. Maxwell: Yes; I understand that the service should be three-legged, and that he may be five hours booked off, which is counted as working time, because he is away from home.

Mr. Owen: Yes; I think the very system of booking men off is wrong.

Mr. Maxwell: But that is how you would treat this case?

Mr. Owen: Yes. A man is away from home, and of what use is his time to him? He cannot employ it, for instance, in improving his mental capacity.

Mr. Maxwell: I dare say that may be right. I simply wished to know how you would treat the case.

Mr. Owen: We simply go on broad principles. It is hardly within our province to dictate to the Commissioners.

Mr. Maxwell: The man's pay, according to your scale, would be, for the four days, 21s. a day?

Mr. Owen: That is another way of putting it.

Mr. Maxwell: It would be 21s., according to your eight hours' basis.

Mr. Owen: How is it now on the three-legged basis?

Mr. Maxwell: Ah, that is on the present basis. I want to get at this: if he is working forty-eight hours a week on the basis you have laid down, he is only running four days a week: is he to be paid four or six days?

Mr. Owen: Six days.

Mr. Maxwell: Four days at 21s.?

Mr. Owen: He has to be paid at the present time.

Mr. Maxwell: £3 12s.: is that it? You do not propose 21s. a day, and count overtime in those days?

Mr. Owen: I distinctly made that clear. We stipulate forty-eight hours a week, and I think it is for the first four hours time and a quarter. If there is any other means of getting at it, or doing it more economically, to meet both sides of the case, I am sure we shall only be too glad to meet you.

Mr. Maxwell: I dare say. All I want is to get at the rights of the thing. You are going to pay forty-eight hours at the ordinary rate, and pay him for six hours overtime, and he will be running four days and earn £4 1s.

Mr. Owen: Yes. We can quote cases in which a man is running four days a week and is paid for six. Of course, I do not wish to lay that down as a hard-and-fast rule. I do not hold myself out as an expert at this sort of thing.

Mr. Maxwell: I do not suppose so; I am only asking you for information.

Mr. Owen: But it is hardly fair to put me in the position of an expert. I am only an engine-driver.

Mr. Maxwell: All we want is the association to tell us, and I think you know as much about it as any man in the association. Take another case. A man leaves home at 10.30, and gets to the end of his run at 5.30, running all the time, and he stays away from home that night. He is thirteen hours and a half away from home on that day. He comes back the next day, running seven hours again, as on the first day, and he is seventeen hours away from home. How do you meet that case? He has only seven hours' continuous work.

Mr. Owen: But he is seventeen on duty.

Mr. Maxwell: He is seventeen hours and a half away from home the second day. Take your own case. You run to Oamaru, which is about seven hours' run, and stay at Oamaru that night; you are away from home thirteen hours and a half the first day?

Mr. Owen: You give me a lodging-allowance.

Mr. Maxwell: Yes; but you are thirteen hours and a half away from home.

Mr. Owen: That man has done when he has done with his engine.

Mr. Maxwell: So he is in the first case—that man is booked off for five hours.

Mr. Owen: But he is away from home?

Mr. Maxwell: And you are away from home?

Mr. Owen: But this is night-work?

Mr. Maxwell: Yes; in the one case night-work and in the other day-work.

Mr. Owen: Take the Oamaru case: you run a man six days, and give him a week's pay.

Mr. Maxwell: But you would pay him for overtime because he is away from home, although he is not working.

Mr. Owen: No; but he has run one hundred and fifty odd miles.

Mr. Maxwell: But do you not pay him for overtime?

Mr. Owen: He runs such a long mileage that it amounts to a day's work.

Mr. Maxwell: But you are away from home at Oamaru. You only pay the Oamaru man for a single day's work, no overtime, and you do not put him on forty-eight hours a week?

Mr. Owen: Certainly not; his mileage is so good: and in Australia he would be paid a day and a half for same mileage.

Mr. Maxwell: But why not, as in the other case? The other man is booked off his engine, he is away from his home, and has nothing to do: in fact, the same position as the Oamaru man.

Mr. Owen: He has nothing to do with the engine? no responsibility if the glass or tubes burst?

Mr. Maxwell: Nothing at all; he is clear of his engine.

Mr. Owen: You are putting a rather awkward question for me to answer; but I think, as you keep the man away from home during the day, and he has to come on again the same day, his time should count.

Mr. Maxwell: Very well; that is, in the first case you count for time away from home off duty; but in the second case you do not count for it?

Mr. Owen: I think not.

Mr. Maxwell: Why not in the second case?

Mr. Owen: I do not come on duty again the same day.

Mr. Maxwell: But you are away from home.

Mr. Owen: But I have not to take the engine again that day, and have lodging allowance, making that my home for the night.

Mr. Maxwell: Neither has the first man. He is away from home, and booked off, and seems to be in the same position, except that you are away from home all night, and worse off. Yours is the worst case of the two, but you are not going to give yourself the same advantages as the other man.

Mr. Owen: I do not want advantage. I am quite prepared to stand that, to affirm the principle.

Mr. Maxwell: But I cannot see that there is any principle in it, if you are going to pay one man and not another.

Mr. Owen: But the other man is booked off and goes back.

Mr. Maxwell: But the second man is worse off, because he is booked off, and is away from home all night.

Mr. Owen: I hardly see that.

Mr. Maxwell: Oh, decidedly!

Mr. Owen: He goes to his lodging-house or hotel, and remains there.

Mr. Maxwell: But the other man can go to a drivers' room or lodging-house and take his rest in comfort. I ask, because I want to know what you would do; and I understand that in a case of this kind you would not pay that man anything for being away from home thirteen and a half hours.

Mr. Owen: You are quoting the Oamaru case?

Mr. Maxwell: Yes.

Mr. Owen: Certainly not.

Mr. Maxwell: Nor when he is away from home seventeen hours and a half? Would you pay him overtime for the day coming back?

Mr. Owen: I do not think you should misconstrue what I say; but it seems to me beside the question altogether. We never asked you to pay a man when he is in bed.

Mr. Maxwell: But I want you to say what you would do. In the first case, you propose to pay the man who is five hours off. How do you know that he is not in bed?

Mr. Owen: But in this case the man is getting his rest for the next day's work.

Mr. Maxwell: Well, but this man is getting his five hours' rest for his work.

Mr. Owen: I can quote an instance of that kind, of a man who tried to get his rest in the middle of the day, and what is he now? A wreck. Mr. Rotheram knows the case I am referring to. The man was so avaricious, he would have worked twenty-five hours out of the twenty-four, if you would have paid him for it. He tried to get his rest in the middle of the day, working at night. It think it was about seventeen hours a day. What was the result? That man could not get his rest in the middle of the day. A man lies down in the day with all his clothes on him, you know, and that is not rest.

Mr. Maxwell: I am not questioning the motive at all; I merely want to arrive at an answer. I gather that, if you are away thirteen hours and a half, and sleep away, you do not demand any overtime pay for that?

Mr. Owen: May I ask a question? Is it that you are trying to trap me?

Mr. Maxwell: No; there are a great number of cases, and a great variety. I picked out two, and I have got another one to ask you about. I want to find out how the treatment would be, in each case, on the basis of eight hours and paying for time and not for work—how it will apply.

Mr. Owen: Well, as to the man who you say takes his rest in the middle of the day, I have an instance where doing that has ruined a man.

Mr. Maxwell: Yes, but that is beside the question. What I want to find out is how to deal with the case. I think I have got out your meaning. In your own case you would pay the man no overtime.

Mr. Owen: Certainly not; I would not dream of it.

Mr. Edwards: I think it is overcome in this way. We wish a man to be paid from time on to time off for the day, and then it rests with the department to so arrange the men that there shall be work found for them to do during the whole time. If they are paid for eight hours it is useless to go into the question whether we will charge the man for time away. If they are paid from time on to time off the department can so arrange as to find work for them.

Mr. Maxwell: That is the difficulty. It is quite impossible to find work for them.

Mr. Edwards: Then, they come under the exceptional cases.

Mr. Maxwell: The forty-eight hours a week will not apply?

Mr. Edwards: If it is proved to the satisfaction of all concerned that it is an exceptional case, all we can do is to arrange accordingly.

Mr. Winter: You make a difference between the two cases you quoted. In the one case the man starts at a certain time in the morning, is booked off, and has to come back again. In the other case the man leaves his shed in the morning, does his day's work right off, is done at a certain time, and then he is home for that particular night.

Mr. Maxwell: No; he stays out for the night.

Mr. Winter: He goes to the hotel: for the time being he has two homes. A man may have a wife in Christchurch, and a son or a daughter in Oamaru.

Mr. Maxwell: Suppose a case in which he has not two homes.

Mr. Winter: I say wherever he puts-up is his home for the time being; when the man gets to Oamaru he has done his work. On the second day he again goes home.

Mr. Maxwell: Well, that does not quite settle it. If a man has the two homes, why does he require any night-allowance for being away?

Mr. Winter: He might have to go to a hotel.

Mr. Maxwell: Well, there is the difference between that and his home.

Mr. Hannay: I understand what Mr. Maxwell wanted to get out clearly was, at what rates these men should be paid. But there was one thing that came into my mind while Mr. Owen was speaking—perhaps he would tell us. It has been dwelt on that the man in the first case, away from his home, is booked off. The Executive have explained that they would expect that man to be paid; but if, as happens with a great many of our men, the man, instead of running away from his home, runs a few miles down a branch and back to his home, and so is actually booked off when he is at home during the day, is it understood that that man would be paid for all that time?

Mr. Owen: He is looking after the engine.

Mr. Hannay: Suppose the engine is left in the shed?

Mr. Owen: And other people are looking after it?

Mr. Hannay: Yes, somebody else.

Mr. Owen: These sort of things are very difficult to get at. We know you are putting the most difficult questions.

Mr. Hannay: No, I only want to know what you would do.

Mr. Owen: Say Wellington is my home, and I run out to another station, the Hutt, and back home. I would meet that in this way: that, in nine cases out of ten, shunting is required for the engine, and you can keep that man on to do the shunting, and the other man who would be doing the shunting runs the night train. That is a fair division of labour.

Mr. Hannay: That is not quite an answer. Suppose a case where it was most convenient, where the only arrangement for the public convenience was, that the train should be run out in the morning, and that you are clear of your engine altogether for five hours. All I want to know is—and I am not trying to catch you in any way—if you intend that the man who does this work should be paid for that five hours?

Mr. Owen: It is rather an exceptional case, because, if a man is running in that way to a place where he can go home, and where there are several people to look after his engine, surely there is other work that the engine can be put to. I think my explanation in the first case would meet it, though it is a most exceptional case where a man can get clear of his engine and yet cannot, by manipulation of the work, be kept occupied.

Mr. Maxwell: There is no work for him to do.

Mr. Owen: He is looking after his engine.

Mr. Maxwell: Never mind the engine; we are looking after his engine when standing, and he is running three hours in the morning and three in the evening.

Mr. McKerrow: The real question is, would you pay him for the interval he is booked off?

Mr. Owen: And is at his own home?

Mr McKerrow: Yes.

Mr. Owen: Well, that is a very difficult thing to get at, but it is hardly fair to ask a man to come on so much in the morning, and then send him home.

Mr. McKerrow: That is hardly the question. You have laid down a principle of eight hours a day whether the man is working or not, and we want to know how it is to be paid. Mr. Hannay has propounded to you a case which, in my own knowledge, occurs, in which a man does a little service in the morning,—three hours,—and there is no further work for him and the engine, and they are laid aside. Then he repeats the same run in the afternoon or evening and takes other three hours. He has worked six hours, but he has five hours' resting-time. The question is, will you reckon to his credit eleven hours?

Mr. Owen: I do not want to beg the question, but it is this way: I think if the department finds that they have to pay the man or reckon his hours overtime, they will very soon find something else for him to do.

Mr. McKerrow: But there are cases where we cannot find him work to do. We are keeping away from instances, of course, and talking on broad principles; but there are cases where we cannot find such work.

Mr. Owen: I can quite see the drift of your remarks, and, with due respect, it is trying to corner one.

Mr. Hannay: I wish to disclaim that entirely, and in fact such a case occurs. You have asked that certain hours shall be recognised. How would you pay the men? That is all. I do not say that your demand is right or wrong, but how would you pay him? That is all I want to know.

Mr. McKerrow: You would pay him for the intermittent time?

Mr. Owen: I think that all his time should be reckoned.

Mr. Hoban: You may book a man on for two hours and off for three, keeping him going in that way from daylight till dark. Our programme is that he should not be brought on duty again until he has been off eight hours. You ask these particular questions about exceptional cases. I do not know that there are many branches at all where a man is off six hours. In the main branches he is off three hours at the most. It must be a case in an outlying district you refer to, known to no one but the Commissioners.

Mr. McKerrow: But still a man is put there.

Mr. Hoban: If you affirm the broad principle that a man is to be kept at work, I think you can do it. The man is always responsible for his engine.

Mr. Owen: A man has an engine at an outside station, and his fireman gets up and lights the engine, raises steam, and so on, and they run down, say, three hours, and three hours back, and are off five hours in the middle of the day, during which time he is cleaning his engine, emptying coal-wagons, and filling coal into coal-bags, coaling and watering his engine, and shunting if required. This is a typical instance. Do you not think it is rather hard to ask that man to be booked off in the middle of the day?

Mr. Hannay: I tried to explain that I only wanted to know whether the man should be paid or not, and you have answered quite frankly that you expect that man to be paid. It is only that we should clearly understand.

Mr. Owen: You leave such a loophole for the foreman to do as he likes in a case of that sort.

Mr. Hoban: As a matter of fact, I understand the question to be this: Would we pay a man for the time he is booked off, and we say simply Yes; because, although this particular man may get five hours off, there are cases where a man has been booked off for half an hour. This leaves so much power in the hands of the foremen. Of course, we know a foreman tries to run as cheaply as possible, and gets credit for it if he succeeds. And if we were to recognise the principle that booked-off time is not to be paid for, there is no knowing where it would end.

Mr. McKerrow: The drift of our information has been this: that it will bring in great inequalities to do what you suggest. The run of 150 miles to Oamaru has been brought in, and it appears, from the turn the discussion has taken, that the driver on that run would be paid less than the man who does a short run of three hours in the mornings and evenings, but with five hours intervening. It certainly introduces an element of great inequality.

Mr. Maxwell: The man who does the least important and least onerous duties will be getting the best pay.

Mr. Elvines: We expect that you would put a first-class driver on the Oamaru line, and a third-class one on the other.

Mr. McKerrow: That is an aggravation of the inequality.

Mr. Maxwell: The second-class man would get the highest pay.

Mr. Winter: But can we not keep to the point that we do not want any increase of pay, but simply to reduce the hours of labour? Mr. Maxwell will make a point against us if he can prove that we have asked that inferior drivers at country stations or branch-lines should receive higher pay than first-class men. We are not asking that.

Mr. McKerrow: Well, I will not say higher pay. Supposing we apply the eight hours a day and no overtime: the man on this run to Oamaru will be running six days in the week, but the country man that does a little run, and stands a large portion of the time, would work out his forty-eight hours in three days; the other three days he would be at liberty. This would occur: that if he was an active man he would not go about doing nothing, but go into some other employment.

Mr. Winter: But you have provided in the rules against that.

Mr. McKerrow: Well, suppose he just sauntered about his home—the effect on the public mind, what would it be? The settlers seeing a man going about at his leisure three days in the week, and paid for those days 12s., I do not think the settlers in the country would stand that. The public would not apprehend the things you are speaking of, and no doubt the Commissioners would be very speedily censured for making arrangements which brought such a state of things about. Would that not happen?

Mr. Winter: No; it does not happen at the present time. You would keep the man these hours extra, and pay him for that.

Mr. McKerrow: But we have already stated to you that we have no employment for him. Bear that in mind. Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Hannay have stated—and I can corroborate it—that there are places where you cannot find work for an engine-man, unless you make him go and ballast, &c., up the line, which would be absurd.

Mr. Owen: I have made no proposition of that sort.

Mr. McKerrow: Did you not say we were to find him work?

Mr. Owen: No. Mr. Maxwell's case was where a man worked fifty-four hours in four days, or forty-eight and six extra. That would bring in a three-legged service, where the man runs four days and is off two.

Mr. Maxwell: But please observe the duty in that case. The man is really not working. You are going to pay him for thirty hours' running in the week and twenty-four booked off. The other case—of the three-legged service—is where we are really running the man, working long hours, and a long service and not standing.

Mr. Winter: Mr. McKerrow thought it would seem ridiculous to see a man walking about while others were at work every day. Probably it would; but if the settlers observed these things and made remarks through the Press, or by communication with you, the thing could be easily explained, that they are called upon to do their week's work in four days and six hours.

Mr. McKerrow: I hardly think the settlers would be satisfied with the explanation.

Mr. Winter: It is just probable that some of them would not be satisfied with anything.

Mr. McKerrow: Their own case as regards work is so different. In what may be called the domestic work, they work more than eight hours—ploughing, for instance.

Mr. Owen: Only eight hours.

Mr. McKerrow: Well, they do more in Scotland, where I come from.

Mr. Maxwell: And in England also.

Mr. Owen: Where I come from (in England) I know that ploughmen were done at two o'clock in the afternoon. A man would have his four horses, and a mate to assist him, and they would be through their day's work at two o'clock.

Mr. Maxwell: I happened to be brought up on a farm, and I never saw that that was the practice, though the work was much more arduous than in this country. Of course, I am not pleading that these hours are justifiable.

Mr. Edwards: So far as public opinion is concerned, I do not think it would be worse than is the case now, because at all our fair-sized towns and stations, where men are booked off during the day, they are strolling about the town, and there is a great temptation to get into places where they should not be. I know the public have an opinion that railway-men have nothing to do because they are strolling about so much.

Mr. McKerrow: That would be aggravated.

Mr. Edwards: I do not think so, if the men could be at their homes.

Mr. McKerrow: But their homes are in the town.

Mr. Winter: A great deal is made of this booking off, but it must be borne in mind that a man booked off has got to get permission to go away for an hour. A man is not actually on duty, but he is at call, and if his foreman wants him he is there, and is compelled to stay.

Mr. Hoban: Supposing he gets an hour, what can the man do? His clothes are not the cleanest, where can he go? Sit on a stool and smoke, that is all he can do. You must take the one-hour man as well as the five-hour man, and adopt the broad principle.

Mr. McKerrow: I will just ask Mr. Rotheram if they are very particular in striking twenty minutes or half an hour off, or if the practice is not rather the other way.

Mr. Rotheram: Every day's work is thoroughly considered, and a fair allowance is made for it.

Mr. McKerrow: Half an hour, say, would not be booked off against the man?

Mr. Rotheram: No.

Mr. Hoban: I do not wish to go into questions about every day's work being carefully considered, but we have abundant evidence, if we like to make it public, that would even make the Commissioners blush. We have sheets, even here in Wellington, to show that men working fourteen or fifteen hours have not been booked off at all, but have been kept standing and been allowed ten hours for it. You seem to admit the principle, and I think, as you have given up that point, you might admit that it is fair that if a man is on duty he should be paid.

Mr. McKerrow: No; I say it is unfair, if a man is standing half-an-hour, to book that; he would simply be on duty. It would be rather dragging it to the extremity.

Mr. Hoban: I give the foremen credit that they give and take a certain amount, but if a man is standing he should be paid while he is on duty. In many cases they are not supposed to put down shunting. They may be at work coaling, firing, &c.; but the work is booked, and the foreman takes what he thinks fit and allows these men. A foreman may not know what the man standing is doing at all, and it is left in the hands of the foreman altogether.

Mr. Rotheram: The foreman knows every man's work every day.

Mr. Hoban: But you give a man charge of an engine, say; the foreman cannot be in the yard all day long, and I may be attending to my engine two or three days for half-an-hour while he is in the office attending to his books, and it is simply guesswork, trying to solve a difficult problem, the solution being left in the hands of the officers. Perhaps I am going outside the question?

Mr. Maxwell: No, that is the question. It is left to each officer to say what is a fair day's work. This is the regulation: "Drivers and firemen will not have their whole time counted from first coming on duty until finally leaving, but only such time as the officer in charge may in each case determine may be fairly counted as working time."

Mr. Hoban: Suppose I return in the "standing" column six hours, and I am working three hours, how is it possible for the officer to know that?

Mr. Maxwell: But the man's duty is known every day. If he has got to water his engine, coal, &c., the foreman knows that.

Mr. Hoban: Something may happen to the engine which takes him a little time to attend to.

Mr. Rotheram: It says that on his report.

Mr. Hoban: But the officer would not know how long it took him to do it.

Mr. Maxwell: Of course, it would be his business to know.

Mr. Hoban: There may be some details put down in the sheet, but if a man repairs a thing himself it is not put in the sheet. It might be some little thing he would not report.

Mr. Maxwell: That would be a very awkward thing for the man if he were found out; everything should be reported.

Mr. Owen: Some men take great pride in working at the engine. Many men in New Zealand have followed the locomotive calling because they have a mechanical turn, and that accounts for them running light and trying to keep the thing in repair. They will do all they can, and in many instances do work they are not supposed to do, simply out of love of an engine, as it were, and a liking to see her working well and clean. Very many times when a man is booked off, though he may not be told to do it, he does go and clean his engine where the cleaner has not touched it.

Mr. Maxwell: Will he not report everything he does?

Mr. Owen: Certainly not.

Mr. Maxwell: Do you not think he ought to do so? Would it not be better?

Mr. Owen: Yes, it might be; but, of course, he is to do no work that his foreman does not tell him.

Mr. Maxwell: But he is supposed to report everything.

Mr. Owen: That order is not a fortnight old.

Mr. Rotheram: No; it is another order you are thinking of.

3. Piecework.

Mr. Hoban: Of course, so far as piecework is concerned I have no actual experience of the matter, and a person should not meddle with tools he does not know, so I shall leave my colleagues to this particular part. I should point out that, in my opinion and in the opinion of my Executive—we have discussed it thoroughly, and I express this in their behalf—the system of piecework is a pernicious one, and destroys good-feeling among men; and, further, that the pay for which it is let to them is unfair. A man gets a contract to repair, at a price which is fixed and labelled on the job (he has no right to say what he will take it for), but finds when he takes it to pieces that there is more work in it than was given out, and therefore he loses by it. The foreman thinks it is fair; he does not. A brass moulder in the shop takes a contract to do, and is assisted by three other tradesmen. He makes a big cheque out of it, but the other three only make an ordinary day's pay, although they work the same as he does. Manifestly, that is unfair. Of course, I am simply giving you rough glimpses of these things.

Mr. McKerrow: I went carefully over all the sheets of this contract-work for March, and I noticed that in every instance the men have made more per day than they would have made by wages; so that that disproves your statement that the men are compelled to work at some job that does not pay them.

Mr. Hoban: Of course, that is not my reasoning. If one man get the work—I am a tradesman, and here is another tradesman: I make £20 or £30; he is quite as good as me, but he only gets an ordinary day's pay. It promotes ill-feeling, and the men themselves would rather have the regular day's pay. Some men, of course, would go and work their lives out; greed is innate in them; and the man who does a fair day's work is looked down upon.

Mr. McKerrow: Apart from the idea of avarice, we all know that between any two workmen there may be very great difference. A good workman, with greater physical advantages, will sometimes do twice the work of a man who has not got the same skill and perfection in his business

Piecework has this advantage, that a man who does the work gets paid for it according to what he deserves. Take the inferior workman—for, unfortunately, there are such, who cannot get above mediocrity: you can hardly expect to pay good and bad alike! In other words, you would seek to prevent the superior workman getting the advantage of his natural ability and skill.

Mr. Hoban: I quite admit that, but the cases are manifestly unfair. However, I will leave the subject to Mr. Winter.

Mr. Winter: Piecework has been in vogue for some considerable time in the workshops; and, although it is correct, as you say, that in the greatest number of instances men have probably made a little over wages, still it has been at other sacrifices, and the men have come unanimously to the conclusion that piecework is bad in principle. It is an almost infallible way of reducing the price of labour, and you will see that, if a man is supposed to do a fair day's work and receive a fair wage, directly a way is left open to him to make more money by working extra hard. You thereby reduce the price of that man's labour—you offer a premium to him and appeal to the worst passion of human nature—avarice or greed—and reduce the price of his labour, which by other means might not be practicable. It is almost as bad as giving a man whom you know to be troubled with a suicidal mania a razor, and then, when he has cut his throat, saying, "Well, I did not think he was such a fool! What a fool the man was to cut his throat! I did not give him the razor to do that." It is the same with piecework. You put into the man's hands a means to do what you probably wish done. You might want to reduce the price of labour, and you say, "Very well, we will give him piecework; that's an infallible means. We will reduce the price of labour, and by a gradual process reduce the actual wages." That has been the outcome of it everywhere, and the men working in other countries have proved by experience that wherever piecework has been introduced wages have come down. Therefore we are unanimously of opinion that we should ask you to abolish it. You say a man of greater capacity, ability, and muscular skill will do his work better than a man who has not so much. Now, we quoted Bellamy yesterday; let us quote him now. In the industrial army he pictures each one should have a fair share of the profits, and each one is equally deserving where each does his best, and no man should be condemned to comparative penury and misery because Nature has not endowed him with an equal amount of mental capacity or physical energy as his neighbour.

Mr. McKerrow.—That is in the year 2,000.

Mr. Winter: We are going that way.

Mr. Maxwell: You want to get there before the other fellows?

Mr. Winter: I would if I could, but, unfortunately, I am fettered. But that is really the principle. We think it is not fair, because a man is not capable of doing as much work as his neighbour, that he should permanently suffer. The system is bristling with incongruities, too. It has been stated that some classes of work are paid too highly—you admit that. I say that is being done at the expense of muscle and brain. In other classes of work men cannot make wages, and when they have applied to their officers, and shown them that the price had not been sufficiently high, they have not got redress.

Mr. McKerrow: I will ask Mr. Rotheram whether, when any case has come before the officers where a man has been working at a job at a price really non-paying, what has been the practice of the department?

Mr. Rotheram: Every job is thoroughly considered. The practice in vogue up to the 31st March was, at the end of every period of piecework, to take out a statement showing results where less than full time was made or more than time and a quarter. If necessary, the rate was then adjusted. It has not been adjusted in cases where an inferior man could not make wages and another could make time and a quarter.

Mr. Winter: Time and a quarter is never allowed. Time and an eighth has been the instruction.

Mr. Rotheram: Will you let me see the instruction?

Mr. Winter: I have not got it here.

Mr. Rotheram: No; and you cannot produce it.

Mr. Winter: I could produce the man who has it.

Mr. Rotheram: No such order was ever issued.

Mr. Winter: I do not say by you, but by the officers.

Mr. Rotheram: I do not think so.

Mr. Maxwell: What are your instructions?

Mr. Rotheram: Time and a quarter.

Mr. McKerrow: For the month of March it is as near as may be time and a quarter.

Mr. Winter: I do not dispute that; I only speak as far as instructions are concerned.

Mr. McKerrow: As far as you know?

Mr. Winter: Well, on information. With regard to repairs done on piecework, it is almost impossible to determine the amount of labour required, and it is merely a speculative thing, and rests entirely with the foremen or the superior officers, who determine the price of a certain work. The thing has been carefully calculated, and they have arrived at a conclusion that certain classes of repairs should be paid at a certain rate. It is hardly possible to calculate that work. Taking the cylinder off an engine, for instance: so much money is allowed, and there may be more work in one instance than another—you could not determine beforehand what the work would be. Forgers and brass-moulders go on piecework, and have men working with them on day-work. The forgers and brass-moulders make time and a quarter, but not more by their own efforts than by those of the men working for them. The other men feel aggrieved at it, and they say, "If there is any more money to be made out of the job let us have a proportionate share of it." Of course, the forger is an exceptional case, I know; but their wages would probably not amount to any more than the present high wages. Smiths on piecework have strikers on day-work. The smith is driving into it all day, and the striker is doing the hardest part of the work.

Mr. McKerrow: I do not think that.

Mr. Winter: Well, it is pretty well admitted that of the two men he has the most muscular work.

Mr. McKerrow: But he "stands" a long time.

Mr. Winter: So does the smith.

Mr. McKerrow: But he only works eight hours a day.

Mr. Winter: So does the smith. The strikers say, "If we are working with the smiths on piecework we represent a proportionate amount of work, because we have to earn it."

Mr. McKerrow: I think that is hardly fair. I was just asking Mr. Rotheram, and he pointed out that in making wheels the striker is important, and is paid proportionately with the smith. The smith, of course, is the chief man, and, in the ordinary way, he, and not the striker, has the real merit of putting the work forward.

Mr. Winter: And the smith receives higher wages?

Mr. McKerrow: Of course he does. He is the man of skill.

Mr. Winter: If he receives 10s. as a skilled man, and the striker gets 7s., there is a great difference.

Mr. McKerrow: What would you give him?

Mr. Winter: A fair proportion of all money over and above wages whilst working on piece.

Mr. McKerrow: I am advised that the striker is an unimportant part of the production of the forge. He is the unskilled portion.

Mr. Winter: And is the unskilled labourer unimportant?

Mr. McKerrow: It is unimportant as far as turning out the work.

Mr. Winter: What would the skilled man be without muscular power.

Mr. McKerrow: Well, he would not do very well, but a smith requires a long training as well. Any strong muscular fellow could be a striker in a short time.

Mr. Winter: But suppose superior capacity receives superior wages: that is altogether apart from the question of extra hard work. The striker says, "I do not want to go any nearer to the smith's wages, but I want a fair proportion of the extra money he is making when on piecework."

Mr. McKerrow: I admit there is a little show of reason in what you say. I do not go so far as you do, but I admit there is weight in it.

Mr. Winter: Even the smiths would rather that the strikers should be paid. But here, in Addington, an order was issued prohibiting, under pain of penalty, any one giving a striker extra pay. If a smith gives his striker a portion of the money which he has made by his work the order has been issued that that smith will be punished.

Mr. Rotheram: I am not aware of that.

Mr. Winter: Mr. Scott issued the order.

Mr. Maxwell: It was not given by your order, Mr. Rotheram?

Mr. Rotheram: No. As a matter of fact, I think Mr. Winter knows that it is not in operation.

Mr. Winter: I do not say it is now, but the smiths once received the order.

Mr. Maxwell: Was it a written order?

Mr. Winter: No. The strikers felt aggrieved, and they appointed a certain number of their class to interview Mr. Scott. He told them he had no power, and would not allow it; and he sent orders to the foremen that he would strictly prohibit a smith paying a striker any extra money. Another case is this: that two men at a different rate of wages are put on to a job—one at 10s. a day, and the other at 9s. They are allowed to make time and an eighth (we are under the impression we can do no more). If the 10s. man makes the money it follows that the 9s. man must make a good deal more than time and an eighth. If the 9s. man makes more than time and an eighth the price is cut down: so that the 10s. man cannot make time and an eighth. Certain jobs have been divided between two machinists working different classes of machines. The drilling work, for an instance, depends greatly on the nature and class of the machine. One man, having a machine suitable for the work, can make fair money; but another, with a machine less suitable, will fall behind—the one has to do the work, therefore, for the other to make the time up: yet they are on the same footing, and the work is divided between them. These are some of the principal incongruities of the system. Piecework also offers a premium for abuse to those who have the administration of it. Wagon repairs, for instance, are divided into classes—light and heavy. The foreman goes round a wagon, sees what is wanted, and tickets the wagon "light" or "heavy." Now, you cannot draw a broad line between the two classes. Some light repairs border very closely on heavy repairs, and *vice versâ*. A man may get light repairs in which there is nearly as much work as in some heavy repairs, and the man with heavy "light" repairs will have to work considerably harder than the man who gets ordinary "light" repairs. I make no imputation, but it just leaves the way open to any one man or men getting by accident a preponderance of this kind of work.

Mr. McKerrow: But in a large establishment the thing would average out very well.

Mr. Winter: There are a number of things to weigh. But it is bad in principle, and bad in practice, and we are instructed to ask you to abolish it entirely.

Mr. Elvines: I speak of piecework in general; but not particularly in connection with the Addington shops, because I am not really acquainted with them. I have only been there on a short job in the works department, and have not been able to gather any information. However, Mr. Winter is on the job, and to give the name of piecework to what he indicated is simply absurd. As far as regards the general idea of what piecework is, it is where everything is constituted on a scale agreed to by both sides. The shoemakers, for instance, agree to a rate of pay that shall be given for the driving of so many dozen of nails and the cutting of so much leather. You cannot possibly do this—contract work, I was going to call it.

Mr. McKerrow: Job.

Mr. Elvines: No; it is really a forced contract; that is the only name I can give it. Piecework always has a tendency to reduce wages. If I might be allowed, I could explain what I used to do in London. In London I worked under the society of chairmakers, and the system there had been arranged by masters and journeymen, and we had to pay £2 10s. to work to those prices. I worked at them, and on some work I could not make more than £1 8s. a week, while at others I could earn £4 a week. If I could have got more of the £4 work I could have lived in London like a gentleman, without coming out here. I have earned £4 10s. one week and £1 8s. the next. That will give you an idea of the ridiculous way piecework is managed.

Mr. McKerrow: In London?

Mr. Elvines: Well, according to Mr. Winter, in Addington it is a hundred times worse. A contract is got up by the people, who give the work to the man, and they say, "There is so much work; you shall do it at such a price." I ask any gentleman here whether he would like to take it like that?

Mr. McKerrow: The actual fact, according to a return I have had made up, is that the men make, on an average, time and a quarter on the ordinary wage; so that it would appear to be rather in your favour that the price given is reasonable. I may just remark that there is a great deal of work in Addington and Hillside of a recurring nature—wagons, cars, and so on. The same thing occurs year after year, and the smith or carpenter and the fitter and painter who paint or repair one wagon do the same month after month, and it is easily ascertained what the man can reasonably do; and these men make time and a quarter. In the case of a job like repairing a locomotive it must be a matter of estimate, and it is just possible that in some cases the estimate may be wrong; but, generally speaking, I would assume that the foremen, before they get to those positions, ought to be able to estimate work pretty corrrectly. But do not by any means run away with the idea that piecework is the only mode of paying work in these shops. I ascertain that only about one-eighth of the work is done on piece, and it is of the class I have indicated—namely, work of a recurring nature.

Mr. Elvines: Well, we ask you to do away with that eighth.

Mr. McKerrow: I will just be quite candid with you. I do not wish to cast any imputation on our workmen, because I know there is not a finer body of men in the colony—I say that not to please or flatter you, but because it is my own observation—but wherever there is a large body of men, you know, there is always a tendency to drop down to what is called the "Government stroke."

Mr. Elvines: But these foremen, surely, should know all about the men in the shop, and what they are doing?

Mr. McKerrow: They do; but it is one thing to know the work, and another thing to get it done; and the piecework is a stimulus to the best men to do their best. A little practice is worth a great deal of theory. What is the practice in the great shops at Home? Both in private and company workshops piecework is resorted to—not in that small eighth degree, but almost universally. Then these magnificent steamers that travel round our coasts—all the engine-work in them, I am told, was made on piecework. The very notes that these gentlemen are so assiduously taking down will be set up in type by piecework. Your boots and clothes are done by piecework. It undoubtedly relieves men from that sense of servitude which is inseperable from the master's eye being always upon them. Instead of lowering, it is really raising the price of work—giving you the best opportunity of developing in the best way possible. For an inferior workman, to do away with it is playing into his hands, and bringing about in another form what Mr. Winter very strongly put—the injustice of one man contributing to another. Now, the system of day-wages tends to lower the reward due to a good workman to make up the deficiency of an inferior one.

Mr. Elvines: Most men have an aptitude for a particular kind of work, and it is the duty of the foreman to find out that particular aptitude, and give the man the work he can do best, not pit one man against another. Sometimes, if you give the same class of work to two men, one will be much quicker than the other, who would beat him at something else. When you have day-work you can choose your man for these jobs, instead of pitting men against each other. Only, your foreman should be able to see this.

Mr. McKerrow: So he is, no doubt.

The Conference, at 1 p.m., adjourned till 3 p.m.

Conference resumed at 3 p.m.

Mr. McKerrow: We were on the question of piecework: does any gentleman wish to make any further remark upon it?

Mr. Winter: This morning I tried to show you why we considered piecework unsatisfactory and pernicious, and the reason why we ask you, if possible, to abolish it. There are one or two points I may touch upon, in conclusion. It might not be altogether quite clear to you whether piecework does not reduce wages, or whether it might not, in all probability, in the end, reduce wages. You will find that Mr. Rotheram said this morning that at the end of each term—monthly or quarterly, I forget——

Mr. McKerrow: Monthly.

Mr. Winter: All the piecework was picked out, duly considered, and the prices regulated. If it was seen that there was too much money made on the piecework the prices were reduced. By that system it is very easily seen that the prices of piecework can be reduced from time to time, and yet the same stimulus will be required for the man to work harder and harder to keep up the extra money he has been making, until you succeed in reducing the price of piecework to the very lowest pitch; so that a man has to work extremely hard—as hard as he can—to make bare wages. Such, unfortunately, has been the effect in the Old Country. There men have to work at such a rate, and to such an extent, to make bare wages, or a bare living, that, in fact, when they go home

all they want to do is to lie down and rest and recruit their strength for the next day's slavery. Now, I do not think in a country like this—a young colony where we are looking for better things, and working for better things—I do not think we should ever allow the possibility—the prospect—of such a state of affairs. You admit that you are willing—that you wish to pay a fair day's wages for a fair day's work. Very well, you have efficient officers to see that the fair day's work is done in every department. As far as I know—it has been admitted here—the officers are fully cognisant of the work that is being done—that every man is continually under his officer's eye. You alluded to the "Government stroke"—and I may say I am very sorry that you alluded to it, because it puts us in an undignified position, to this extent: that we see there is some suspicion lurking in your minds that your employés, whenever possible, adopt the "Government stroke," which means, in other words, doing a "loaf."

Mr. McKerrow: I would like to say that my remarks should not be taken as applying to railway workmen as a body: they should be taken to apply to all large bodies of workmen, wherever congregated. I have observed that in a large body of workmen getting together there is some opportunity of holding back, and, as every man has a lazy corner somewhere, he is apt to indulge it if he has an opportunity to do so.

Mr. Winter: You do not give a man credit for having an industrious as well as a lazy corner somewhere, and that a man may take as much pride in turning out a day's work to the satisfaction of his officer, and be eager for praise, which we very rarely get. We sometimes have felt that, but never in my experience has a foreman said, "Well done; you have done that well."

Mr. McKerrow: Perhaps the lazy corner predominated there.—(Laughter.)

Mr. Winter: I have been eleven years in the service, and if there had been a lazy corner there it would have been discovered before this.

Mr. McKerrow: It was only a joke.

Mr. Winter: If there is a lazy corner there may possibly be an industrious one. Most of us have livers, and it is possible a man may hang back for an hour or two in the day when he does not feel well; but if that man thinks he has been lagging behind a little bit to-day he will pull up for that. I do not know of any man that would not rather do a fair day's work and receive or deserve the appreciation of his officer than be loafing about and laying himself open to the imputation of being a loafer, and being removed at the first opportunity. The visitors who come to the Government shop are all surprised at the beehive it represents. It is nothing but one huge mass of industry. They all admit it; they say they are surprised that there is not the slightest sign of the "Government stroke." The expression has been made many a time.

Mr. McKerrow: We appreciate what you say, but there is sometimes a great deal of bustle, and very little work done. I do not say it is so in the Government shops, but it is possible there can be a great deal of bustle and very little work.

Mr. Winter: We are speaking of the railway workshops now, and if there is a great deal of bustle and very little work your very efficient officers must see that the work is done, and they will call the men to account if it is not done. The men are all under the foreman's eyes, and in the fitting-shop at Addington, where I am, we cannot move hand nor foot without the foreman seeing us. The foreman is an efficient officer; he is lynx-eyed, and sometimes I think he has eyes on all sides, because nothing escapes him; and, if he meets with anything which does not meet with his approval, he is not slow in letting us know. And it is pretty much so in other departments. There is full discipline, and the "Government stroke" is simply out of the question; and if it were not so I believe the inherent will of the men to do a fair day's work would obviate the "Government stroke" entirely. I think you believe, as well as I do, that we do not do the "Government stroke." I think you are quite satisfied about that. But as to the piecework, you stated that it would leave a man in such a position that he would be free of being under the boss's eye all the time.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes, I said so.

Mr. Winter: Now, if a man has piecework at remunerative prices he finds this job will pay well, and he says, "I can hang back; I need not be afraid of my foreman, because I am on piecework." There is the way open for the "Government stroke" directly. The man can hang back on the strength that he has a good price. But instead of that the department allows time and one-eighth to be made; but the argument still holds good. If a man has the price he has either got to hang back and do the "Government stroke" or else make more money than he is likely to receive, or, if he receives it, the price will be cut down. We have come to the conclusion, almost unanimously, that piecework is not good, and I hope you will look at the matter in the light we have looked upon it in, and see your way clear to abolish it."

Mr. Hoban: Of course, gentleman, as I told you before, I am not well acquainted with the matter; but if you acknowledge that a man should be paid a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, what is the necessity, if you have a foreman to see the work is carred out, for piecework? I can see no real reason why you should retain piecework. You have the option, if a man is not a good workman, of saying, "We do not require your services." I cannot see why you should object to the abolition of piecework. The only thing, you say, is the "Government stroke."

Mr. McKerrow: What I said was this: that piecework gives a sort of stimulus to the workmen who are under it, and they lead on the rest of the work.

Mr. Hoban: But look at the evils that arise from that. The evils are greater than the good, and those evils should be taken into account. For my part, I see no real reason why piecework should not be abolished. You yourself, sir, in the whole course of Mr. Winter's address, have not put one question to him which has affected his argument, and, that being the case, you have no objection-yourself to it being abolished; as far as I can see, you ought to meet our views and say: "Well, gentlemen, we have officers to see that the work is carried out. The men are willing to work as you, who represent the whole society, say they are; we will accede to your request."

Mr. Maxwell: The main objection, as I understand it, to the piecework, as Mr. Winter dealt with it, is that it would have the effect of lowering the wages. That is the chief objection.

Mr. Winter: It has the immediate effect of lowering the price of labour, and, in the end, of lowering wages.

Mr. Maxwell: I would make a suggestion: suppose that there is a fixed rate of wages, and if a man is on piecework he shall not earn less than the regular wage, but may be able to earn more if he can do so, would that meet your objection? Do you understand what I mean? If a man's rate is 8s. a day he would not be paid less, but if he can make a rate and a quarter he could do so? Do you object to that?

Mr. Winter: We object to piecework entirely. One man may be better than another, and we should not suffer because one man may be better physically or mentally than another.

Mr. Maxwell: But you would not suffer by that.

Mr. Winter: Financially, we should.

Mr. Maxwell: Suppose the good man earns more, the bad man does not suffer by that.

Mr. Winter: He would suffer in this way: if you find a man cannot earn 8s. a day, and you pay him 8s. a day, you will get rid of that man as soon as possible.

Mr. Maxwell: If he is a bad workman, yes.

Mr. Winter: But would you not draw the conclusion that the man is not so good as another one?

Mr. Maxwell: In any case we should get rid of a bad workman.

Mr. Winter: That man might be a good workman, and turn out far better work than a man who turns it out quicker.

Mr. Maxwell: You do not think that suggestion meets your demand for the abolition of piecework, in any way?

Mr. Winter: I do not think so.

Mr. Maxwell: If a man is a bad workman, and does not do his work in a reasonable manner, he would not be retained anyhow.

Mr. Winter: You will admit there are no two men alike. Each man is a little different from the other.

Mr. Maxwell: Still, there is a time, we all recognise, when you find a man is so bad a workman, from various reasons, that an employer does not employ him any longer.

Mr. Winter: But why should you want piecework to effect that? You have your officers, who can judge if a man is doing a fair day's work.

Mr. Maxwell: We do not require it; but I was endeavouring to meet your argument about the reduction of wages, and I suggest that, as a solution of the difficulty, a man should not be paid less than a certain rate, but should have an opportunity of making more if he can, the reason being to get work done expeditiously, and keep men up to the mark.

Mr. Winter: The old principle still comes in again, that we do not wish men to fill their pockets by keeping other men out of work.

Mr. Maxwell: You do not fall in with the suggestion.

Mr. Winter: No, sir.

Mr. McKerrow: Would any one else like to make a remark? Do you wish to say anything Mr. Hoban?

Mr. Hoban: I think the matter has been so thoroughly threshed out that there is nothing more to say. I think we have threshed out all the points well, and, of course, this last one very well indeed, because I find there is really no objection to it. The only question is whether, as Mr. Maxwell says, we would not like the men to earn a little more. That brings up again the principle that one man has more for his labour than another man. We want to distribute labour equally. If we can get more men employed in the railway service, so much the better.

Mr. McKerrow: Then, we need not occupy more time at present. The evidence will all be printed, and you will have an opportunity of reviewing it later on.

Mr. Hoban: If this is the conclusion of our programme so far, I presume directly after what we have said here has been printed we shall be able to meet you again, and I presume we shall receive some sort of reply, and I hope that reply will be as we desire. It is, of course, for you to say what you will do in the matter, but I think if you will go into the matter carefully you will see that all our demands are fair, and they have not been refuted. There has been some little difficulty as to the hours of labour; but as to the boy-labour, you have admitted that the proportion is very fair, and you say that the boys employed now are under that proportion, and if you put it into effect you will employ more boys, and I do not see that you can object to it.

Mr. McKerrow: We do not anticipate much difficulty in that.

Mr. Hoban: As to the hours of labour, that will, of course, require some careful consideration. We have found little difficulties crop up in the way. We want the recognition of the eight hours, although there are some cases which will have to be taken as special cases. As to piecework, our argument has been very full indeed, and I hope you will see your way to grant that *in toto*. I thank you, in conclusion, for the courtesy with which you have received the deputation; it shows that you are willing to deal with the employés in a fair and impartial manner; and when I report to the society the very courteous manner in which you have received us they will be very pleased indeed. When we find an employer willing to meet his employé, or representative of that employé, it is gratifying indeed, and shows that we are pressing on to what Mr. Winter has referred to as being connected with the year 2000. I thank you, in conclusion, very heartily for the way in which you have received the deputation.

Mr. McKerrow: I thank you on behalf of the Commissioners for your very kind expressions of opinion. They are equally reciprocal. We are very pleased with the manner in which you have deported yourselves. You seem to be very reasonable, although we may not be able to agree on all

points. You have advanced your arguments in a very fair and moderate manner. The evidence will be printed as soon as possible, and we will send you copies to your hotels, I hope, to-morrow. We will then be in communication with each other for the final meeting, as to the decision we have come to.

Mr. Hoban: I wish to mention that some of the deputation are employés themselves, and the usual course is to apply to the departmental officers for the leave required, but they thought it would be better to mention it to the Commissioners now, as they are here.

Mr. McKerrow: We shall be most happy to grant the requisite leave.

Mr. Hoban: Thank you very much.

Mr. Elvines: Before we leave, I should like to draw the attention of the Commissioners to the case of the workmen.

Mr. McKerrow: The bridge-men, and so forth? Those you belong to?

Mr. Elvines: Yes. They have to leave home on Monday morning, and do not return until Saturday night. On pay-day they are allowed to come down by the mid-day train, if there is any, and of course it so happens now that at a very few stations only there is a mid-day train; and the men would like you to grant that they may come down by the morning train, provided they make up their time to forty-eight hours before they leave. And they would like you to allow them time for going to their work on Monday morning, because it would press very heavily on them to have to make up their time both going to work on a Monday morning and coming back on a Saturday night.

Mr. McKerrow: Mr. Lowe is here; we may hear what he has to say on the subject. He is the officer concerned.

Mr. Lowe: There would not be daylight during winter in which men could make up their time.

Mr. McKerrow: You say they would have to leave their work in some cases on Saturday mornings?

Mr. Elvines: In most cases they could; but in cases where it is impossible to do so they would have to stop till night. As it is now, it is impossible for those men to get to their homes until late every Saturday night during the month.

Mr. McKerrow: It is only once a month you would like them to get in in the morning.

Mr. Elvines: Yes.

Mr. McKerrow: That is to say, where there is no mid-day train?

Mr. Elvines: Where there is a mid-day train they could go by it. The rule allows them to go by the mid-day train, and at the time that rule was made there was always a mid-day train from north to south, and in most parts of the South Island, to their destination; but the mid-day train was knocked off, and they cannot get in except by the train at night; and that often happened to be the express, which comes in at 9 o'clock; and it is very late for a man to be able only to get into town at that time every Saturday night in the year.

Mr. McKerrow: You are away on an average about three months in the year?

Mr. Elvines: These men are away, most of them, all the year round. There are some only away, on an average, three, four, or five months.

Mr. McKerrow: I promise you the thing will be considered.

Mr. Winter: There is one additional reason why these men should be able to return earlier on a Saturday. We have now the early-closing movement, and all the shops close early, and will, in all probability, down our way, at least, close at 6 o'clock on Saturdays, as well as any other day; and when these men come home, having drawn their pay, there is always some little shopping to be done, and when they come home so late they have not an opportunity, neither have their wives, to do the shopping. When a man has been away sometimes a month he likes to go out and do his shopping with his wife, and this privilege would be within their reach if the men came home by the early train.

The Conference adjourned at 3.40 p.m.

SATURDAY, 21ST JUNE, 1890.

The deputation met the Commissioners at 10 a.m. in order to receive the reply of the Railway Commissioners to the proposals submitted at the former interview.

Mr. McKerrow: Mr. Hoban, before I proceed to make known the proposed altered regulations, I will ask Mr. Maxwell to explain the present regulations.

Mr. Maxwell: There are a few points it is desirable to mention. During the discussion that has taken place it appears that the Association have recognised that special circumstances must be treated specially, and that we cannot lay down a hard-and-fast rule for the transaction of the business of a railway. Now, looking at the present scale, it is one which has stood pretty much the same for the last ten years. At any rate, you will see, as we all know, that eight hours' continuous labour is the basis on which we work—that is, eight hours' continuous labour per day for all workshop and way and works hands—probably 2,500 employés. These men have only three days' leave on pay during the year, and if they work overtime they get paid extra for it. That describes briefly the conditions of employment of that portion of the staff. The remainder of the staff—put it roughly at 2,000—comprises all traffic hands and running hands. Now, take the traffic hands first. The stationmasters are a very exceptional group. A stationmaster's work on a railway is never done so long as there is a train on the road. He may be called on at any time to attend at his station. In some cases the stationmaster needs assistance, and there are a few large towns in the colony where a stationmaster cannot supervise the work all day long, and he may have one or more assistants. At country stations, as a rule, he has to do all the work. The stationmaster, on account of the inconvenience

attending his calling, has seventeen days' leave fixed for the year. He is paid a yearly salary, and has nothing paid for overtime. As a rule, his private house is at the station, and he has to live there. Another group comprises the guards, signal-men, and porters. They have continuous labour at port and goods stations, and there they follow the eight-hours system; but in country and some town stations the duties are very intermittent, and in such cases there is no fixed time for work. This group of men have ten days' leave granted. Their duties are not so long and onerous as those of the stationmasters. Then there is the running department, in which we have cleaners (who are practically eight-hours men), and drivers, and firemen, who are intermittent workers. Now, the drivers and firemen, whose work is intermittent, have their working time fixed at ten hours a day, and the wages are fixed on that basis. Comparing these with the tradesmen or mechanics, who get from 8s. to 10s. a day for eight hours' continuous work, they are not treated badly with from 10s. to 12s. a day of intermittent labour. The scale of pay is older than ten years; I suppose it is about fifteen years since it was first started, but it has been modified from time to time, and has been standing as it is now for about ten years. When the scale was elaborated all these points received consideration, and the pay of the men was fixed according to circumstances. The stations were classified, for instance, taking into consideration the hours a stationmaster had to work, the number of trains he had, and the amount of accounting work, and so on; also the number of hands he had to look after. All these points had to be considered in fixing the classification and the rate of pay. I mention these things to show that a great deal of thought and care has been bestowed in fixing the existing scale and the existing regulations, so that men may be paid and their time fixed and leave granted according to the circumstances under which they are working, and the time they have to work, eight hours' continuous work being the basis, and those employés who could not get eight hours' continuous work having their time fixed on something like an equivalent basis.

Mr. Owen: With due deference to what Mr. Maxwell has said, I may say that since I have been in the service it has receded greatly in regard to pay: the senior driver had 15s. a day, the next 14s., and the junior 13s. 6d.

Mr. Maxwell: Will you tell me where you came from?

Mr. Owen: From Canterbury. I refer to the time of the Provincial Government.

Mr. Maxwell: You have been in the colony longer than I. Do you maintain that those rates were general?

Mr. Owen: I do not wish to maintain anything; I wish to state facts. We want to show, as reasonable men, that these are not extreme cases. In 1871 that was the pay—in 1870 and 1871—not for a single year or two. Mr. Maxwell will admit that 13s. has been paid for drivers; in fact, I may say I received it myself, but, of course, it was cut down by the 10-per-cent. reduction.

Mr. Maxwell: The provinces were abolished in 1876. It was the rate of pay up to December, 1876; 14s. was the rate till then, when it was lowered.

Mr. Owen: Yes; since the fifteen years back referred to by Mr. Maxwell drivers were receiving 13s. a day, and firemen 10s. That was cut down by the 10-per-cent. reduction in 1879, and has never been restored.

Mr. McKerrow: Practically, the present rate dates from 1879?

Mr. Owen: Another point I wish to draw attention to is that, while other departments received the 10 per cent. back again, the railway service never did.

Mr. Hoban: To go back to the eight-hours system: you, Sir, said it was practicable?

Mr. McKerrow: Yes, at a cost.

Mr. Hoban: We want that at a cost. Mr. Maxwell has said the rate of pay recognises the principle of eight hours' labour. We say, give us the hours and state your rate afterwards. I believe the men would work at the present rate of pay, but not at the hours. Concede the eight hours and we can go and request the men to be contented. With regard to continuous time, I cannot do better than quote Mr. Elvines' remarks, on page 22 of the report of the proceedings. He says, "Take the works men. Their time is taken up from the time when they start in the morning, and have to cart their tools to the station, go away to the train, put their tools in, get them down again at night and put them away. That is really all work, and we have no compensation whatever. The rule is that you will get a shilling if you are over twelve hours, but the trains are so nicely timed that it is exactly eleven hours fifty-five minutes when you get back, so that we lose that shilling, and have done for years. What we really wish is to be brought under the eight hours' system, and to consider that work the same as that of any other class of men that has been spoken of. With regard to platelayers, many of them have to go seven to eleven miles to work. I have seen them at seven o'clock in the morning. They have to load their trolly, get their tools on, and start at seven to push the trolly to the work; and they have to be there to start at eight. We contend that all that is work for an hour before 8 o'clock. It is a well-known fact that the men are discontented throughout the length and breadth of the colony. Wherever I go I find it is so; and I receive letters to the same effect. You should consider the time these men are going to their work, for it is hard work going up a heavy grade with a trolly in the face of a stiff nor'-wester. I have known men have to pull up at a station and wait for the train." Then there are the porters.

Mr. McKerrow: Porters are not employed except at large stations.

Mr. Hoban: But where they are employed they are kept on duty for long hours.

Mr. McKerrow: But not exercising their muscular energies all the time.

Mr. Hoban: I take you to be reasonable. This is the great fault of the traffic department, that, no matter how many hours the men work, they get no overtime for it. We want a man's time to be reckoned while he is on duty. Private firms do it.

Mr. Maxwell: Where there is continuous labour of eight hours we recognise that as a day's work, as in a goods-shed, where continuous work is carried on.

Mr. Hoban: I am referring, of course, to porters.

Mr. Maxwell: They are, of course, essentially different.

Mr. Hoban: The ten days' leave during the year does not recompense the men for the excessive hours worked: private firms often give more than that; so I do not think that was a fair argument when the scale was drawn up. But we are not here now to discuss these matters over again. We are here simply to hear the reply you have to give us. I trust it will be a definite one and a satisfactory one to the employés generally.

Mr. Owen: I wish to make a few remarks with regard to the scale formulated during the last ten years. I thought I might draw a comparison, if it will not be thought odious. I wish to draw attention to the difference in the scales between New Zealand and the Australian Colonies. Of course, we are all south of the line, and I think we should all share and share alike. We do not ask for any rise in pay; but there is a great difference between this colony and the Australian Colonies.

Mr. McKerrow: That is stated in the evidence. There is a higher rate paid on the other side. It is hardly advisable to have that discussion again. I merely give the hint so that we may curtail the remarks and get to business, and allow the Commissioners to inform you what they intend to do.

Mr. Winter: Mr. Maxwell says a great deal of thought and care has been bestowed on the present scale. He says it was initiated fifteen years ago, but has since been modified. We all agree that a considerable amount of thought and care has been bestowed upon it, but it has always been in one direction—to get labour as cheap as possible. The workshop hands' and the continuous workers' wages have been gradually reduced. Some mechanics are paid 8s. and 8s. 6d., and labourers 5s. or 5s. 6d.

Mr. Maxwell: It is not 5s. 6d. for labourers; it is 6s. 6d. It is only 5s. 6d. for lads.

Mr. Winter: Well, these regulations are misleading, for it says 5s. 6d. a day.

Mr. Maxwell: That is only to young men joining the service; it does not affect the labourers' scale. I can quite understand that the scale may be misleading. It is not intended to regulate the pay of labourers.

Mr. Winter: I take it, then, that the present rate of pay will not be interfered with, but all boys taken on will work up only to get 5s. 6d. It is very unfortunate that these things are not more explicit, because every one has been misled. I think all the thought and care has been in one direction for a large number of years, and that there should be a reaction. The thing should be reversed now, and, to use a sporting phrase, let the labourers have "an innings." The regulations have always been modified against the labourer.

Mr. Maxwell: I do not suggest that they have been modified from time to time unfavourably. They were modified and the scale pretty well fixed in 1879, before I was in charge of the railways. The labourers' wages were fixed at 6s., but Parliament raised them to 6s. 6d. in 1882 or 1883. As far as I remember, there has been no cutting-down of wages since.

Mr. Winter: That modification was done by the people's representatives, instead of by the department. Thought and care was bestowed in the proper direction that time,—that cannot be disputed. Taking the modification of 1879, at that time a mechanic's wages was fixed at 8s. 6d. a day; now they have been modified to 8s.

Mr. Rotheram: The average is 8s. to 10s. 6d. a day.

Mr. Maxwell: In 1879–80, I think, the 10-per-cent. reduction was made by the Government of the day, supported by Parliament; in the Railway Department there were immense discrepancies in rates of pay. In one part of the country the wages were 20 and 30 per cent. higher than they were in other parts. There was no uniformity. A man in Christchurch might be getting one rate, and a man in Auckland be getting 25 or 30 per cent. less. The Government of the day, not the department, determined to stop that state of things. A man should be paid just the same for doing the same class of work in any part of the colony. They constructed an average scale, and that is practically the present scale, and all men were paid a uniform rate according to the scale. A driver in Auckland received the same rate as a driver in Invercargill, and a mechanic in Canterbury the same as in Auckland. That is what happened. A very large proportion of men who were very much underpaid got their wages raised.

Mr. Winter: I am afraid that there was very little raising done.

Mr. Maxwell: A very large amount.

Mr. Winter: Since then the tendency has been to reduce very considerably. Where men with 10s. a day have gone out of the service the tendency has been to fill their places with men at 9s. and 8s. a day. It is that gradual modification from a higher standard to a lower one that we do not approve.

Mr. McKerrow: I will now read the modifications the Commissioners wish to place before employés for acceptance:—

The Commissioners have resolved to make the following material concessions to the demands of the Association:—

1. By restricting boy labour in the shops.
2. By giving extra pay for guards' overtime.
3. By abandoning the rule which leaves the local officer to fix the working time, and by allowing standing time up to three (3) hours at a spell to count for working time in the case of drivers, firemen, and guards, without deduction for dinner-hour.
4. By restricting excessive hours.
5. By abating piecework as a rule.
6. By raising the age for cleaners to enter.

But they cannot undertake to treat persons engaged on intermittent services on the same basis as those on continuous work. The latter work on the eight-hour system, the former must have their duties regulated according to services.

The adoption of an eight-hour day for intermittent workers, as suggested, while costing the colony probably £50,000 a year more, would also, in many instances, give the employé on the lightest and least responsible duty the highest wages.

Following are the details of the proposals of the Commissioners:—

BOY LABOUR.

The employment of boys and apprentices in the shops to approximate gradually to the proposals made.

The numbers prescribed by the Association for the Way and Works Department are too many; their adoption would displace a large number of men. The Commissioners do not propose to exceed the present proportion of about one-eighth materially.

For the traffic and general service the number of cadets and lads should remain, approximately, at the present proportion, which is somewhat below the proportion assigned by the Association. This number is reasonably sufficient to fill vacancies with trained hands as they occur.

Eight hours' continuous work is to constitute a day's work, as at present. Intermittent services are to be treated as the case may require, the following modified rules being adopted:—

WORKING-HOURS.

Workmen are required to work eight hours per day, or forty-eight hours per week, for the authorised daily wages. The regular hours of work are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on working-days, with one hour off.

Extra pay will be allowed to labourers and tradesmen for time worked in excess of eight hours per day, subject to such regulations as may be from time to time issued.

LOCOMOTIVE-RUNNING.

Sixty hours to count as one week's work for a driver or fireman.

Overtime to be counted at the rate of time and a quarter.

TRAFFIC.

Traffic employés generally will be required to work all trains on the advertised time-table, without allowance for overtime; but, as far as possible, duties to be arranged to avoid overtime.

Sixty hours to count as one week's work for guards; overtime to be counted at the rate of time and a quarter.

GENERAL.

Half-pay will be allowed to employés suffering accident when on duty, if from causes beyond their own control, for the first three months, and quarter-pay for an additional three months. As far as can be arranged consistently with economy and public convenience, in the case of employés generally the working time is not to exceed eight hours per day or forty-eight hours per week of six working days.

Drivers, firemen, and guards will have the whole time counted from first coming on duty until finally leaving, without deduction for dinner hour, except in cases where they are standing for more than three hours at a spell. Time standing for more than three hours at a spell will not be counted.

[NOTE.—From this it will be seen that a liberal allowance is made for standing time, and the objection, strongly stated by the Association, to the local officer fixing the time allowed is removed.]

The Commissioners will restrict all excessive hours of working, employing extra hands, as a rule, in preference.

The workmen, as a general rule, cannot be paid for the time going to or coming from their work; but in extreme and exceptional cases special allowance will be made, according to the merits of the case.

Where piecework is considered desirable, the pay will not be less than ordinary wages rate, but workmen will be allowed to earn up to rate and a quarter. In a general way piecework will be restricted, the Commissioners using the system only where they think circumstances justify it.

The age for cleaners to enter will be from eighteen to twenty-one years, the pay, as per scale, rising 6d. a day each year until it reaches 7s. a day.

Mr. Hoban: We cannot get a definite reply. We are as we were before. You have not given us a practical reply. We could make a certain amount out of it, but not what we want. With regard to boy labour nothing definite is stated. You said you would go in a fair direction. We would like you to say if you accept our proposal.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes; we really agree with the proposal with regard to boy labour; but now, as before, we say that we cannot just do it in every shop, in every section. We cannot do it until we pay off some of the apprentices. It was acknowledged that in some of the shops there was more than one apprentice to four men, but over the whole of the department that proportion was not reached. We cannot get to the limit of one in four in each of the shops just immediately without inconvenience.

Mr. Hoban: We do not wish to interfere with the lads at present in the service, but we desire an understanding that no more lads or apprentices shall be taken on in any workshop until that proportion has been arrived at.

Mr. McKerrow: We do not agree to that, quite. You will see at once an objection to that. Take any shops where there is an excess of apprentices—more than one to four journeymen—if your proposal were rigidly adhered to it would not be possible to put in an apprentice for several

years, and the hiatus would have to be filled up with trained men. I want to be clear on this point. We will approximate the thing in good faith. We do not want to steal a march on you. We want to put a few apprentices on, so as not to create a hiatus.

Mr. Hoban: There is already an excess of boy-labour in some of the shops. If you bring on more it will be worse.

Mr. Maxwell: If two or three go out and only one is put in, that will bring about the proportion gradually.

Mr. Hoban: You will work the proportion so as not to bring it down.

Mr. McKerrow: We have to work this on a continuous scale. If you are going to have a service you cannot put a break on like that proposed.

Mr. Hoban: If an apprentice went out to-morrow you would not put one on in his place? You would only put one on in place of three.

Mr. McKerrow: We intend to do only what we say.

Mr. Hoban: Yes; but we have to explain to our society. Now with regard to unskilled labour?

Mr. McKerrow: We do not propose to have more than one-eighth.

Mr. Hoban: And now with regard to cadets?

Mr. McKerrow: What I have said I will read again: "For the traffic and general service the number of cadets and lads should remain approximately at the present proportion, which is somewhat below the proportion assigned by the Association. This number is reasonably sufficient to fill vacancies with trained hands as they occur." This branch of the service is different from the mechanical branch. In the latter branch we take in lads to give them an opportunity of learning a trade, but we do not agree to find them employment afterwards. Hence, in some cases the proportion of one in four is greater than the demand to keep up the natural supply. But to have a good railway-man you must catch him young, and train him up to man's estate. We simply take in enough to keep up the supply, not as in the mechanical department.

Mr. Hoban: Practically you accept our proposals as to cadets.

Mr. McKerrow: We have grouped the traffic and general branches together as lads and cadets generally.

Mr. Hoban: If you go that far you take in porters. You do not agree to our proposition of one to three—stationmaster and clerks. You would have the whole service taken together.

Mr. McKerrow: The traffic is one branch.

Mr. Hoban: Why take in cadets to take the porters' place? I can understand that the cadets are necessary to fill the clerks' places; but why to take the porters' place?

Mr. McKerrow: If the porter is a steady and reliable and active lad he carries as it were the marshal's bâton in his knapsack, and may become a stationmaster. I merely make this remark to show clearly that a cadet in any clerical branch and a porter run in grooves, from which they can merge into a higher position. Only the two classes alluded to are associated together.

Mr. Hoban: What you tell us about the cadets may be necessary to keep up the clerical staff; but, if that is the case, why not limit them to the clerical staff? Why bring them in as porters?

Mr. McKerrow: A lad-porter may merge into a higher class if he have the qualifications.

Mr. Hoban: Cadets are trained to go up as clerks and stationmasters. You do not train cadets to be porters, but for clerical work, and you ought to limit the number of cadets to the latter staff.

Mr. Maxwell: I think you are laying too much stress on the term "cadet" in comparing him with a lad-porter. Really there is not such a dividing-line as you fancy. They cannot always be separated readily.

Mr. Hoban: That is another argument in favour of what I have been saying with regard to the boys. If the porters can fill these positions, you have porters going on and cadets going on.

Mr. Maxwell: Only enough in the aggregate to fill the vacancies with the two combined. With the whole group we only have enough to fill the vacancies as they occur.

Mr. Hoban: What you mean to say, practically, is that you want openly to take on as many cadets as you choose?

Mr. Maxwell: Just so.

Mr. Hoban: We cannot agree to that. We must have more limitation as regards boy-labour. The cadets and porters will run out together by-and-by, and I think if the Commissioners took the proportionate number of cadets to the number of the whole traffic department they would be wrong. It is not necessary to waste time in discussing it. You have both cadets and porters eligible to take higher positions.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes.

Mr. Winter: The whole statement is so vague that it requires great consideration to understand it. It would be better to have it before us in writing. You appear to have made concessions, but they do not seem to be concessions at all. I do not consider that you have conceded one point. You always reserve the right to alter the regulations, and it rests with the Commissioners to say whether the conditions are in force or not. You are the judge of your own conditions. We have nothing definite from our point of view. We have put the question very plainly. You say there shall be a less number of boys, but reserve your right to increase them. We wish you to have a certain proportion of boys, cadets included.

Mr. McKerrow: We have said so.

Mr. Winter: But it will not take effect for a hundred years.

Mr. McKerrow: This decision was stated with no after-consideration that the Commissioners would break faith with you. I wish to state that you cannot make these alterations in a day.

Mr. Winter: But how much time will elapse? Every one of us will be dead and gone and forgotten before we could say the Commissioners had broken faith with us. You have stretched the time so long.

Mr. McKerrow: I may say we have begun already to carry out the stipulated one to four. Only yesterday the Commissioners refused to entertain the application for more apprentices. That was a very urgent application.

Mr. Winter: If you are sincere, why not say you will accede to our request?

Mr. McKerrow: We have done so.

Mr. Winter: When a man gets four or five pages of a document before him he is somewhat confused as to its meaning.

Mr. McKerrow: The subject is not a very simple one to be put in a word or two. A great many considerations have to be taken in mind, and I think when you see this before you it will appear clearer than it does now from my reading.

Mr. Winter: I followed you as carefully as I could, and that is the conclusion I arrived at—that we have no concessions at all. We have some concessions, but not one point wholly acceded to.

Mr. McKerrow: The only point was that of the cadets—the only point not cleared up. Mr. Hoban was pretty well satisfied.

Mr. Hoban: I cannot say until we have perused that document. It would be unwise to do so.

Mr. McKerrow: Quite so.

Mr. Winter: This gradual arrangement, where two boys come out and one boy is put in, will that bring about the desired result?

Mr. McKerrow: That is the intention of the regulation.

Mr. Winter: But it will extend over a long period of years. Apprentices have been taken on at a tremendous rate recently. In the Addington workshops there was a notice up that all men who had boys eligible could send in an application.

Mr. McKerrow: Is that correct, Mr. Rotheram?

Mr. Rotheram: I do not know.

Mr. Winter: The process will be gradual. If you will say there shall be no more boys appointed we will be satisfied.

Mr. McKerrow: We cannot do that, owing to the gaps to be filled up. Of course, the mechanical department is a sort of school.

Mr. Winter: And the apprentices go away after learning their trade.

Mr. McKerrow: If they choose. I do not think you can quote many instances where an apprentice has been paid off after serving his time.

Mr. Rotheram: Every apprentice will be out of his time in about five years.

Mr. Maxwell: A great many are going out every year.

Mr. Winter: You do not employ them as journeymen. The experience is that boys have to clear out because they do not get journeymen's wages. There will be a gap when the boys are out of their time. They are invited to leave.

Mr. McKerrow: There is always a certain amount of work in every establishment for lads and boys that you do not require men to do. That is the reason why we want apprentices.

Mr. Winter: We only say do not have more than are necessary, and not so great a number as to interfere with adult labour.

Mr. McKerrow: We are quite agreeable to this: that there shall only be one boy to four men in future. The difficulty is simply the difference in the present state and one in four. It might take three or four years to get the number brought down, but as the apprenticeship is only for five years it must necessarily run out very quick.

Mr. Winter: I would like you to make a concession. If you find you are getting short of apprentices, there are plenty in the country that you can take.

Mr. McKerrow: You know, as a practical man, that when you get raw lads in a shop it is a very difficult matter to find suitable work for them. In learning a trade in a workshop the apprentice goes on from a lower to a higher class of work. You will require to graduate the admissions so as not to have boys running on top of one another.

Mr. Winter: Boys have been graduating on top of one another for the last two years.

Mr. McKerrow: We do not want to repeat that operation. We want to feed the shops gradually, but giving the proportion of one to four as far as we can. It seems reasonable enough to me.

Mr. Winter: But the time is so great before we shall feel the benefit of it. Many of us would be dead before it affected us. There are twenty-five apprentices in the Addington workshops to two mechanics. Just imagine the immense number of years it would take to reduce the number required by the proportion.

Mr. McKerrow: I am almost sorry that we touched on this, because I think it is an immaterial point. I believe we could agree to what you stipulate for but for the difficulty of carrying it out to the very letter, and the fear that you might afterwards think we were breaking faith. I really think you ought not to make so much of it. There is really no intention to go beyond the one to four, but we want you to give us reasonable time. If you like, we will stipulate at once the time in which the proportion will be brought about.

Mr. Winter: We do not wish you to stipulate any particular time. We only say do not take any more boys on until the boys run out.

Mr. Rotheram: Fix it at four years, if you like.

Mr. Winter: Supposing, for argument's sake, we agreed to a thing of that sort, how should we know it would be done?

Mr. Rotheram: It would be recorded.

Mr. Winter: You always find a different man adopts a different mode of work. If it were simply on record, as a certain policy as it were, if you had a successor—supposing you were to die,

say—he would find this on record, and would perhaps alter it; but if it was a regulation, and was recorded as an intention to be carried into practice that no more boys should be taken on than allowed by the proportion we require, then there is no getting away from it. Why, we are discussing a term of four years, and we do not know what may happen in that time.

Mr. Maxwell: Say three.

Mr. McKerrow: Do you think it an unreasonable proposition, Mr. Elvines, that I have made just to graduate the process, so as not to have a great gap in apprentice-labour?

Mr. Elvines: I think it rather unreasonable in the way you put it. At the present time you have so many young boys. It will be a hard job to find them that amount of employment that is suited to them after teaching them their trade. You have so many young boys that there is a difficulty in teaching them their trade.

Mr. McKerrow: I wish to obviate that.

Mr. Elvines: You want to keep the youngest down for two years, then you must take no more on for two years, and at the end of the two years there will be more of the higher class. Unfortunately, the poor boys are now thrown upon the world unable to find employment at their trade. What we particularly want is not to flood one shop.

Mr. McKerrow: That is clearly brought out, and we intend to adopt that principle. I have said that here. I think we undertake to take on as few as possible, and bring down the proportion as rapidly as possible; that would be reasonable.

Mr. Winter: You could not possibly bring them down to the number in two years. Some have seven years to serve.

Mr. Maxwell: No; only four or five. You may have ten or a dozen coming out in one year. It is a material reduction. Take Addington for instance.

Mr. Owen: There are too many there; you will hardly feel it.

Mr. Elvines: Some shops may be flooded. It is that shop we ask you to keep down. You really ought not to take on any more for two years if any shop is flooded.

Mr. Rotheram: I do not think any shop is flooded.

Mr. Winter: Twenty-five to forty-eight. I think you must have a poor conception of what flooding is. What I wish to draw particular attention to is, that two years' boys will make very little difference. You could very well spare the first two years; and then, if you are allowed to take on one for every three discharged, you would keep up as good a proportion as you want in that particular shop. Some shops, with not too many boys, you could work as you thought fit. I know very well that when boys are first apprenticed they are just feeling their way about the shop.

Mr. McKerrow: That seems reasonable. The proposal is that, where the number is above the proportion, no apprentice shall be taken on for two years; after that, if the proportion is more than one to four, one shall be taken on to three going off until the adjustment is made.

Mr. Rotheram: In Napier we cannot get boys.

Mr. Owen: Take them from the flooded shops, and transfer them to another.

Mr. Rotheram: I wish we could do that.

Mr. Haden: In speaking of the cadets on the clerical staff, I did not show you its excess. There are nine cadets to seventeen clerks in Lyttelton. The effect is that, where they have succeeded in attaining the maximum, a stoppage takes place. That point seems to me conclusive that they are in excess. When a man dies or retires from the service, there have been cases where, in the case of a £140-grade man, a man or lad at £105 has been put on.

Mr. Maxwell: At no increase?

Mr. Haden: Only at the particular scale of four or five years' service. Before getting the maximum you might stop indefinitely—you might stop fifty years. It is possible to stop an indefinite time. As we have been speaking about flooding the workshops, I should like to see a stop put to the flooding of the clerical branch, and cadets only taken on according to the proportion. A clerk has skill; if he is to be proficient he has to be educated; and we think that, as many would never go to fill a porter's place, all the channels of promotion should be open to every one. I presume it would not be impossible for a platelayer to become a traffic-manager; but, of course, we do not see many such instances. If a cadet could rise to a stationmaster he would be on the same footing as a platelayer, who, if exceptional, would also rise. But, still, there is no reason why any particular place should be flooded with young labour, to the detriment of all; and this is the reason why we want the restriction in particular places.

Mr. Maxwell: If you restrict the cadets you would have to import outside clerical labour. We have ceased to do that. It is a very costly thing to do to go out of the Railway Department and get men unaccustomed to railway work. We have limited ourselves only to taking on lads, taking no adult man in that branch of the service.

Mr. McKerrow: There is no taking-on of lads to get rid of adult labour.

Mr. Winter: I apprehend that in taking on young labour so excessively you wish to have a large young nation.

Mr. Hannay: I think it has been shown in evidence that we take a lad into the service to train him up. We do not take off a man and put a lad on in his place. Some men have been ten or eleven years with us who all started with us as lads; and I may say the attempt to recruit with men was not successful.

Mr. Maxwell: It was entirely unsuccessful, and we have entirely dropped it. Your own case is one of the last where adults were brought in in that way.

Mr. Winter: I do not wish to stipulate that adult labour should be taken on; I only wish to point out that we do not want boy labour out of proportion in any department of the service.

Mr. Hannay: If you do not take up lads you must go outside.

Mr. Winter: The number seems in excess.

Mr. Hannay: Take your own staff at Lyttelton: Suppose instead of nine cadets there were

only five or six, we could not go on without somebody else. We should have to go outside for young men. I think you will admit that. The alternative is either to take on young men, or lads and train them.

Mr. Elvines: Mr. Hannay will find that there are a flock of young men he could bring back who have passed their clerkship: rated cadets of twenty-four that I know of.

Mr. Hannay: You would then have to fill up his place in the country. We have not many cadets of twenty-four.

Mr. Maxwell: I think there is only one lad in the service of twenty-four. We have them all registered.

Mr. Hannay: The great bulk of the lads are at £105 a year.

Mr. Elvines: Our proportion as to cadets is one to three clerks and stationmasters, and in your proportion you seem to exclude porters. Our proportion of these is one to four. The proportion you really wish to put for our acceptance is two to seven, which makes it rather higher. You will really have to be restricted close in that matter.

Mr. Hannay: As regards unskilled labour in the traffic department, we have not the proportion you ask.

Mr. Elvines: When you take the proportion, then you should restrict the number to a greater extent.

Mr. Hannay: How are you going to get the staff if you do not get the cadets?

Mr. Elvines: The proportion is far less. It is only one in three.

Mr. Hannay: No, one to four.

Mr. Elvines: That is one in four. I think you really have, as far as I recollect the numbers, quite the proportion we allow.

Mr. Hannay: The rule has been to take on as many lads as, and no more than, you want to teach the business. I think a year or two ago the business was at a standstill. There was no movement in the staff because there was no increase in business; but last year there was an enormous increase in business, and we took on lads. Next year, if there is no increase in business, we shall not take them on.

Mr. Winter: We do not wish to say you should not take on sufficient cadets to keep up the staff you require for the proper working of the service; but we wish you to make these cadets clerks as soon as they have been in the service the prescribed time: not to keep them as cadets at £105 for an indefinite period; because they are virtually boys as far as salaries are concerned, though they do clerks' work.

Mr. Hannay: All these cadets receiving £90 a year are only lads of nineteen or twenty years of age.

Mr. Winter: Suppose they stop there until they are thirty years of age: would you keep them at that salary?

Mr. Hannay: It has been already stated that there is only one at twenty-four years of age.

Mr. Winter: But you will admit that there is any amount of room for such a thing to take place. It is possible that he might stop there until he died or left the service.

Mr. Hannay: If a lad did not show that he was capable of becoming a clerk, he would not be kept. What you say could not possibly occur.

Mr. Winter: You said there was a lad of twenty-four.

Mr. Hannay: Yes; but he did not start as a lad: he started late.

Mr. Winter: You take on cadets, and when they rise to a certain figure—£105 or thereabouts—they stop for some time. You say not long; but they do stop sometimes. There is a block of boys all pushing upward, and these cadets are taken to do clerks' work of most descriptions.

Mr. McKerrow: That is their business.

Mr. Maxwell: Their promotion depends on their ability to learn.

Mr. Winter: But when their ability is proved they should receive a clerk's salary of £110, with proper regulations for reaching £140. If you say that every cadet retained in the service shall rise from £105 to £110, and so on up to £140, we shall say no more. They are not apprentices; they are in the Commissioners' employ, and are supposed to be retained, not discharged.

Mr. Maxwell: In that case we should have to let a number go out to look for employment elsewhere after serving their time.

Mr. Haden: The difficulty is this: we cannot get further than a clerk.

Mr. McKerrow: "Cadet" is a genteel term for an apprentice.

Mr. Haden: This is the objection, as far as I can see: Cadets are young fellows who get £105 a year. They are shifted about; but when a cadet has finished his time he should get an increase of salary according to your scale. He should not be kept at £105. At present he might be sent out to push a man out at £140 a year.

Mr. Hannay: There are no men pushed out.

Mr. Haden: It may arise. It is a matter of economy. If you can get a man at £105 to do the work of one at £120 you will get him. In every case where he is promoted does he get the pay of the man he succeeds?

Mr. Hannay: Certainly not.

Mr. Haden: Does he get the pay of the class?

Mr. Hannay: A cadet gets £105, and is really kept at boys' work, and your proposal is that the moment he has served five years he should get £120, although he is getting only boys' work to do.

Mr. Haden: After an apprentice serves his time in a shop he expects to be employed as a journeyman.

Mr. Maxwell: Say there are twenty, thirty, or forty cadets getting perhaps £105: they are eligible to be put in a higher place, and there has never been any of this large block. As we have

places for them they are promoted; but they have never to leave the service. They enter the service with the knowledge that they will be promoted as opportunity serves. They have to wait until they get the work. They do not get a boy's pay for men's work.

Mr. Haden: What I wish to point out is this: It is hard to define what is boys' work.

Mr. Maxwell: You cannot.

Mr. Haden: Possibly you may by-and-by. All the clerks in the service are cadets.

Mr. Maxwell: I have been here for the last ten years, and it has not come about.

Mr. Haden: It is possible to do so. The tendency is that way.

Mr. Maxwell: It is not so.

Mr. Haden: How can you judge it?

Mr. Maxwell: Because we have only a sufficient number of cadets on.

Mr. Haden: There are any amount of them doing clerk's work. They are doing the work clerks formerly did.

Mr. Maxwell: No; we have gone on the same lines for eight or nine years. We ceased to take on adults. We preferred to train our men, and promote them. That system has gone on satisfactorily for years, and it is much better than before.

Mr. Haden: You say the reason you take on cadets is that you require them to take a man's place. Why not have a limitation to that number?

Mr. Maxwell: Because you cannot sit down here and say, "I will only take one to three." A lad is required here or there. The want is governed by the number of men raised to the higher grades. The proportion we have now is the proportion we usually have.

Mr. Haden: After a person has served as a cadet, say he shall be rated as a clerk, and have a yearly increase of salary.

Mr. Hannay: The work is very difficult to define.

Mr. Haden: I think the Commissioners might see their way to do it. If a man is not fit to receive a clerk's wages he is not fit to receive wages at all.

Mr. Hannay: Although there are a good many at £105, all taken on during the last three years will go up to £110.

Mr. Haden: I can quite understand that by-and-by the whole of the employés in the clerical department would be cadets, because it would pay to keep them as cadets.

Mr. Maxwell: No; I do not think so.

Mr. McKerrow: The business has been increasing, and their number has been greater.

Mr. Haden: But the proportion has been increasing.

Mr. Maxwell: I dare say if you go back some years you will find that the Government have taken on old men—adult men—most unfitted to be in the service at all; but we determined, years ago, to stop that, and to put on young men, and promote them. I do not think it would be reasonable to commence again putting on adult men in the service who are not fitted for the work over the heads of juniors who are more fitted than they.

Mr. Haden: You might keep clerks for ever at the same salary, and still call them cadets.

Mr. McKerrow: We might do that, but there is only one, as stated, at twenty-four. Twenty-one is about the limit. One came on later than usual—at nineteen. I think the matter is not worth this consideration. There is not a single case of adult labour being taken off to give place to a cadet.

Mr. Haden: But you have cadets doing work which has been done by clerks in days gone by.

Mr. McKerrow: Cadets should be promoted sooner—they should go on up to this stage.

Mr. Haden: If they keep going on they must go on to clerks.

Mr. McKerrow: We have a large number of applications. Several get up to £180. But they cannot get higher until the doors are open upstairs. They have a progressive system to go up to the top story. The service could not carry on without.

Mr. Haden: In the sixth year a cadet should receive a clerk's wages. He is no longer a cadet.

Mr. Hannay: What is a reasonable wage for a class of lads at that age?

Mr. Winter: I think you are hitting the nail on the head now.

Mr. Maxwell: A cadet has to wait until there is a vacancy. There is not the number you think waiting. When we want a lad we take one we think fit for the vacancy and put him in. We do not take on boys for the purpose of displacing men.

Mr. McKerrow: There are more lines every year. The lines are increasing, and more boys are required. There are about three hundred more employés now than a year ago.

Mr. Winter: You say that is not an excessive number: the clerks say it is an excessive number: we represent them, and we have come primed, as it were, with what they have told us. They say there is too great a number, and we want the number reduced. If you say there is not more than the proportion, you cannot have any hesitation in granting the request that the proportion shall not be greater in the future.

Mr. McKerrow: I have not the number at my fingers' ends. I do not think the number is greater than the proportion of one cadet to three clerks and a stationmaster.

Mr. Hannay: Oh, yes; I think there are more.

Mr. Winter: It was stated just now that when a cadet arrives at £105 a year he was occupying the position of a clerk—he was doing a clerk's work. "Very, well," says Mr. Maxwell, "that is what he is paid for;" but, on the other hand, you say that you are not going to let a clerk do cadet's work.

Mr. Maxwell: Not adult clerks' work. We are not going to employ men to do clerical work that a boy can do as well.

Mr. Winter: But you keep an individual on boy's pay to do a man's work. I say there should be some distinction. It is unsatisfactory. You should either restrict the proportion of cadets to

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.

Mr. Winter: Just so; take on a man.

Mr. Hannay: But it might be to do a boy's work.

Mr. Maxwell: We cannot tell how many we want. We do not know how many leave the service—retire or die. We have no control over that, and we have also to appoint others to the higher grades. We want lads to fill the places. When promotions occur we take on lads—sometimes many in a short period. Then again the gates shut: men do not leave the service. At one time we did not take any on for a year. We cannot fix any rule for taking on lads. When there are no promotions we do not as a rule get them, and when promotions are active we take them on.

Mr. Elvines: The tenor of your statement is that an increase of promotions would necessitate an increase of lads.

Mr. Hannay: That is true.

Mr. Elvines: If you can show us that the promotion has been in proportion to the lads taken on, that would be enough.

Mr. McKerrow: This is an expanding service.

Mr. Hannay: I think we are making too much of this. I believe we are unanimous that we should not limit the number of boys to be taken on. The question is, how should they get promotion? It is very rarely that we have lads with us over six years without getting promotion.

Mr. Maxwell: Some have an opportunity of promotion quickly, by passing an examination.

Mr. Hoban: After being in the service six years they should be rated as clerks.

Mr. Edwards: One of our objects is to regulate the labour-market. We have thought out the situation carefully and thoughtfully, and we find that the only way to regulate it is to have rules laid down fixing the proportion of adult to boy labour. We have made it this proportion. This deputation is simply carrying out the ruling of the union. I do not think the deputation could abandon its instructions.

Mr. McKerrow: You are intelligent men, and if you all agree to a little modification there is no difficulty as far as your association is concerned. You are here to arrange matters. We have got through the apprenticeship question, and if you agree to the cadets we shall be able to get on.

Mr. Hoban: Let us pass it and consider it later. With regard to shunting?

Mr. McKerrow: We quite agree with you on that point.

Mr. Edwards: Can porters be promoted to be stationmasters?

Mr. Maxwell: We have done that.

Mr. Edwards: Is it understood that porters can be stationmasters? I might inform you that Traffic Managers rule otherwise. It has been understood until the last few years that porters can be promoted to be stationmasters, but now Traffic Managers rule that no porters can become stationmasters. We have porters learning the duties connected with the work, such as telegraphy, &c., and who have been actually promoted to be stationmasters, but who have been afterwards reduced again to porters, and informed that they could not become stationmasters.

Mr. Maxwell: Where is that?

Mr. Edwards: I will refer you to Remuera: a porter was appointed, and was afterwards told that he could not hold the position.

Mr. Maxwell: That must be a mistake: it must be through some misunderstanding. That misunderstanding will be removed.

Mr. Hoban: With regard to shunting, Mr. Owen has pointed out to me that in some prominent places boys are in the habit of doing the shunting. They come within this arrangement?

Mr. McKerrow: We agree to that, where the amount of work requires a man: in main yards, &c.

Mr. Hoban: Now we will take the hours of labour. In discussing it several points have cropped up. I would ask you to read your suggestions again.

Mr. McKerrow [having read the proposed regulations, see page 45]: The concession of three hours includes very nearly all the services along the lines. There are a few exceptional cases where there would be "standing" without acknowledgment of pay. If they were paid it would come to this, that men performing the least important services would be receiving the highest pay if we rigidly allowed the excess of time. We have made it so that drivers, firemen, and guards will know what they are entitled to without reference to the foreman. Although sixty hours is recognised as a week's work, it does not follow that a man is to be paid for only three-fourths of that time: sixty hours is the maximum.

Mr. Hoban: I am sorry you do not adopt the proposal with regard to eight hours. That is the main point for which we have come up to day. We maintain that ten hours is too much for a day's labour. We say you should adopt the eight-hours system—eight hours work a day or forty-eight hours a week. You make it sixty hours a week. Why do you do it?

Mr. Maxwell: Without the dinner-hour that would be fifty-four.

Mr. Hoban: That is all the more reason why we should get the forty-eight hours. We ask you to make a concession of these hours. If you say you will make the concession that will end the whole matter.

Mr. McKerrow: We have gone a long way to meet you. If you act on the corresponding principle it will be right.

Mr. Hoban: We go on the principle of what is a fair day's work. I think that, eight hours being the recognised number all over the world, it is time we should get it carried out here.

Mr. McKerrow: It would be a very serious expense.

Mr. Hoban: It would be very little extra expense.

Mr. McKerrow: A great deal. Time and a quarter adds up expense quickly.

Mr. Hoban: I do not ask for eight hours. I ask definitely whether you will give this forty-eight hours a week concession.

Mr. McKerrow: We have given it a great deal of consideration, and gone, I think, a little further than we ought to go with the conciliatory intention of giving something acceptable.

Mr. Hoban: One thing I forgot. I think if the guards are working more than the regular number of hours they should be paid the same as for overtime.

Mr. McKerrow: We agree to that.

Mr. Hoban: Also the same with men in the traffic?

Mr. McKerrow: No; we can regulate their hours so as to come within these hours a week.

Mr. Hoban: You practically agree to our terms, except that the time shall be sixty hours instead of forty-eight hours a week. We think forty-eight hours a fair week's work.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes, continuous work.

Mr. Hoban: That simply comes to the old position. You pay a clerk whether he is at continuous work or not.

Mr. Owen: I think you admit the pay is lower than in the Australian Colonies?

Mr. Maxwell: Yes.

Mr. Owen: I think you will find that in other countries than Victoria and New South Wales.

Mr. Maxwell: You are speaking of drivers and firemen.

Mr. Owen: Yes; there is no sixty hours there, and yet they are higher paid.

Mr. McKerrow: I admit the rate of remuneration is higher in the other colonies. They are richer, or something of that sort; all salaries are higher. We must bear in mind that New Zealand is mainly an agricultural country. We have minerals, no doubt; but we are not so richly endowed as New South Wales in the matter of minerals. We must bear in mind that the service does not exist for the employés, but for the settlers. For years past settlers have been growing oats, wheat, butter, cheese, and other products at scarcely paying rates, working early and late with their families; and it is really that class who will have to make up these higher rates we are now discussing. You see the railway-rates cannot be increased because it is these people who will have to pay them, and if the railway-rates cannot meet all the demands on the revenue, it simply means that these people will be taxed so much more. We cannot run away to Victoria and New South Wales for our standard; we must take things as they are in New Zealand.

Mr. Owen: I quite admit that.

Mr. McKerrow: Another thing I may mention: I have never been in New South Wales, but I presume a driver would very much sooner work here in this genial climate than in New South Wales, with its climate of a torrid nature.

Mr. Owen: There is a good deal of sound, common-sense in your remarks; but I think the railways in Victoria and New South Wales will not stand on a par with your railways. I think they stand on a much lower footing. They are not paying so well as yours.

Mr. McKerrow: They are paying better. Last year they paid 4 per cent. in Victoria and in New South Wales something over 3 per cent.

Mr. Owen: Well, sir, you have £63,000 above your estimate. I must congratulate you on having done so well, but if you appropriate part of that to meet our request I do not think we shall be asking a very great deal. How will the ten hours you quote come in with an affair like this—ten hours or a hundred miles. That is a very important word—that little word a hundred miles. You take ten hours or a hundred miles: take a shunting-engine, you only allow it to book sixty hours.

Mr. McKerrow: You do not count shunting in the rate of wages; there is no fixed rate. It does not affect wages or anybody's pay.

Mr. Owen: If you run a man ten hours or 100 miles, if he runs over 100 miles, naturally he would consider that a day's work; if he did ten hours and did not do 100 miles, that would make a day's work. I think you will find that ten hours and 100 miles, does affect the rate men have been paid. We will leave that. I was taken aback altogether. Sixty hours is condemned all over the world.

Mr. Maxwell: You have obtained large concessions in standing time.

Mr. Owen: With regard to the dinner-hour; you will admit we get no dinner-hour. We shall have to take our meals on the engine.

Mr. McKerrow: Supposing a man is standing he will have plenty of time to have a meal in a proper way. We would not deduct that. We have tried to avoid, in making this arrangement, any troublesome sort of computation between the foreman and the driver. We want the men to be in as independent a position as is consistant with discipline. We want, in other words, that they shall be men and not slaves.

Mr. Owen: I may say you have levelled a blow at the locomotive men by these sixty hours.

Mr. McKerrow: I am sorry to hear that. It does not mean exactly sixty hours. We put it at that when we were considering the week's work; after that it will be time and a quarter. Standing time is to count in the sixty hours: formerly that was booked differently. Now we allow three hours at a spell; nothing is deducted unless it is three continuous hours. No notice will be taken of one hour and a quarter, but if you stand four hours then notice will be taken of it. It prevents booking off, and avoids irritation.

Mr. Owen: You say sixty hours a week. Does that include seven days' work?

Mr. Maxwell: No, six days. Sunday time is entirely independent of the sixty hours.

Mr. Owen: Then, Sunday time totals separately from the week's time in the rate that is to be paid?

Mr. McKerrow: Yes, time and a quarter.

Mr. Winter: It is no good wasting time. You have made it sixty hours; we have made it forty-eight. We could not accept your proposals: they would probably tar-and-feather us when we got back to Christchurch. Your own employés have decided that forty-eight hours shall be a

week's work. I consider, now you have arrived at the conclusion to have sixty hours instead of forty-eight all that we have to do is to take word back to that effect. We do not see that there can be any compromise: forty-eight hours must be a week's work. We must admit that we could not get you to accede to their demands. If that is not conceded the matter must fail. The main principle all over the world will be forty-eight hours, and this is refused to the men in New Zealand.

Mr. Edwards: I rise to indorse the opinions of Mr. Winter. We could not compromise in the matter; we must take back the resolution arrived at. If there was a difficulty pointed out we could arrange accordingly.

Mr. Maxwell: It was pointed out that the exceptional cases were so many that they would subvert the rule.

Mr. Edwards: I do not see why we could not easily arrange it, even if there were a great number of these cases.

Mr. Edwards: I understand you to say fifty-four hours a week. In some cases men would vary over their meals.

Mr. McKerrow: In a case of standing it would not matter what time was taken.

Mr. Owen: Our idea was to eliminate any of this three hours' standing.

Mr. McKerrow: I quite understand you when you say you have to talk this matter over, and take back the answer to the Executive. But you are men of enlightenment. The whole business of the world, the making of laws, and so on, is all settled by compromises—that is to say, there is debate and consideration, and each party approximates or gives way a little, and a workable result is arrived at. I think, when you think this out, you will acknowledge that the Commissioners have gone a long way to meet you.

Mr. Owen: I cannot see why, having gone this distance, you cannot give another six hours. You admit that you have a good staff, and that the wages are low as compared with the other colonies. I do not think the climate has anything to do with the matter. Some people would not come here from the other side. I admit you have made great concessions, but, you see, it will cost only a little more. What, after all, is the cost so long as you do justice to the men? The railways should not be looked upon as a means of raising revenue: they should be looked on as a means of making the country prosperous. You say you have made £63,000 profit: why not give the men a little of that?

Mr. McKerrow: The country might not be so prosperous in a year or two. If you look at the statistics you will find that the revenue goes up and down. Last year was a singularly prosperous year. The products were never before so large as last year.

Mr. Owen: I think you will find that the products increase year by year. Why not give us some of the profits?

Mr. McKerrow: It is almost impossible to work the eight hours a day.

Mr. Winter: Forty-eight hours a week?

Mr. McKerrow: Forty-eight hours a week.

Mr. Owen: Do I understand that the porters, shunters, and other men shall, as far as possible, work forty-eight hours?

Mr. McKerrow: Yes; but it cannot be done at all the stations. It will be done as far as possible. We are all in favour of eight hours' labour, only we think we have to apply it according to circumstances.

Mr. Owen: Then, it is only the unfortunate running men who will get this blow levelled at their heads.

Mr. McKerrow: I think you will admit that there are a great many not running ten hours a day.

Mr. Owen: That is nine points in my favour. I can quote cases in England where men do not work six hours. They run from Bristol to Exeter—seventy-five miles—and back, and then they are done.

Mr. Maxwell: What wages do they get?

Mr. Owen: I believe, 7s. 6d. The North-Western Railway Company lately gave their men 6d. a day advance without being asked. They were getting 6s. or 7s. I am only quoting these cases to show what they are doing in the Old Country which we have left behind.

Mr. Maxwell: There is a lot of standing time in the sixty hours which was formerly booked off. Take the time from Christchurch to Oamaru: that is six hours five minutes: how long is a driver on duty there?

Mr. Owen: We are supposed to be round in the passenger-yards at 10.40. We have to be on more than an hour before. About half-past 9 is the starting time.

Mr. Maxwell: When do you get off?

Mr. Owen: About half-past 6 o'clock.

Mr. Maxwell: That is eight hours or eight hours and a half. That is a most important run. Now, look at some of the branch lines. The run in is three hours, standing five hours, and the run back three hours; that is eleven hours. If we adopt your proposal the driver would get a day and a half's pay—more than a more responsible man. He would be paid as much as the driver who ran a long and heavy journey.

Mr. Owen: My point is the standing. Many men have no cleaners at all. The fireman lights up the engine, and gets up steam. He runs down to the station, where he stops during the day. All that is marked in the standing column.

Mr. Maxwell: Time cleaning the engine would not count as standing.

Mr. Owen: No; but it would be put in the standing book. I have quoted a case in England where a man was standing five out of fifteen hours. He had to get the engine ready for the morning. It all totalled up to thirteen days, and he was paid for that.

Mr. Maxwell: On the tramway the drivers are paid 45s. a week for sixty-six hours.

Mr. Owen: I hope you do not put us on the footing of tramway-men.

Mr. Maxwell: The work is harder on a tramway.

Mr. Owen: I do not see that you have given much concession in standing time.

Mr. Maxwell: You laid so much stress on it. We thought we were making a great concession.

Mr. Owen: I do not think there is a railway in the world where they have such a thing as standing time.

Mr. McKerrow: But they are paid by the running.

Mr. Owen: Yes; By the trip system. In America they are getting, in some instances, treble what we are getting.

Mr. Maxwell: They are paid by the mile in America, and they get very low pay in some instances.

Mr. Owen: We do not run so hard as they do generally, and it takes us longer to get to a place. On the other side, I think they have nine hours a day.

Mr. Rotheram: They have fifty-five hours a week.

Mr. Hannay: Do you think it would be reasonable to make no distinction between a man doing important work and one doing ordinary work.

Mr. Owen: I do not want to answer that question. You have laid down sixty hours a week. Even supposing they have fifty-five hours a week on the other side, they are not satisfied with that. They are asking for eight hours per day, each day to stand by itself on its own bottom; and, further than that, that the traffic time should be so arranged that they shall not be asked to remain on duty more than eight hours. Compare that with the question here. I think if you are impartial you will look at one request and then at the other. You see in the one case the men are getting five hours less and are not satisfied, but are going for considerably higher things than we are. I do not know whether they will obtain their wishes; that is a matter for the future to decide. I simply draw attention to what they are asking for there. You want us to accept sixty hours a week, and they are dissatisfied with fifty-five. I think they ask that each ending day shall not exceed eight hours. We have endeavoured, instead of asking for eight hours a day, to get forty-eight hours a week. We thought that would simplify matters greatly. We do not want to make the time and a quarter rate. If you would reconsider the matter—think it over—come! To tell you the truth I am ashamed to go back. I feel I would rather take the boat and go to a fresh sphere, because of this sixty hours a week. I think I have said all I can.

Mr. McKerrow: Bear in mind that is the maximum.

Mr. Owen: I think I am quoting Mr. Maxwell's words, "Exceptions become the rule."

Mr. Winter: I would like to point out to you that this concession has not been asked for on the influence of the moment, but after due consideration and deliberation. The movement is not singular as far as New Zealand is concerned, but everywhere. I mentioned, I think, before that it is in the march of civilisation—that the turning point has arrived. From long hours we must come down to comparatively short hours. It has come to this now: There is a natural law of progress which says that ten hours a day are too long; and I believe that everywhere the whole of the labouring classes have come to the conclusion that eight hours must be the limit. Your servants have had the matter under consideration for some time, and now ask you to keep pace with the times, and reduce the hours of labour to forty-eight. If we go back and inform them that you insist on sixty hours you will see the unfavourable effect it will have. If they find that all hope is thrown away—that they ask for bread and receive a stone—it will cause so much feeling of dissatisfaction among the men that there is no knowing what will be done. You know an avalanche begins from very little, but gradually grows and gathers strength, and finally falls with a crash. The labour question may assume the proportions of that avalanche. I would ask you to consider whether it would not be better to concede these reasonable demands than to risk this avalanche business. I have watched the men, and I feel that they are determined. I think with Mr. Hoban that, as the difference between us does not really amount to a great deal, it would be very wise if you were to concede the lot.

At 1.12 p.m. the discussion was adjourned for lunch. It was resumed at 3 o'clock.

Mr. McKerrow: The question of eight hours, I think, we have fought pretty well out. I have made known to you the opinion of the Commissioners, and you—Mr. Hoban and Mr. Winter—said, and it was generally understood, that you would have to see the Executive before anything could be done in the matter. You are not prepared to meet the Commissioners on that point.

Mr. Hoban: Our instructions are these: That we, at all hazards, get the eight hours, or forty-eight hours a week. We have submitted the matter to you, and you refuse. We must now return to Christchurch, when you will probably be asked to submit it to arbitration. If you refuse arbitration, then we must resort to extreme measures. That is a thing to be deplored, and I myself have never counselled it. Some people have said that I and one or two others have desired to put ourselves most prominently before the public, but that has never been my object. If I can assist these men I will. I think the matter is one the Commissioners should well consider. We are supported by large bodies of men throughout the colonies, and if extreme measures are resorted to in our case it may cost the colony not £20,000 nor £30,000, but £100,000.

Mr. McKerrow: You mean calling the men out.

Mr. Hoban: Yes. The men are so determined. They say this principle of eight hours is an almost universal system. It will be all over the world, and why should not the Commissioners in a graceful way give the same terms. You admit the hours are reasonable. The only point in the discussion is whether we shall have the time or not. It is only six hours per week each man, and for this simple concession you force us to take an extreme step. It is hardly worth our while staying, because, if we do not get this, the matter is not worth any more consideration. I regret to have to speak so plainly, but I do not see how we can treat with you at all, unless this is settled. We have thought this matter out in the Executive, and have their opinion; and we have the advice

of business people and traders. We do not take the advice of candidates for the Legislature all over the country: we take the opinion of business men and others. I simply again have to express regret if we have to resort to extreme measures; but I am sure we shall have the power of the colony at our back, and the members of the House. I was present there last night, and the remarks made by the members who spoke all tended to show that our requests were considered very fair and reasonable indeed. While thanking you for one or two points or concessions—very small after all—your replies to several of our communications are not altogether what we expected. I wish to put this before you: You said our proportion with regard to boy-labour would enable you to employ a larger number of boys, and that the number proposed would displace a large number of men. Our object is to limit the number of boys. It would not only displace men, it would simply give you a larger number of boys for the purpose. But we will simply resume the hours of labour. I ask again whether you will meet us in this matter. At the present time you are both judge and jury. You are hearing a case practically against yourselves, and you are, as one of my colleagues points out, deciding in the matter. Now, where there are two points in dispute, it is usual to refer the thing to a different party. Now, as the matter refers to the Government, and will cost the people a lot of money, and as you have by your reply said the request is not unfair, I think we should submit the proposal to arbitration, and save the country the cost of extreme measures. I do not think it is worth while taking up your time, gentlemen, unless my colleagues would like to put their opinions before you.

Mr. Owen: We have had advice from and consultation with some of the largest bodies of men in this colony, and we are in association with large bodies on the other side; and I do not know what they would do and think of us if we attempted to meet you. I think they would drown us if we got on the other side of the water.

Mr. Winter: That is a point on which I propose to touch. The Maritime Council is very hot for the eight hours, and so are others; and we claim to be recognised as a portion of the trades unions. If we were to go and accept a thing like that, and go back to Christchurch and advise the Executive to accept the concessions you are pleased to make, we would be working in direct opposition to the great principles laid down by the labour federations. We should be looked upon as undoing what had been done in the past. It is contrary to reason to do it. Also bear in mind that, if there is the slightest tendency in the direction of adopting extreme measures, not only will the Maritime Council assist us, but they will urge us to do, and almost compel us to do, from a union point of view. This is a point which ought to be considered before we depart for the day.

Mr. McKerrow: The Commissioners are entirely in favour of eight hours' work, but we discriminate between eight hours' continuous work and intermittent labour. We have already pointed out that in the locomotive department and running department it is almost impossible to confine the work to eight hours a day. It was admitted that there were exceptional cases that could be treated as exceptional, but it was also pointed out that there were so many exceptional cases that they would almost form the rule. Suppose we agreed we simply could not observe it, and it was agreed that it would be very absurd to have two sets of men, two stationmasters, &c. With regard to extreme measures, I am glad to see that you deplore them; but I can hardly see that the Commissioners, who are intrusted with this great property of the colony—worth fourteen millions sterling—and pressed on all sides by the settlers to reduce the rates, so as to enable them to traffic their produce to the markets—I do not see that we could accept the responsibility of adding to the expenses of the country, and on that account the Commissioners have given the matter very careful consideration, and really hesitate to go further than they have already done. We have already added several thousand pounds to the expenditure of the country, as referred to in the forenoon, and I think you will see that, by allowing for standing time, and so forth, we have gone a long way towards meeting your demands. I quite agree with Mr. Winter that you are part of a great organization, and that it would be difficult for you to say why you departed from the letter of your instructions; but as reasonable men you will be able to see the difficulty in connection with continuous and intermittent labour.

Mr. Hoban: Well, then, what you practically say is that you absolutely decline to make eight hours a day's work, or forty-eight a week's work.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes.

Mr. Maxwell: For intermittent service.

Mr. Hoban: Then the next question is: Would you be prepared to submit it to independent parties?

Mr. McKerrow: I think not. We have been intrusted with the service, and it is no part of our duty to delegate or shirk its duties. We must take our responsibility for the administration of this great service.

Mr. Hoban: You talk a great deal about pleasing the settlers, and this and that person, but do you not think also you should consider the employés as well.

Mr. McKerrow: That is exactly what we are trying to do. We are holding the balance between the two parties.

Mr. Hoban: You say you made £63,000 last year: why not spend some of that in this way? You admit the demands are reasonable.

Mr. McKerrow: Not exactly. We have said all along eight hours' continuous labour—ten hours intermittent. We consider that a fair approximation to equality.

Mr. Hoban: You also say this eight hours is a fair system?

Mr. McKerrow: Yes; continuous hours.

Mr. Hoban: No; eight hours. As unionists we must press this.

Mr. McKerrow: I said you are co-operating with them and demanding eight hours, and your difficulty is to explain to them what is the difference between continuous and intermittent labour.

Mr. Hoban: I think they understand the difference between the two cases. The simple difference between the two points is a matter of extremes. Then, we have your final answer on this question. You are willing to take the consequences if anything happens. We shall instruct our secretary, and I have no doubt about what will be done. Of course, we shall consider it, and we shall instruct our secretary to offer arbitration. You say you are willing to save the country expense, and we shall see if you are willing to stand the expense of blocking the trade of the colony.

Mr. Owen: The Shag Point difficulty, I think, pointed out to the Commissioners what may occur.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes.

Mr. Owen: The unionists do not handle packages, luggage, or anything of that sort. I only want to point that out.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes.

Mr. Owen: As far as we are all concerned here, as representing the Executive, we deplore the idea—the very possibility—of extreme measures; in, fact, we never dreamt it would come near to such a thing. Of course, when it comes to that unionists all hang together.

Mr. McKerrow: I should like to ask you one thing: Do you think it compatible with the ideas of liberty to put these threats before the public? Do you think there is much difference between the morality of the men who threatened in the Shag Point difficulty to which you refer and the burglar who meets you in some lonely part, and says, "I want your money. If you deliver it up quietly we will be friends; but of course I have a pistol here to do execution." As regards the morality, do you not think they are on a par?

Mr. Owen: I should be very sorry to do anything of the sort. I disclaim the idea as far as I can possibly do it.

Mr. McKerrow: Of course, I know you would not be a burglar.

Mr. Owen: But you must remember you have refused arbitration.

Mr. McKerrow: I have explained that it is beyond our power. We are the arbitrators appointed by the Government representing the country. We are arbitrators in all matters relating to the railway service; so that it is no use going to another set of arbitrators. Parliament must appoint them if they are to be appointed. We cannot do so, or agree to co-operate with them. Of course that is the legal aspect of the matter.

Mr. Owen: You have refused absolutely to reconsider the sixty hours a week.

Mr. McKerrow: Supposing this other set of arbitrators were to decide against you, you would simply have this bloodshed argument in your pocket.

Mr. Hoban: No; we shall demand eight hours for the whole service. We shall then submit the matter to arbitration, and if it said that ten hours is fair and reasonable, and compatible with the interests of the workmen of the colony, then we shall be able to agree to that.

Mr. McKerrow: But I understand you to say that you are unable to agree to that.

Mr. Winter: Arbitrators would be of no use whatever unless both parties agreed to their decision.

Mr. McKerrow: It was stated that unionism was of such a nature that your combination was, in a measure, powerless in the matter—that you must agree to eight hours.

Mr. Winter: Morally we are compelled to, but not literally.

Mr. McKerrow: In arbitration there would be a deed. Presuming we were to agree to arbitration, we should have to sign a deed, and one of its conditions would be to abide by the award, which might be for ten hours.

Mr. Winter: We should have to abide by it, but unionism would not permit it.

Mr. McKerrow: Unionism would not permit your Association to acccept ten hours a day; but if we are forced to submit to arbitration we are willing to abide by the award. With regard to the Shag Point matter, that is very much like a man coming with a pistol and demanding your money or your life.

Mr. Winter: I say no. We are not demanding your money: we are simply demanding an increase of the public money doled out for a public service.

Mr. McKerrow: We are so far the representatives of the public in this matter.

Mr. Winter: But I am a shareholder in it.

Mr. McKerrow: Exactly; but there are 600,000 shareholders.

Mr. Winter: But each one is an individual shareholder, and no one has any particular claim. It is a public concern. We do not ask your money or your life, but simply a little bigger share of the distribution in the way, not of money, but of time.

Mr. McKerrow: I would like to point out that the Commissioners cannot accept arbitration, because they have no power to do so. They are dependent on the supplies voted by Parliament, and if Parliament refused to vote the supplies arbitration would be to no purpose. If the Commissioners agreed to make regulations very largely increasing the expenditure the House would very likely decline to pass the vote; so that we could not agree to arbitration, as we could not be sure of giving effect to the decision.

Mr. Winter: The House was quite willing to vote a lesser amount, because you had been able to reduce the expenditure on the railways to a considerable extent. They found no fault with that; and if you ask for more money I do not think the Government or the House will refuse it.

Mr. Hoban: Further, you know as well as I do that, as matter of fact, if the railways asked for £100,000 a year it would have to be placed on the estimates. But it is not necessary to ask for that supply. As you say, you made £63,000 this year: what will it be next year, with the prices of produce higher, as I hope they will be? If you ask Parliament I do not think there will be three men in the House against us.

Mr. Owen: I would like to point out, about this sixty hours, that it is so much in advance of anything the other colonies have been asked to concede in any shape or form. I do not want to quote

cases. You quote them for continuous labour. I could quote any amount. There are men simply walking about, but they come under the eight hours. I could quote cases of men coming under the continuous labour term as you say, but they are not continuous workers; they are actually intermittent workers. I do not want to compromise them in any shape or form. They are there when the necessity arises, but they are no more continuous workers than we are.

Mr. Maxwell: This intermittent labour is not generally treated differently outside. I think I pointed out that the tram-drivers' work is sixty-six hours, as agreed by the Trades and Labour Council.

Mr. Winter: The Trades and Labour Council repudiate that entirely. The deputation never had the power to accept such a thing.

Mr. Maxwell: What did they demand, Mr. Winter?

Mr. Winter: I cannot tell on the spur of the moment; but they repudiate the idea *in toto* that they demanded sixty-six hours.

Mr. Maxwell: They called out the men because that demand was not fulfilled. The demand is for sixty-six hours.

Mr. Winter: No; they did not demand that. Dr. Grace is willing to concede that.

Mr. Owen: We would be stultifying ourselves by accepting your terms. They would say, "They are not men at all." I cannot see how it is possible to accept ten hours. Take the Home-country: ten hours has gone by.

Mr. McKerrow: I do not think so.

Mr. Hoban: I think we have been harping upon this question long enough. It is like running our heads against a stone wall. The Commissioners have made up their minds, as we could see by their having their replies written out, not to give us what is fair and reasonable. They do not look at it on the side of labour, but on the other side. It is only a question now of who is the stronger when it comes to the point. I think, as they have pushed us so far, there is nothing like plain speaking in these things. We shall have to fight it out to the bitter end. We will pass it over. With regard to piecework, here again the Commissioners do not debate the matter fairly. When we debated the matter fairly their only argument was that they feared it would result in the "Government stroke;" and, if you think that replies to all the arguments in the matter, I can only say that your judgment is not altogether that of Solomon's. We pointed out defects in the system, but you said if we allowed the system to be abolished it would result in the "Government stroke." It was pointed out that you have Government men watching the others—looking through windows at these men, who are industrious men. You practically say, "We will have the piecework as we think fit." We ask you if you will abolish piecework—yes or no; but you simply reply, "Where piecework is considered desirable the pay shall be not less than the ordinary wages rate, but workmen will be able to earn up to time and a quarter."

Mr. McKerrow: I think you can take our word for it that, as only one-eighth of the work is done on piece, and as Mr. Rotheram informs me the proportion can still be lessened, it will be restricted.

Mr. Hoban: Why not have day-work? What is your objection besides the "Government stroke."

Mr. McKerrow: We want the best workman to show the way to the others to work, and give him a chance to distinguish himself. In this way you set up a standard of work, and do not get into a humdrum system.

Mr. Hoban: Do you not see the humdrum system all over the world.

Mr. McKerrow: In the Home-country, at all the great engineering shops where they build so many engines, wherever it is practicable, the work is all done by piecework. That shows that where the greatest experience is gained in conducting work it has dropped down to a system of piecework.

Mr. Hoban: Well, admitting that, we are not in England; we are in New Zealand. We are far more enlightened than they are in Great Britain.

Mr. Maxwell: We still will have to follow the Old Country in many things.

Mr. Hoban: You know how the Old Country in our time treated unions—how they were put down, and men sent to gaol for holding meetings. But we can discuss matters more fearlessly in New Zealand. Surely you do not mean to say that if you give a fair day's pay to a man, and have a foreman over him, that that man will revert to the "Government stroke."

Mr. McKerrow: I say it is inherent in human nature to do so.

Mr. Hoban: But if you had a foreman to keep him at work some men would not do better.

Mr. McKerrow: No. I have known men who would sham in your presence. You can take a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink.

Mr. Hoban: You could turn them away.

Mr. McKerrow: You hesitate greatly before you turn a man off. He may have a wife and children, and comradeship and other ties.

Mr. Hoban: The Government do not consider that.

Mr. McKerrow: The Government service is the best employment in the country. Many are extremely eager to get into the railway service. I have some difficulty in fending people off who wish appointments for their friends. It is the same with my brother Commissioners. It is the same with other positions in the Government service. The people are eager to get appointments.

Mr. Hoban: Yes; some positions are very snug; I should be glad to get one myself. But if you ask men who work in the Government workshops they will tell you to-morrow they would prefer outside shops.

Mr. McKerrow: The advantage of the Government service is this: The work goes on steadily year after year; and the pay is there for certain on pay-day.

Mr. Hoban: So it is with other large firms.

Mr. McKerrow: No; I do not think so always.

Mr. Hoban: The objection is that it is an unhealthy stimulus.

Mr. McKerrow: No; by piecework a man gets the reward of his industry.

Mr. Hoban: No; his own industry will bring his wages down. These charges are averaged now and then; and if you saw a man in your employ making double wages, do you mean to say you would not regulate that, and cut it down one-half?

Mr. McKerrow: It is in evidence that we will not reduce the wages in any way, and will allow time and a quarter to be made.

Mr. Hoban: You say you will not reduce wages now, but by-and-by you will reduce them from £25 to £20 per month. You would cut it down so that a man would only make day-wages. Men work hard because of their avarice. I do not think the majority should suffer because of these men. The majority say they suffer under piecework, but you will go by the minority.

Mr. Winter: I think that was threshed out. I thought you admitted you would conciliate the men in this.

Mr. McKerrow: We do agree in the main to decrease it. We do not want to diminish your pay, and we will restrict even the present piecework.

Mr. Winter: If you see the necessity of restricting it, why not abolish it altogether? They do not do it outside.

Mr. McKerrow: Do you say outside shops do not have piecework?

Mr. Winter: No; Scott Brothers, of Christchurch, and Anderson do not have piecework. I think we might agree that forgers should be excluded. It is not altogether piecework. A certain work is let to a man at a certain price mutually agreed upon. Leave forgers out of the question.

Mr. Maxwell: Wheelmakers come in the same category.

Mr. Winter: I do not think so.

Mr. Maxwell: Wheelmaking is done by the gang.

Mr. Winter: We have never made wheels at Addington.

Mr. Rotheram: No; only at Hillside.

Mr. Winter: Have they ever been made on day-work.

Mr. Rotheram: I do not know. It is now all piecework.

Mr. McKerrow: Could it not be made by contract-work?

Mr. Rotheram: Well, I believe we could take anything by contract-work.

Mr. Winter: If *bonâ fide*, we cannot restrict any man from taking contract-work.

Mr. Rotheram: The same as the brassfounder. He does the whole thing with an assistant.

Mr. Winter: No; that is the mischief of the thing. The foreman makes a pound or two a week out of the assistants. The brass-moulder gets so much a pound for all the brass castings. He has two moulders working at the minimum rate of wages, and he does not do any great amount of work himself.

Mr. Rotheram: But he is skilled.

Mr. Winter: The assistants are also skilled labourers.

Mr. Rotheram: That is simply absurd.

Mr. Winter: If it is, then it is your fault, because they are two apprentices turned out of your shops. If we exclude these cases as *bonâ fide* contracts, will you agree to the abolition of piecework, then?

Mr. McKerrow: I think we can meet you there.

Mr. Winter: Brass-moulders, forgers, and wheelmakers excepted.

Mr. Maxwell: It will knock off nine-tenths.—Is brass casting to be considered contract-work too?

Mr. Winter: Yes; they are men making money out of other men's work. Let all share alike. Let the brass-moulder employ them.

Mr. Edwards: If the moulder employs his assistants, mind, it will aggravate the case more than it does now.

Mr. Winter: Pay a certain man for being the leading man. Let each man have a fair share of the profits.

Mr. Rotheram: I think that is done.

Mr. Winter: I beg your pardon; it is not.

Mr. Rotheram: Mr. Winter is speaking about things he does not understand.

Mr. Winter: I am speaking from information received from the men there. If I cannot trust the men I must abide by the consequences. It is now some little time since I was in Christchurch. If Mr. Rotheram has made alterations since I left, I cannot be expected to be cognisant of that fact. In contracting, as at present in vogue, the head man makes a profit out of another person's labours.

Mr. Winter: We again ask you to limit the cadets to the proportion. If it is necessary to take boys let them start, after serving five years, on the road to £140 a year. We think you might adopt one of these courses.

Mr. McKerrow: With regard to the limitation, we have talked that matter out. We shall employ only as many as are necessary. With regard to the cadets, the practice, as it works out, is very much like this: After serving six years they pass on to clerks, unless for some reason—such as inefficiency, or want of attention—they are kept back. After six years' service he goes on by £10 increases up to £140. A lad of fifteen would be put on for five years. He would be aged twenty when his time is served, but he is kept as a cadet until he is twenty-one. He would then pass on to be a clerk, and go on, arriving at £140 by the time he was twenty-four. Of course he stands still there for some time, but he may rise earlier if the vacancies occur, and he is expert and efficient.

Mr. Maxwell: He may be appointed at twenty.

Mr. Winter: These are exceptional instances, of course.

Mr. Maxwell: There are a good many.

Mr. Winter: I am given to understand that in the clerical department—I go upon information received, and some one may have gone to Christchurch since I was there—such cases do not very often happen. We are bound to say there are more cadets being appointed than there is any need for. There are more cadets than can become clerks; and you admitted that you could not possibly pay a clerk for doing a boy's work, and therefore care must be taken to prevent the press upward.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes; that will be our plan in future.

Mr. Winter: Will you agree to the proposal that a cadet, after five years' service, shall receive a clerk's salary?

Mr. McKerrow: No; I said that after five years he shall go on to £110 if a suitable opening occurs, and rise on to £120. He may have to wait, unless there are openings for him. He will have to wait as a cadet, but at the end of six years he will be a clerk, if efficient.

Mr. Winter: But that is the question. What is efficiency? How can we explain that?

Mr. Maxwell: You can go back and tell them that they can reach £110 in four years if they like to go up for the Civil Service Examination. If a lad passes the Senior Civil Service Examination, he can reach £110 in three years nine months. It depends upon a man's industry and ability.

Mr. Haden: You put it down that it is possible for a smart young man to come to the front in four years. It is a very nice rule to have; but he has to proceed up by regular stages to the clerk's class, where he has to wait. You said he would be paid if he went in for efficiency; but many competent men are to be found in the fourth class.

Mr. Maxwell: The regulation is this: Cadets who pass the Junior Civil Service Examination will be allowed to count three months' service for it, and cadets who pass the Senior Civil Service Examination will be allowed to count one year's service, and the dates of promotion will be earlier by those periods.

Mr. Haden: Well, what we ask for is that a cadet, when he has served his apprenticeship, shall proceed to the class of clerks, and receive the graduated scale as far as he can without waiting; because if there is any waiting it all points clearly to me that the highway is blocked up for the time being. Some have had to wait two or three years. These are facts I quote—facts from my own observation. If a man stops at the end of his apprenticeship there is an end to progression, and the only inference is that the supply is larger than the demand. If you can see that point and will remedy it, it will remove a great grievance. We have not come to regulate any grievances in particular; but this one we should like to take back and say it was granted.

Mr. Winter: Do not you see that it is the wish of these men that the extra year after the apprenticeship is served should be abolished?

Mr. McKerrow: £110 is very fair pay for these young men. I do not think it is any very great hardship if they should have to wait another year. He has to wait another year for the next £10. No doubt, if he gets married £110 is small for his necessities; but, take it another way—if he starts his five years when he is a lad fresh from school, it is no hardship to serve another year. In fact, he may not have to serve another year, as Mr. Maxwell pointed out. At the worst he is on an ascending scale at the end of the year.

Mr. Winter: You say there is no hardship. From a social point of view a man should marry when he is young, and take certain responsibilities, and he should not have to wait until he is bald-headed before he can marry. If he is industrious and thrifty, a young man at twenty-one is thinking of settling down into family life. He should be thinking about the serious aspects of life. We all think that these young men should have the means of accumulating money at this particular period; so that it is a hardship to keep him waiting. You will admit that this is a class of the Service that has to keep up a better appearance than those in the workshops. He has to spend more on his dress, and to look like a gentleman.

Mr. McKerrow: That would only make a difference of about £5 a year.

Mr. Winter: But there is extra expense. They must, under the conditions, be dressed like gentlemen.

Mr. Edwards: They must look like gentlemen, because they occupy a higher position as members of the Civil Service. They cannot save money on £105 a year.

Mr. McKerrow: I saved money on considerably less when a lad.

Mr. Edwards: You were in a far different position, perhaps, and living under different conditions. I wish to point out that it would not cost a very large amount of money; and when you look at the fact that these young men are preparing to settle down in life at that particular period, I do not think it is altogether desirable that they should wait twelve months before getting a rise in salary. The point is not much.

Mr. Winter: I was about to address you on exactly the same lines, and, further, to point out that in this country, according to my observation, a young man does start the performance of domestic duties early, and therefore it would be precisely the time for him to accumulate a little money for the small establishment he might wish to start.

Mr. McKerrow: The regulation will be adhered to, that five years shall be the cadetship, but a cadet shall rise to £110 in four years if, as Mr. Maxwell said, vacancies occur. If not, he will be retained as a cadet for six years, and at the end of that time he will be a clerk.

Mr. Hoban: I think the clerks will see that that is a fair offer. We shall have to submit it to them. We wanted to get as much as we could, naturally. I think it is fair enough.

Mr. Winter: Now, as to porters: Do you concede our request that there shall not be more than one lad porter to four adults.

Mr. McKerrow: We have conceded that already.

Mr. Elvines: Extra pay will be allowed to workmen and tradesmen employed more than eight hours, subject to regulations from time to time issued. That is not very definite.

Mr. Maxwell: Special cases shall be taken into account.

Mr. Elvines: And what with regard to platelayers who run their trollies in the morning?

Mr. Maxwell: That is in extreme cases of men going out to their work.

Mr. Elvines: That is an ordinary occurrence with the whole of them.

Mr. Hoban: The platelayers' gang are paid for one way on the other side; the other way is not counted. I am referring to platelayers inspecting the lines.

Mr. Maxwell: They live in such a position that they can travel along the line to work and do their inspection at the same time.

Mr. Elvines: They have to carry their material and their tools.

Mr. Lowe: They do not carry their tools or material every day. They leave their tools where they left off at night.

Mr. Elvines: But if they want extra materials they carry them in the morning.

Mr. Edwards: Platelayers might be walking the length in addition to the day's work. In some sections they work before 8 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. McKerrow: It is very difficult to lay down strict rules in these matters, circumstances vary so much. It is best to leave it in the hands of the District Engineers to arrange matters fairly with the men. You cannot lay down cast-iron rules to meet all these cases.

Mr. Edwards: Where a man has to go a long distance he ought to be paid for it.

Mr. McKerrow: But he is simply inspecting the line as he goes along. Unless a man went blindfolded he could not help seeing the line. It comes in just the same as a man walking to his work.

Mr. Edwards: It does not follow that he should inspect the work. That is a different circumstance.

Mr. McKerrow: Another thing: The men work together; one man lives at the end of the section, and another lives at the other end; all have to start work at the same time: you must have them meeting at a regular time.

Mr. Edwards: Could you not rule that where platelayers work before 8 o'clock you would make it time over, or allow them time off?

Mr. McKerrow: Time off does not do with platelayers, because they have to work together.

Mr. Maxwell: Mr. Lowe tells me that the average distance to be travelled is about three miles—half an hour each way. With velocipedes that would be very little. Some cases would be very difficult to deal with. For many years we have been fixing the platelayers' houses to prevent undue hardship. We could alter them in different parts of the country. The difficulty has been that the railways have been rapidly extending, and when an extension has been added it has upset the previously-existing arrangements.

Mr. Edwards: But in some cases a man has to go out very early.

Mr. Maxwell: If he has to go to work at a very early hour he is paid for it. Of course you are aware that platelayers are paid wet or dry, and cannot work, sometimes, at all. If it is wet all stay off. The extra walking will just about balance the time he is off in wet weather.

Mr. Edwards: I know some have to walk the length independent of their work, and we would like you to pay for that.

Mr. Winter: Do we understand that where a man has to walk the length he will be paid for it. If one has to go in one direction to work, and in another direction to inspect the length, he must start sufficiently early to enable him to get back.

Mr. Lowe: That is on account of the position of his house. But by enforcing the rule you would have to make him shift his house. If two men live, one at one end of the length and the other at the other end, they could meet at some place between the two points.

Mr. Hoban: I presume, where there are special circumstances you will take them into consideration.

Mr. McKerrow: Certainly.

Mr. Hoban: Then I understand the whole of our proposals are adopted with the exception of the hours of labour?

Mr. McKerrow: Yes—intermittent labour.

Mr. Hoban: I am sorry we must part without that. I would sooner see us part in a friendly way.

Mr. Winter: We understand you positively decline to consider the forty-eight hours?

Mr. McKerrow: Yes.

Mr. Winter: And you will not go to arbitration?

Mr. McKerrow: We have no power to do so.

Mr. Winter: I have been talking to my colleagues, and would like to settle the question amicably. Are you prepared to meet us a little further, and say fifty-four hours shall be a week's work? We pledge ourselves to take that back and do our best to make the men contented with it.

Mr. McKerrow: We will think of it. When will you be leaving, Mr. Hoban?

Mr. Hoban: To-morrow morning, if possible.

Mr. Owen: Gentlemen, I would ask you to consider it. God knows we would rather do anything than leave you in this hostile way. We would rather go away and say, "They are jolly good fellows, and we got our way fine with them." I would impress upon you, sir, and beg you, sooner than drive the men away, to thoroughly consider this thing and concede it. If you look it over, it is only the same as New South Wales is doing now, and they are wanting more. I would ask you as emphatically as I can to consider it in all its favourable points. I think I can say you will, as reasonable gentlemen, sooner than let things go on as they are likely to drift, concede it. It is not asking such a great amount. The wave is going all over the world for eight hours. Can you not meet us half-way?

Mr. McKerrow: I think we do. We have met you three-quarters.

Mr. Owen: I can hardly see that. What you have conceded to the locomotive department is three hours' standing; but that is allowed in all parts of the world. I have looked through the thing, and the conditions of service in all parts of the world—in fact, I have spent something in trying to get this information from persons in all parts of the world; and if you look at it from a reasonable point of view you will see that it is fair. Why not do as New South Wales did years ago?

Mr. McKerrow: Fifty-five hours?

Mr. Owen: Well, fifty-four. We would not quarrel about that.

Mr. McKerrow: We will consider; the proposal but do not push us for a few days for our reply. We have to go into the matter and consider the finances, and also how it will affect the service. We do not expect you to wait here, but we will correspond with your secretary or Mr. Hoban, and send our reply.

Mr. Winter: We should like to have a reply to-day, so as to enable us to take this information down with us.

Mr. McKerrow: We cannot do that.

Mr. Owen: We would rather stop.

Mr. McKerrow: No; I should not like to ask you to stop.

Mr. Owen: We came up to get a definite understanding, and should not like to go away without it.

Mr. Maxwell: We do not want to oblige you to go away, but we cannot look into it under a few days.

Mr. McKerrow: How about your time, Mr. Hoban?

Mr. Hoban: I would like to go back with my colleagues with something to take to the men. I should be glad to take the news to Christchurch, and I would prefer to wait a few days to receive it. As an officer of the society, I should like to carry my duties to a successful issue. Seeing that you have granted the other concessions, I think you will have no occasion to regret going a little further.

Mr. McKerrow: Will you wait until Wednesday?

Mr. Hoban: Yes.

Mr. McKerrow: Very well; we will try and settle the matter by that time.

Mr. Hoban: I have to thank you very much for the courteous manner in which you have treated us generally, and in any other matters that may come up I should like you to treat us in a similar way.

WEDNESDAY, 25TH JUNE, 1890.

The Commissioners met the delegates at 11 a.m.

Mr. McKerrow: Mr. Hoban, when we rose on Saturday we had practically settled everything with the exception of the week's time for drivers, firemen, and guards, the difference being as between sixty hours for a week's work and forty-eight hours. You remember that after the discussion you proposed to compromise with fifty-four hours. I may say that, after careful consideration, the Commissioners have decided to accept your proposal.

Mr. Hoban: We have to thank you for the concession. When we made the suggestion we had no desire to affect the Eight Hours Bill, and, although we understood there was a grievance of that kind, we tried to meet you in as fair a way as possible.

Mr. McKerrow: There is one point I would like to mention with regard to the platelayers——

Mr. Hoban:——Where one of the gang has to inspect the line before doing his ordinary work, would he be paid for it?

Mr. McKerrow: I think it would be difficult to lay down a cast-iron rule. I think that can be left to the officers to decide.

Mr. Hoban: I think you will take the matter into consideration, and allow them something off per mile. I will ask you to give us a letter showing the concessions allowed by you, so that we can show it when we go back, and let the branches know all over the colony; and, as we have to get away this afternoon, I will just thank you, on behalf of the delegates, for your courtesy in giving us free passes over the lines. I dare say you will be glad that the men are getting back to their work. We have enjoyed the trip very much indeed; and I hope that in future, if there are any difficulties, we shall be able to settle them in an amicable manner.

Mr. McKerrow: I may say, to prevent any misunderstanding in future, that if there are any exceptional cases with regard to the hours we shall have to treat them on their merits. On some of the branch lines it would be impossible to carry the principle out to the letter.

Mr. Hoban: We admitted that there were exceptional cases. We merely wanted the rule adopted. That is all, I think, unless any of my colleagues have a word to say.

Mr. Winter: I have to thank you for having conceded our requests and obviated future difficulties in the working of the line. The servants of the colony will be grateful to you for granting their requests. And I must also thank you for the way in which you have treated us since we have been here. I have appreciated it very much.

Mr. Hoban: If the stationmasters and outside porters can have their hours of labour cut down at all, will you see that that is done?

Mr. McKerrow: Yes.

Mr. Hoban: Thank you.

Mr. McKerrow: Does any one else wish to make a remark?

Mr. Owen: There is rather an awkward question with regard to locomotive-men going on in the morning. The firemen and guards, as a rule, go on forty-five minutes before starting. The drivers go on half an hour before, but on the big engines they cannot get the train ready and the wagons out of the siding in half an hour. There is a difficulty in that direction.

Mr. Rotheram: They are quite distinct. Thirty minutes was allowed the driver to get the engine out and ready for the traffic.

Mr. Owen: There are different ways of working in different places. I wished to make that clear, because it has never been understood clearly.

Mr. McKerrow: There is another thing I would explain, in case there should be a doubt about it. It is about the cleaners. We agree that cleaners shall be taken on at from eighteen to twenty-one years of age. We were all agreed on that point, and that the pay should rise to 7s. a day.

Mr. Winter: Supposing they start at eighteen.

Mr. McKerrow: They will get 4s. a day, and rise 6d. each year up to 7s. a day.

Mr. Maxwell: If he starts at eighteen he gets 4s., with a yearly rise of 6d.; if at twenty-one, he starts at 5s. 6d., and rises to 7s. at twenty-four years. We have increased the age that older men can come in.

Mr. McKerrow: Of course, it is understood that the fifty-four hours cannot come into force at once. It will take time to get the men.

Mr. Hoban: When will it come into force?

Mr. Maxwell: We have a large number working only fifty-four hours now. It may take two years to bring it in entirely. The men will have to work overtime.

Mr. McKerrow: The effect of these alterations is certainly to enhance the pay of the men.

Mr. Hoban: We cannot complain. You have met us more than half-way.

The delegates again thanked the Commissioners, and withdrew.

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