

20. As head of a large Railway Department, in your judgment was this man you had the interview with qualified to rank as an expert engineer?—So far as boilers are concerned. I would not call him an all-round mechanical engineer. Of course, boilermaking is a branch of engineering. In that respect he is an expert engineer.

21. You refuse to give us the name of the gentleman who had this interview with you?—As a matter of honour I do not feel disposed to do so, because I have not his permission. You might just as well ask the newspaper-proprietor, who got my letter to the Chief Mechanical Engineer surreptitiously, for information as to who gave it him.

22. Have you approached the person for permission to use his name?—No.

23. Do you take the responsibility of those statements yourself—that is, those statements contained in your letter which have been the cause of this inquiry—or do you propose to prove them by calling this gentleman to substantiate their reliability?—I do not propose to call him. I have no power to call him.

24. Was there any intention on your part that these statements should be made public?—Certainly not.

25. Then, if they had not been made public, how would the men have got on? They would have been accused of being loiterers and loafers, and have had no opportunity of refuting the statements?—Very likely the men would know nothing about it.

26. Do you consider it a fair thing to send letters like that behind the backs of men without their knowing anything about it?—It is the usual way. When complaints of a similar nature are received they are referred to the head of the particular branch concerned to get a report upon, and if the men are exonerated—as on this occasion was the case—that is the end of it. The men's minds are not uneasy about these charges; it is the foremen who are responsible. The foreman is the man who is held responsible by the Workshops Manager, by myself, and by the Chief Locomotive Engineer.

27. You have no personal knowledge of men practising what you term "Government stroke"?—No. They would very soon know of it if I did.

28. Then it is merely a statement made to you by this casual visitor to the shop?—It is the opinion of my informant. They are not my words, my view, or my opinion. They are simply the views of my informant, passed on to the Engineer to make inquiries as to the correctness of those views.

29. Do you not think that, before using it in the way you did, you should have asked the officers at Addington to report, and then have heard their side of the case and have come to a judgment?—The first letter was a confidential one to the Chief Mechanical Engineer.

30. From your instructions to the Chief Mechanical Engineer you said, "You will please take such action as will bring this discreditable state of affairs to an end." You appear to have accepted your informant's statement as correct?—For the time being I did. I have had reason to alter it since.

31. You now unreservedly withdraw that letter?—I do not say that, but as far as the men are concerned I am bound to accept the report of my officers, which exonerates them. I am satisfied there is no reasonable ground for complaint.

32. You are satisfied now that such a state of things does not exist?—That is so.

HON. J. E. JENKINSON, M.L.C., examined. (No. 2.)

*Witness:* I desire to thank the Board of Inquiry for this opportunity of saying a few words, and I want to confine my remarks in the first instance to a personal matter. Before that I want to say one or two things in reference to Mr. Ronayne. I have heard his evidence. From the time I first approached Mr. Ronayne on matters connected with the railways and the railway service, he has been eminently fair and reasonable, and he has given me such reasonable concessions for the benefit of the railwaymen that I cannot help thinking, if the men themselves had the knowledge that Mr. Ronayne had on the questions brought before him by myself and others, they would hold a higher opinion of him than I have heard expressed lately by them. Mr. Ronayne said that he based his memo. on an interview he had with an expert engineer, and that that expert engineer's interview was confidential, and he could not therefore give his name. Well, sir, reading the memo., I am perfectly convinced that a part of it—I cannot say the whole—I do not know what was in Mr. Ronayne's mind—but a part certainly emanated from what I put before him. I take credit for a few of the particular words in that memo., and that is why I think the impression has got abroad that I had more to do with it than I really had. The words, "Five minutes per rivet for the new riveter," are my words. I do not know that those are the words originally said. Mr. Ronayne's account of the interview is not quite correct, so far as I remember. I have a fairly good memory, and particularly regarding this interview, because it has not been allowed to go far out of my mind since the appearance of the memorandum in the newspaper. As a matter of fact, I went to Mr. Ronayne on that morning in reference to an allowance granted of 6d. per day by Parliament to skilled workmen. I asked why that had not been paid, and the matter of the Addington Workshops came up. I might say that for the last few years I have been met, when I approached the Railway Department in connection with Addington, with the answer, "Things are not satisfactory at Addington. The work is costing more at Addington than elsewhere. The men are not turning out the work there in such a way as to be economical to the Dominion." That is the reply I have been met with when I have approached the Department. Knowing that this feeling existed in the minds of the Department, I thought it was time we should strive to get at why the work was not done as economically at Addington as elsewhere. I knew from my own experience that the work was turned out better at Addington than elsewhere, and it was natural, that being the case, that it would cost more. Several times I got this answer from Mr. Ronayne and other heads of Departments. I said that I knew perfectly well that the work was not being turned out economically. Mr. Ronayne said, "Yes?" I said, "Yes, because of the system." I said there was extravagance shown