

73. *Mr. Hampton.*] You have already admitted that you visited Addington Workshops early in November?—Some time in November.

74. What was the object of your visit on that occasion?—Friendliness; chats with the men, and general interest.

75. Did you go there to chat with the men and keep them from their work?—No.

76. The object of your visit was chats with the men?—Yes; I may say I was there during the dinner-hour.

77. You were not there only during dinner-hour?—No, I was there after 2.

78. What for?—General interest.

79. Are you the expert referred to by Mr. Ronayne in his communication to the Chief Mechanical Engineer?—I do not know.

80. Have you ever had any interviews with Mr. Ronayne?—Quite a number.

81. Within the last few months?—Yes.

82. When was the last one?—Probably a fortnight ago.

83. Do you think you are the individual whom he referred to as the “expert engineer”?—He refers to some of my statements in that communication; I know he uses some of my words.

84. Are there any statements in Mr. Ronayne’s letters which you have made to him?—Yes.

85. Which are they?—The reference to “five minutes per rivet.”

86. You told Mr. Ronayne that you saw the boilermakers taking five minutes per rivet?—Not in that way.

87. In what way?—Speaking of the appliances and the want of power from want of water in the accumulator, and the excessive expense that had been put on, I expressed the opinion that I thought the result of five minutes per rivet was not sufficient. I thought that would not bear out the motive in putting such an expensive machine into the shop and endowing it with such up-to-date appliances.

88. You blame the machine?—No, the machine is a remarkably good one.

89. Do you blame the men?—No.

90. You thought the men took too much time to put the rivets in?—Yes.

91. And you told Mr. Ronayne so?—Yes.

92. And you went to Addington on a friendly visit?—Yes.

93. After going there on a friendly visit, and chatting with the men, you go to Mr. Ronayne and tell him that the men are idling their time and taking too long to put in the rivets?—Because of the appliances.

94. Is your idea of a friendly visit this: that you go and watch your old shopmates working, and then go and have a communication with the General Manager, saying that they are taking too long over their work?—I do not think you are putting it in a fair way.

95. What other position can you put it in?—I have my own opinion about the present system of carrying on the shops, and it is only by going to the shops and keeping my eyes open that I am able to get impressions in regard to the system.

96. The men do not take too long to put the rivets in?—The rivets are put in by the men with the appliances at their hand. The rivets are put in too slowly; therefore the men are taking too long to put the rivets in. But it is not the men’s fault; I say now that the appliances to the machinery constitute such drawbacks and obstacles that they compel the men to take too long with their work.

97. You throw the whole blame on the appliances?—Certainly.

98. The men are in no way to blame?—Not at all.

99. You admit making that statement about five minutes per rivet?—Yes.

100. Are you an expert engineer?—I cannot say.

101. How long have you worked at boilermaking?—Twenty-five or thirty years—sufficient to enable me to know that work is done under good or bad conditions.

102. By trade you are a boilermaker?—Yes.

103. You are not an expert engineer?—No.

104. You make no claim to be such?—No.

105. This expert engineer said this: “He was astounded at the slow method and leisurely work of the men generally, but more especially those in the boiler-shop.” Have you expressed anything on those lines to Mr. Ronayne?—Somewhat on those lines, but that gave a different meaning. I said that the slow method was due to the appliances the men had to use.

106. You went to Addington to have a friendly chat with the men, and then you told Mr. Ronayne that you were astounded at the slow method and leisurely work done?—No, I did not.

107. Did you or did you not say that the men worked in a slow or leisurely manner?—I do not know. I found that the discontent in Addington at that time was such that there was very little wonder that the work was not turned out as cheap as it should be.

108. What was the discontent about?—There was extreme discontent about classification.

109. How did you find out about the discontent?—By the men interviewing me. Several men at the works spoke to me about this particular classification, and I rather fancied I made an appointment with two of them to meet me in the evening and go more exhaustively into the question.

110. Who were they?—Mr. O’Brien and Mr. Ruddle.

111. You said all your chats were with them in the dinner-hour?—Not necessarily.

112. You went there to keep them from their work?—No.

113. Do you not think that chatting with a man who is at work is calculated to interfere with his work?—No. I never found the men to resent it very much. In a boiler-shop the nature of the work is such that the men are bound to stand still at times, and by an outsider it might be thought that those men were idling their time, but to a man who is acquainted with the character of that work that would not so appear. At such times the men would have time to chat.