

17. You saw the principal workshops of the four railway systems?—Yes.

18. How did the industry and discipline of the men in those shops strike you as compared with Addington?—There was only one shop in which I would say the industry and discipline compared favourably with our own.

19. With regard to the shop in which the industry and discipline compared favourably with Addington, was it better, or do you think it was equal?—The system of work was much better, there is no doubt about that.

20. What do you mean by “the system”?—In building locomotives they would not touch the work of erection until the whole of the sets were completed.

21. They built locomotives in sets of ten, I believe?—Yes. I saw there lying on the floor of the erection-shop ten complete sets of frame-plates, ten sets of wheels, ten sets of cylinders, ten sets of cross-heads and motion-bars, ten sets of axle-boxes, and ten sets of Horn plates. They were all completely machined and lying on the floor waiting for the completion of one or two other sets before any start was made at all on the erection of the locomotives.

22. In your opinion it is quite impracticable to build locomotives to advantage unless you build them in sets of, say, ten or five?—It is certainly a very great advantage.

23. To do that at Addington considerably more accommodation would be required?—Yes. I suggested that they should be made in sets of five.

24. Does not the fact that you are carrying on urgent repairs often interfere with the progress of new work?—Undoubtedly it does, and at Addington we have had to take all the men off the new work in order to push on with the repairs. Of course, repairs are kept up to date; the other was not. In this place I speak of in Australia repairs were sacrificed to new work. There were fifty locomotives waiting outside for repairs. They were giving preference to the new work just as we give preference to repairs here.

25. So far as your experience goes, you have nothing but good to say for the Addington men?—That is so. I consider that as workmen they are excellent, and their conduct is highly satisfactory.

26. You heard the statement made yesterday about the less rate, and you think there is no ground for doubting the Addington men's industry and discipline?—Not the slightest. The only trouble about Addington is that men interfere who have no right. They talk to the employees, and in that way upset the discipline and interfere with the shops. They really persuade the men that they have a grievance when all the time they have not.

27. You heard it stated yesterday that a certain large planing-machine just inside the machine-shop was unnecessary and largely useless: do you agree with that?—No. It is capable of doing work equal to that of the best up-to-date machine you can import. It cuts both ways, and its cutting-power is equal to 40 ft. per minute. You do not want a very flash machine for heavy work.

28. You did all your staff matters through Mr. Jackson?—Yes.

29. *The Chairman.*] When you were manager at Addington, was the staff system the same as mentioned by Mr. Jackson?—Yes, and very unsatisfactory, too. It got so bad at the finish that, in order to minimise the delay, I used to send a man round with the letters to the men on the list, and he waited for the answer. Otherwise we were kept waiting months at times for the reply.

30. Did it ever become necessary for you to recommend the dismissal of men?—I can hardly call to mind a case just now. We do not as a rule make a recommendation. We report them, and if the conduct warrants dismissal they are dismissed by the Head Office.

31. You found the conduct of the men at Addington in all respects good?—Taken as a whole, yes.

32. But you think there was some prejudicial effect by interference from outsiders?—Yes; any amount of false statements were made, and in due course these came on to me, and the men at the time got blamed for doing these things, whilst, as a matter of fact, they were innocent, and we had no means of finding out how it came about.

33. Do you mean that these outsiders came into the shops?—No; they got information from the men in the shops, and used it.

34. You are not alluding to outside persons coming into the shops?—No.

35. You have extensive experience of the shops outside of Addington, and have been at Newmarket. How do you find the desire to work on the part of the workmen at Addington compared with that shown by the men at Newmarket and the other shops of which you have experience?—I think it is about similar. Newmarket always had a good name, and I think the same applies to Addington. I see no difference in them.

36. Do you consider that during your time the men at Addington, taken as a whole, were doing a fair day's work for a fair day's pay?—I am quite satisfied in my own mind that they were.

WILLIAM VALLANCE MAUCLIN examined. (No. 6.)

1. *Mr. Beattie.*] What is your present position?—I am outside foreman for Messrs. P. and D. Duncan.

2. At one time did you work at Addington?—I did.

3. In what capacity?—As a casual fitter.

4. I am led to understand that you have expressed your willingness to give evidence as to what you saw when you worked there?—That is so. In my opinion the average workman in the Addington Workshops is just about on a par with the average workman in contracting shops as regards intelligence, experience, and ability.

5. And with regard to this charge which you may have seen in the newspapers as to their being addicted to loafing, does your experience support or refute that?—I do not think there is any more idling of time taking place in the Government than would take place in the average outside workshop.