

employee in the Workshops, and he should know of what he is speaking. He now holds a responsible position with an outside private firm. Mr. Mauchlin said he did not think any more idling took place at Addington than in any other shops: if anything, the discipline was more severe than in outside shops. Then, again, there was the outside evidence of Mr. George Scott, who said that the men at Addington were at present doing all they possibly could under existing conditions. Then we had the evidence of Mr. James Hislop, who is now an entirely disinterested person—a retired Railway servant. He seems to have had a good deal of experience in private employment. Mr. Hislop said he worked as hard at Addington as he did in any other place, including the shop of Messrs. Price Bros. Then, again, if you want further outside evidence, I would quote our friend the Hon. Mr. Jenkinson. Mr. Jenkinson said he was in the habit of visiting the Addington Workshops twice yearly. He did not notice any loafing on the part of the men when he visited Addington. Regarding the riveting, he did not complain of the work of the men. That evidence is all in favour of the men. On the other hand, as against the men, we have but little evidence—practically none. The only evidence we have which could be taken as against the men is that of Mr. Jenkinson, where he said he had heard that men were in the habit of speaking to their foremen in insulting language. I do not think you could possibly accept hearsay evidence of that sort. Mr. Jenkinson had no practical knowledge of anything of that kind happening, and the various officers who have been before you giving evidence have all stated that they know nothing of such language having been used. I think, then, sir, that you will find on this point the character of the men has been completely vindicated. I hope you will make this clear and emphatic. I notice that some of the newspaper Press—the country Press especially—are making statements to the effect that Mr. Ronayne has withdrawn his charges under political compulsion, and have practically said that there is no doubt that the charges were perfectly true. I hope you will make your finding on this point so plain and so emphatic as to disabuse the minds of those gentlemen for all time as to the state of discipline in Addington Workshops.

I will now pass on to the cost of production at Addington as compared with the cost in other shops, whether Government or private. A very large amount of evidence has been put before you on this point by Mr. Beattie. I have no doubt that you will carefully examine the tabulated statements and the returns put in, and if you do this I have every confidence that your finding on this point will be favourable to the Addington Workshops.

Passing on from that I come to clause 5—the output: whether it is reasonable in quantity and quality having regard to all the circumstances. Now, I should just like to refer to some of these circumstances which you as Commissioners will have to take into consideration in dealing with this clause. I would first bring under your notice what has been brought out in evidence—the mixture of the work: that is, the repair-work and new work being all done in one shop, and the taking-away of men from the new work for repair-work. That is a disadvantage. I think it should be taken into consideration. There is also another fact which should be taken into consideration in considering this point, and that is that it is only possible to complete one locomotive at one time. That, I think, is also a disadvantage. I would direct you, sirs, to a further disadvantage under which we at Addington labour—that is, the preference which seems to be given to the firm of Messrs. Price Bros. in getting out work. It has been shown in evidence that gear has been actually taken from an Addington engine to be sent away to the firm of Price Bros. That means that Addington men have to do their work twice over as against once to the employees of Price Bros. The evidence further showed that Price Bros.' work had a priority of claim on the machines, and Addington work has been pushed on one side whilst Price Bros.' work has been pushed ahead. That is another circumstance which I think might well be taken into consideration. Then, of course, I would ask you to consider the quality of the work. Evidence has been given showing that the quality of the work at Addington is unsurpassed. Mr. Ronayne himself has never had any fault to find with the work at Addington. He declared that, so far as the quality was concerned, the Addington shops could hold their own with any shop in the world. He made that statement having but recently made a tour of Canada, America, and England. I would therefore ask you to take that fact into consideration in considering your finding on that clause.

And now, sir, I come to the last but to my mind by no means the least important clause of the whole scope of the inquiry. That is the clause which demands that the Commission shall inquire into any matter calling for alteration or improvement in the interests of efficiency or discipline. I will divide this into two parts—efficiency and discipline. I will take first the interests of efficiency, and under this heading I would ask you to consider the necessity of making some recommendation by which men may be encouraged to work out new devices and new inventions. I am asking this quite apart from the merits or demerits of any inventions or devices which have been brought before you in evidence. I think that the men at Addington generally think that something more should be done in this connection than is done under the present state of affairs. The process which Mr. Ronayne outlined yesterday appears to us to be a very slow process indeed. Mr. Ronayne informed us that when a new invention was devised the man devising the same could report it to his foreman. His foreman would report it to the Workshops Manager, and the Manager in his turn would pass it on to the Locomotive Engineer, who in his turn would pass it on to the Mechanical Engineer, who in his turn would pass it on to the General Manager. Now, I think that this is a fairly slow process. I have here a copy of a letter which an employee sent in to the Head Office asking for recognition for various devices which he had brought about. He waited for nine months before he got a reply from the Head Office, and then it was practically simply to say that his devices and inventions were under consideration. When I saw that employee last those devices and inventions were still under consideration. How long they are likely to be I do not know. But, apart from the slow process, I think the system can hardly be said to be a satisfactory one. I think it hardly reasonable that, if a man has a device which he considers to be of any value, he should be asked to run off and give his idea away to five or six practical expert men. Before that is done I think the man should be allowed, in order to protect himself, to