

*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.