

The stationmaster is to be available for eight hours, whether he is working or not That is how I understand his interpretation.

*Mr. Winter* : I say, if the man is not at work he has to be on hand.

*Mr. Maxwell* : And he is to be paid for that time?

*Mr. Winter* : Yes.

*Mr. Hoban* : What we want to establish here is the principle that eight hours is a proper day's work. There are cases, as Mr. Winter has said, where exceptions will have to be made. Even supposing there are numerous cases, we are quite prepared to meet the Commissioners. We ask you to apply the principle broadly to the men who are working as engine-drivers, and so on. You can easily adopt the principle.

*Mr. Maxwell* : Eight hours' continuous time?

*Mr. Hoban* : Yes.

*Mr. Maxwell* : But that is not work.

*Mr. Hoban* : But we wish to recognise the principle. Where there are these cases in which you could not do it, it would be unreasonable to ask.

*Mr. Maxwell* : Of course, eight hours' continuous labour is what we do recognise, and we have always gone on it.

*Mr. Hoban* : Yes, but I think I could quote cases where eight hours' work has not been gone on.

*Mr. Maxwell* : No doubt the rule has been stretched sometimes, but it is our principle.

*Mr. Elvines* : Take the Works men. Their time is taken up from the time when they start in the morning, and have to cart their tools to the station, go away to the train, put their tools in, get them down again at night and put them away. That is really all work, and we have no compensation whatever. The rule is that you will get a shilling if you are over twelve hours, but the trains are so nicely timed that it is exactly eleven hours fifty-five minutes when you get back, so that we lose that shilling, and have done for years. What we really wish is to be brought under the eight hours' system, and to consider that work the same as that of any other class of men that has been spoken of. With regard to platelayers, many of them have to go seven to eleven miles to work. I have seen them at 7 o'clock in the morning. They have to load their trolley, get their tools on, and start at 7 to push the trolley to the work; and they have to be there to start at 8. We contend that all that is work for an hour before 8 o'clock. It is a well-known fact that the men are discontented throughout the length and breadth of the colony. Wherever I go I find it is so; and I receive letters to the same effect. You should consider the time these men are going to their work, for it is hard work going up a heavy grade with a trolley in the face of a stiff nor'-wester. I have known men have to pull up at a station and wait for the train.

*Mr. Maxwell* : You claim that the men should be paid for all the time they are away?

*Mr. Elvines* : Yes, the same as is done in other departments. Those who do the most work are left out of consideration, of course; and it is those who do the least that get paid.

*Mr. Maxwell* : What department do you refer to?

*Mr. Elvines* : The engineering and carriage department.

*Mr. Maxwell* : Do not they do more work in that department than you do?

*Mr. Elvines* : I do not know that they do; but they do not go out so often, and, of course, they do less of that particular class of work; that is where the point comes in. Those who are continually at it do more of that class of work, and get no pay for it.

*Mr. Maxwell* : You say some platelayers go eleven miles?

*Mr. Lowe* : I know there are some cases where they have to go twelve miles.

*Mr. Elvines* mentioned the Methven and Mount Somers line.

*Mr. McKerrow* : In that very district, if the farmer is going to thresh out his oats, some of his men have to go two or three miles to their work.

*Mr. Elvines* : In that district they would have to keep the labourers on the work; they would not get them from afar. The very large farmers keep their men at the work. Some of them do it, I know.

*Mr. McKerrow* : Walking to and from work is not considered a part of the day's work, so far as payment is concerned, though I grant you it is very fatiguing; it is not customary to pay for it.

*Mr. Elvines* : It is not the walking; it is pushing the trolley.

*Mr. Maxwell* : On the Methven line it is not very difficult. It is an easy grade.

*Mr. Elvines* : Well, it is easy one way, but very hard the other.

*Mr. McKerrow* : You have stated an extreme case. I have just been looking the thing up, and I find that, as a rule, a man has very much less than eleven miles to walk.

*Mr. Elvines* : Take the Little River Branch. The man on Rabbit Island has to go every morning, leave his home at 7 o'clock, and pull over the length, and round the curves, up to Little River.

*Mr. McKerrow* : There are some cases of men being paid for overlooking the line.

*Mr. Elvines* : Yes, I know. There is one at Waikari. The ganger gets that.

*Mr. McKerrow* : Would you ask that they should be paid from the time they leave their house until they get back?

*Mr. Elvines* : I would like that when they leave home their time should count, and that they should go back in their own time.

*Mr. McKerrow* : Half-time?

*Mr. Elvines* : Yes; allow time one way. If they are more than four miles from home they are allowed a quarter of an hour to go. It is the loading up of the tools and material and pushing the trolley that I refer to. With regard to stationmasters, it is a well-known fact that some of them in the country have to be at work very early. The train goes out at, say, 7 and they have to make up the mail, get the parcels ready, and so on. Then they go to breakfast, and do not come back until 9, when they have to attend to the post and telegraph work. They are there till 12, and