

then from 1 to 5. Then they go home. I do not think they have very much that they complain of. They cannot go away, and they are perfectly satisfied, apparently, to go home and stay there. I do not think we need make any particular quibble about them, because the most of them would be satisfied to have it arranged that they should have some time off. It is when the man is away from home. Take the guard on the Methven Branch: he leaves at ten minutes to 7, and gets to Rakaiā at 8. That is his guard's work. From 8 he takes up the porter's work at Rakaiā and does it during the day, starting back at 6.25 to go back to Methven. His day's work is not done till 9 at night.

*Mr. McKerrow*: A long day!

*Mr. Elvines*: Yes, and a continuous day's work, or two days' work. He gets no extra pay for it. I know that if he does not like it he can leave it. I do not say it was done in the Commissioners' time. At the Mount Somers Branch the man there is really porter acting guard, and he has the sole charge of the branch. He goes down in the morning, does the work of the porter at Ashburton Station, and goes home at night.

*Mr. Maxwell*: The man does not do such hard work as many men who work less hours. It is not full work.

*Mr. Elvines*: Do you mean to tell me it is not hard work? I would rather be at my bench than sitting in the train any time, because I have to sit close to the door, and it gives me rheumatics in my legs. After one trip I was laid up three days with lumbago, and they did not pay me for that, although my time was taken up with the lumbago.

*Mr. Maxwell*: Men who trolly to their work do not do so entirely for the purpose of carrying materials; it is more convenient for them to go to work that way than to walk, is it not?

*Mr. Elvines*: Well, yes; but the trolly is to carry materials. They could not carry rails, and walk.

*Mr. Maxwell*: But carrying rails and trollying is not like walking. I have had to trolly many a mile, and, unless it is on a bad line and with a steep grade, you can trolly along with very great comfort.

*Mr. Elvines*: I know it is easy with a velocipede.

*Mr. Edwards*: This subject was brought up before the South Australian Commissioners (they have a society there), who decided that "Permanent-way hands shall be paid for pumping the trolly one way, to or from the scene of the day's work."

*Mr. Haden*: Mr. Maxwell has spoken of the difficulty of arranging intermittent work so as to cut it down to eight hours. There is a case in which a man is working twelve hours continuously six nights in the week, and nine on the seventh. He is a watchman.

*Mr. McKerrow*: But you would hardly call that work.

*Mr. Haden*: Well, this is a comparatively recent part of his job; but he has to go round to the sheds and into them and turn his tell-tale. He cannot go to sleep, and if he continues faithful to his post, and awake for twelve hours in the night, he cannot do much in the day.

*Mr. McKerrow*: It is not like continuous arduous work.

*Mr. Haden*: But it takes up the whole of his energies.

*Mr. McKerrow*: Such men, as a rule, are men not very fit for hard work, who are glad to get these positions.

*Mr. Haden*: This man is aged, but he is able-bodied, has been there a number of years, and was, of course, far younger when he started. I merely mention it as a case of continuous labour. It tots up to eighty-one hours a week.

*Mr. McKerrow*: I have no doubt the work is regulated according to the duties he performs. If when he entered the service he had said, "My hours are eight a day, and I am prepared to work in the night or day," his wages would have been less.

*Mr. Haden*: What would you think his wages are?

*Mr. McKerrow*: 6s. 6d. or 7s. a day.

*Mr. Haden*: 6s. a day for eighty-one hours a week! He was taken at 8s., but when the 10-per-cent. reduction was made he was reduced to 6s.

*Mr. Hannay*: I suppose the deputation understands that in fixing the scale of pay for such men as porters, guards, and so on, whether it was fixed properly or not, it was done in consideration that their hours were intermittent, and that the wage or salary should be accordingly?

*Mr. Hoban*: I understand that ever since the union has been formed—though we have not had the credit for it—in Christchurch they have two shifts of men, and are pretty well satisfied as far as the hours are concerned. Two or three young fellows who were working eleven and twelve hours are now only working eight hours and a quarter. Of course, there are cases which cannot be avoided, but there is no doubt we shall get that settled.

*Mr. Hannay*: You said you thought the men were not working contentedly; I have a much better opinion of them than that. I do not say they are all contented, but I believe our men are not losing us anything.

*Mr. Hoban*: Far be it from me to throw dirty water on our society, but you can quite understand that a contented body of men is far better than a discontented body.

*Mr. Owen*: About men being paid for doing nothing—stationmasters?

*Mr. Maxwell*: You have laid it down that all employés should have forty-eight hours—that none shall work more than eight hours a day, or forty-eight hours a week.

*Mr. Hoban*: Excepting where it is absolutely necessary.

*Mr. Maxwell*: That is making the exception the rule?

*Mr. Winter*: I think my colleagues have fairly expressed themselves in that respect, that with these exceptional matters we are prepared to adopt exceptional measures and come to a mutual understanding.