

*Mr. Winter*: I think, as far as stationmasters, crossing-keepers, and similar men are concerned, a system of relieving might meet their case. A man working thirteen hours for six days might possibly be relieved.

*Mr. Maxwell*: Not working. Do not misunderstand me. Probably he is not at work more than eight hours, but he is tied to his station for that time.

*Mr. Winter*: I think we have met that question. As long as you compel a man to be at his station he is at work.

*Mr. Maxwell*: There is a difference between being available and being at work. You wish to treat them as though they were at work, I know.

*Mr. Winter*: I think a man is at work if he is on duty. If a man was to get some concessions—be relieved for half a day or a day a week, or something like that—it would meet the case. One or two relieving officers added to the service to relieve these men would give them time to make up for the long hours they are on duty.

*Mr. Maxwell*: Would you do that in preference to paying for overtime?

*Mr. Winter*: Certainly. We have affirmed all along that we do not wish to have overtime. There may be individual cases, of course, where a man would study his pocket: it is human nature, to a great extent; but there is no question that the employés individually, if they were asked, "Would you rather have eight hours or the opportunity of making more money by overtime?" would probably say, "Well, I should like a little overtime now and again;" but if they were asked as a body they would say that it is far better not to take overtime, and have more men employed. We do not wish stationmasters to have excessive pay more than any other class of labour, but to have some recompense for the long hours they have to work.

*Mr. McKerrow*: I may tell you this: that the stationmasters are entitled to seventeen days' holiday during the year. That is considered an alleviation of what you evidently think is the hardship in working so many hours.

*Mr. Winter*: I think that alleviation is more in this direction: that a man in that position is supposed to be on duty when other people are enjoying themselves, at holiday-time, and have not the opportunity of that recreation which it is admitted we should all have occasionally. That would hardly compensate him for the thirteen hours and a half.

*Mr. Owen*: With regard to, say, a cadet at a station, it has been done in some cases; and I draw attention to what has been done because it might be done here. Say there is a stationmaster and a cadet at the station you speak of. The stationmaster overnight enters up all his correspondence, his cash-book, and so on, and leaves everything ready and locked up. The cadet in the morning simply has to open the station, take a few tickets, label the parcels, &c. The correspondence is all ready, and he hands it to the guard, and despatches the train. Then the stationmaster comes on later in the day, and the cadet goes to his breakfast, while the stationmaster looks after the goods-sheds, and so on, for a certain time, along with the post and telegraph work. Then the cadet comes on again, and goes off, and the stationmaster finishes up the duty. That is a division of labour. With regard to men wanting overtime, I think you will admit that New Zealand is progressing in education. We have a fine educational system, and the more educated a man gets the less avaricious he is. With regard to overtime, if a man is educated his education teaches him good principles, one of which is that one man should not have a larger amount of money than another one. That is the teaching of the nineteenth century.

*Mr. Maxwell*: What you say is quite right about the cadets; but bear in mind that you have been objecting to young cadets having anything to do with trains. No doubt, what you suggest is one way of getting over some portion of the difficulty; but you must not forget you are one of those who object to it.

*Mr. Owen*: That is not the point. I do not object to a cadet issuing tickets or doing work of that class; but I do object to a lad handling points and shunting trains.

*Mr. Maxwell*: Suppose they are doing it at this train in the morning?

*Mr. Owen*: There is no occasion. You have a guard; he does that work. The guard fetches the engine from the locomotive road, takes it to the train, and simply places the train at the platform.

*Mr. Maxwell*: But the guard is under the instruction of the stationmaster while he is at the station.

*Mr. Owen*: Of course, that goes without saying; but when the guard goes on duty he does not go to the stationmaster and ask what he is to do; he knows what to do. It would be impossible, in most cases, to work with a set of locomotive-men who had to go to their foreman to know what to do. The same with the guard; he knows when he goes on in the morning that he has to take the train to the platform, and go through the usual routine.

*Mr. Maxwell*: But the guard has to take his orders from the stationmaster; and, if there is only a cadet in charge of the station, then you have the guard under the cadet.

*Mr. Owen*: That is the case in many instances; you have got cadets where there is no one else.

*Mr. Edwards*: We must all agree that the case of the stationmaster must be given a certain amount of latitude; but where there is assistance at a station it can easily be arranged to obviate the work. We recognise the fact that, although a porter or a cadet takes the place of the stationmaster for a time, the stationmaster is really the responsible party. At stations where there are no assistants, the stationmaster is there from the first train till the last, and gets no more pay than the one who has assistance. Where there is simply one officer, it can easily be got over by making an allowance which would be satisfactory to all parties concerned. There is no difficulty in it. If we had the relieving system, it would work very awkwardly, considering the man is in charge all that time. I think it is quite right that he should have some allowance made him; but it is one of those peculiar cases which have to be dealt with peculiarly.