

*Mr. Maxwell*: The main objection, as I understand it, to the piecework, as Mr. Winter dealt with it, is that it would have the effect of lowering the wages. That is the chief objection.

*Mr. Winter*: It has the immediate effect of lowering the price of labour, and, in the end, of lowering wages.

*Mr. Maxwell*: I would make a suggestion: suppose that there is a fixed rate of wages, and if a man is on piecework he shall not earn less than the regular wage, but may be able to earn more if he can do so, would that meet your objection? Do you understand what I mean? If a man's rate is 8s. a day he would not be paid less, but if he can make a rate and a quarter he could do so? Do you object to that?

*Mr. Winter*: We object to piecework entirely. One man may be better than another, and we should not suffer because one man may be better physically or mentally than another.

*Mr. Maxwell*: But you would not suffer by that.

*Mr. Winter*: Financially, we should.

*Mr. Maxwell*: Suppose the good man earns more, the bad man does not suffer by that.

*Mr. Winter*: He would suffer in this way: if you find a man cannot earn 8s. a day, and you pay him 8s. a day, you will get rid of that man as soon as possible.

*Mr. Maxwell*: If he is a bad workman, yes.

*Mr. Winter*: But would you not draw the conclusion that the man is not so good as another one?

*Mr. Maxwell*: In any case we should get rid of a bad workman.

*Mr. Winter*: That man might be a good workman, and turn out far better work than a man who turns it out quicker.

*Mr. Maxwell*: You do not think that suggestion meets your demand for the abolition of piecework, in any way?

*Mr. Winter*: I do not think so.

*Mr. Maxwell*: If a man is a bad workman, and does not do his work in a reasonable manner, he would not be retained anyhow.

*Mr. Winter*: You will admit there are no two men alike. Each man is a little different from the other.

*Mr. Maxwell*: Still, there is a time, we all recognise, when you find a man is so bad a workman, from various reasons, that an employer does not employ him any longer.

*Mr. Winter*: But why should you want piecework to effect that? You have your officers, who can judge if a man is doing a fair day's work.

*Mr. Maxwell*: We do not require it; but I was endeavouring to meet your argument about the reduction of wages, and I suggest that, as a solution of the difficulty, a man should not be paid less than a certain rate, but should have an opportunity of making more if he can, the reason being to get work done expeditiously, and keep men up to the mark.

*Mr. Winter*: The old principle still comes in again, that we do not wish men to fill their pockets by keeping other men out of work.

*Mr. Maxwell*: You do not fall in with the suggestion.

*Mr. Winter*: No, sir.

*Mr. McKerrow*: Would any one else like to make a remark? Do you wish to say anything Mr. Hoban?

*Mr. Hoban*: I think the matter has been so thoroughly threshed out that there is nothing more to say. I think we have threshed out all the points well, and, of course, this last one very well indeed, because I find there is really no objection to it. The only question is whether, as Mr. Maxwell says, we would not like the men to earn a little more. That brings up again the principle that one man has more for his labour than another man. We want to distribute labour equally. If we can get more men employed in the railway service, so much the better.

*Mr. McKerrow*: Then, we need not occupy more time at present. The evidence will all be printed, and you will have an opportunity of reviewing it later on.

*Mr. Hoban*: If this is the conclusion of our programme so far, I presume directly after what we have said here has been printed we shall be able to meet you again, and I presume we shall receive some sort of reply, and I hope that reply will be as we desire. It is, of course, for you to say what you will do in the matter, but I think if you will go into the matter carefully you will see that all our demands are fair, and they have not been refuted. There has been some little difficulty as to the hours of labour; but as to the boy-labour, you have admitted that the proportion is very fair, and you say that the boys employed now are under that proportion, and if you put it into effect you will employ more boys, and I do not see that you can object to it.

*Mr. McKerrow*: We do not anticipate much difficulty in that.

*Mr. Hoban*: As to the hours of labour, that will, of course, require some careful consideration. We have found little difficulties crop up in the way. We want the recognition of the eight hours, although there are some cases which will have to be taken as special cases. As to piecework, our argument has been very full indeed, and I hope you will see your way to grant that *in toto*. I thank you, in conclusion, for the courtesy with which you have received the deputation; it shows that you are willing to deal with the employés in a fair and impartial manner; and when I report to the society the very courteous manner in which you have received us they will be very pleased indeed. When we find an employer willing to meet his employé, or representative of that employé, it is gratifying indeed, and shows that we are pressing on to what Mr. Winter has referred to as being connected with the year 2000. I thank you, in conclusion, very heartily for the way in which you have received the deputation.

*Mr. McKerrow*: I thank you on behalf of the Commissioners for your very kind expressions of opinion. They are equally reciprocal. We are very pleased with the manner in which you have deported yourselves. You seem to be very reasonable, although we may not be able to agree on all