

The adoption of an eight-hour day for intermittent workers, as suggested, while costing the colony probably £50,000 a year more, would also, in many instances, give the employé on the lightest and least responsible duty the highest wages.

Following are the details of the proposals of the Commissioners :—

BOY LABOUR.

The employment of boys and apprentices in the shops to approximate gradually to the proposals made.

The numbers prescribed by the Association for the Way and Works Department are too many; their adoption would displace a large number of men. The Commissioners do not propose to exceed the present proportion of about one-eighth materially.

For the traffic and general service the number of cadets and lads should remain, approximately, at the present proportion, which is somewhat below the proportion assigned by the Association. This number is reasonably sufficient to fill vacancies with trained hands as they occur.

Eight hours' continuous work is to constitute a day's work, as at present. Intermittent services are to be treated as the case may require, the following modified rules being adopted :—

WORKING-HOURS.

Workmen are required to work eight hours per day, or forty-eight hours per week, for the authorised daily wages. The regular hours of work are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on working-days, with one hour off.

Extra pay will be allowed to labourers and tradesmen for time worked in excess of eight hours per day, subject to such regulations as may be from time to time issued.

LOCOMOTIVE-RUNNING.

Sixty hours to count as one week's work for a driver or fireman.

Overtime to be counted at the rate of time and a quarter.

TRAFFIC.

Traffic employés generally will be required to work all trains on the advertised time-table, without allowance for overtime; but, as far as possible, duties to be arranged to avoid overtime.

Sixty hours to count as one week's work for guards; overtime to be counted at the rate of time and a quarter.

GENERAL.

Half-pay will be allowed to employés suffering accident when on duty, if from causes beyond their own control, for the first three months, and quarter-pay for an additional three months. As far as can be arranged consistently with economy and public convenience, in the case of employés generally the working time is not to exceed eight hours per day or forty-eight hours per week of six working days.

Drivers, firemen, and guards will have the whole time counted from first coming on duty until finally leaving, without deduction for dinner hour, except in cases where they are standing for more than three hours at a spell. Time standing for more than three hours at a spell will not be counted.

[NOTE.—From this it will be seen that a liberal allowance is made for standing time, and the objection, strongly stated by the Association, to the local officer fixing the time allowed is removed.]

The Commissioners will restrict all excessive hours of working, employing extra hands, as a rule, in preference.

The workmen, as a general rule, cannot be paid for the time going to or coming from their work; but in extreme and exceptional cases special allowance will be made, according to the merits of the case.

Where piecework is considered desirable, the pay will not be less than ordinary wages rate, but workmen will be allowed to earn up to rate and a quarter. In a general way piecework will be restricted, the Commissioners using the system only where they think circumstances justify it.

The age for cleaners to enter will be from eighteen to twenty-one years, the pay, as per scale, rising 6d. a day each year until it reaches 7s. a day.

Mr. Hoban: We cannot get a definite reply. We are as we were before. You have not given us a practical reply. We could make a certain amount out of it, but not what we want. With regard to boy labour nothing definite is stated. You said you would go in a fair direction. We would like you to say if you accept our proposal.

Mr. McKerrow: Yes; we really agree with the proposal with regard to boy labour; but now, as before, we say that we cannot just do it in every shop, in every section. We cannot do it until we pay off some of the apprentices. It was acknowledged that in some of the shops there was more than one apprentice to four men, but over the whole of the department that proportion was not reached. We cannot get to the limit of one in four in each of the shops just immediately without inconvenience.

Mr. Hoban: We do not wish to interfere with the lads at present in the service, but we desire an understanding that no more lads or apprentices shall be taken on in any workshop until that proportion has been arrived at.

Mr. McKerrow: We do not agree to that, quite. You will see at once an objection to that. Take any shops where there is an excess of apprentices—more than one to four journeymen—if your proposal were rigidly adhered to it would not be possible to put in an apprentice for several