

*Mr. McKerrow* : I may say we have begun already to carry out the stipulated one to four. Only yesterday the Commissioners refused to entertain the application for more apprentices. That was a very urgent application.

*Mr. Winter* : If you are sincere, why not say you will accede to our request?

*Mr. McKerrow* : We have done so.

*Mr. Winter* : When a man gets four or five pages of a document before him he is somewhat confused as to its meaning.

*Mr. McKerrow* : The subject is not a very simple one to be put in a word or two. A great many considerations have to be taken in mind, and I think when you see this before you it will appear clearer than it does now from my reading.

*Mr. Winter* : I followed you as carefully as I could, and that is the conclusion I arrived at—that we have no concessions at all. We have some concessions, but not one point wholly acceded to.

*Mr. McKerrow* : The only point was that of the cadets—the only point not cleared up. Mr. Hoban was pretty well satisfied.

*Mr. Hoban* : I cannot say until we have perused that document. It would be unwise to do so.

*Mr. McKerrow* : Quite so.

*Mr. Winter* : This gradual arrangement, where two boys come out and one boy is put in, will that bring about the desired result?

*Mr. McKerrow* : That is the intention of the regulation.

*Mr. Winter* : But it will extend over a long period of years. Apprentices have been taken on at a tremendous rate recently. In the Addington workshops there was a notice up that all men who had boys eligible could send in an application.

*Mr. McKerrow* : Is that correct, Mr. Rotheram?

*Mr. Rotheram* : I do not know.

*Mr. Winter* : The process will be gradual. If you will say there shall be no more boys appointed we will be satisfied.

*Mr. McKerrow* : We cannot do that, owing to the gaps to be filled up. Of course, the mechanical department is a sort of school.

*Mr. Winter* : And the apprentices go away after learning their trade.

*Mr. McKerrow* : If they choose. I do not think you can quote many instances where an apprentice has been paid off after serving his time.

*Mr. Rotheram* : Every apprentice will be out of his time in about five years.

*Mr. Maxwell* : A great many are going out every year.

*Mr. Winter* : You do not employ them as journeymen. The experience is that boys have to clear out because they do not get journeymen's wages. There will be a gap when the boys are out of their time. They are invited to leave.

*Mr. McKerrow* : There is always a certain amount of work in every establishment for lads and boys that you do not require men to do. That is the reason why we want apprentices.

*Mr. Winter* : We only say do not have more than are necessary, and not so great a number as to interfere with adult labour.

*Mr. McKerrow* : We are quite agreeable to this : that there shall only be one boy to four men in future. The difficulty is simply the difference in the present state and one in four. It might take three or four years to get the number brought down, but as the apprenticeship is only for five years it must necessarily run out very quick.

*Mr. Winter* : I would like you to make a concession. If you find you are getting short of apprentices, there are plenty in the country that you can take.

*Mr. McKerrow* : You know, as a practical man, that when you get raw lads in a shop it is a very difficult matter to find suitable work for them. In learning a trade in a workshop the apprentice goes on from a lower to a higher class of work. You will require to graduate the admissions so as not to have boys running on top of one another.

*Mr. Winter* : Boys have been graduating on top of one another for the last two years.

*Mr. McKerrow* : We do not want to repeat that operation. We want to feed the shops gradually, but giving the proportion of one to four as far as we can. It seems reasonable enough to me.

*Mr. Winter* : But the time is so great before we shall feel the benefit of it. Many of us would be dead before it affected us. There are twenty-five apprentices in the Addington workshops to two mechanics. Just imagine the immense number of years it would take to reduce the number required by the proportion.

*Mr. McKerrow* : I am almost sorry that we touched on this, because I think it is an immaterial point. I believe we could agree to what you stipulate for but for the difficulty of carrying it out to the very letter, and the fear that you might afterwards think we were breaking faith. I really think you ought not to make so much of it. There is really no intention to go beyond the one to four, but we want you to give us reasonable time. If you like, we will stipulate at once the time in which the proportion will be brought about.

*Mr. Winter* : We do not wish you to stipulate any particular time. We only say do not take any more boys on until the boys run out.

*Mr. Rotheram* : Fix it at four years, if you like.

*Mr. Winter* : Supposing, for argument's sake, we agreed to a thing of that sort, how should we know it would be done?

*Mr. Rotheram* : It would be recorded.

*Mr. Winter* : You always find a different man adopts a different mode of work. If it were simply on record, as a certain policy as it were, if you had a successor—supposing you were to die,