

*Mr. McKerrow*: We have given it a great deal of consideration, and gone, I think, a little further than we ought to go with the conciliatory intention of giving something acceptable.

*Mr. Hoban*: One thing I forgot. I think if the guards are working more than the regular number of hours they should be paid the same as for overtime.

*Mr. McKerrow*: We agree to that.

*Mr. Hoban*: Also the same with men in the traffic?

*Mr. McKerrow*: No; we can regulate their hours so as to come within these hours a week.

*Mr. Hoban*: You practically agree to our terms, except that the time shall be sixty hours instead of forty-eight hours a week. We think forty-eight hours a fair week's work.

*Mr. McKerrow*: Yes, continuous work.

*Mr. Hoban*: That simply comes to the old position. You pay a clerk whether he is at continuous work or not.

*Mr. Owen*: I think you admit the pay is lower than in the Australian Colonies?

*Mr. Maxwell*: Yes.

*Mr. Owen*: I think you will find that in other countries than Victoria and New South Wales.

*Mr. Maxwell*: You are speaking of drivers and firemen.

*Mr. Owen*: Yes; there is no sixty hours there, and yet they are higher paid.

*Mr. McKerrow*: I admit the rate of remuneration is higher in the other colonies. They are richer, or something of that sort; all salaries are higher. We must bear in mind that New Zealand is mainly an agricultural country. We have minerals, no doubt; but we are not so richly endowed as New South Wales in the matter of minerals. We must bear in mind that the service does not exist for the employes, but for the settlers. For years past settlers have been growing oats, wheat, butter, cheese, and other products at scarcely paying rates, working early and late with their families; and it is really that class who will have to make up these higher rates we are now discussing. You see the railway-rates cannot be increased because it is these people who will have to pay them, and if the railway-rates cannot meet all the demands on the revenue, it simply means that these people will be taxed so much more. We cannot run away to Victoria and New South Wales for our standard; we must take things as they are in New Zealand.

*Mr. Owen*: I quite admit that.

*Mr. McKerrow*: Another thing I may mention: I have never been in New South Wales, but I presume a driver would very much sooner work here in this genial climate than in New South Wales, with its climate of a torrid nature.

*Mr. Owen*: There is a good deal of sound, common-sense in your remarks; but I think the railways in Victoria and New South Wales will not stand on a par with your railways. I think they stand on a much lower footing. They are not paying so well as yours.

*Mr. McKerrow*: They are paying better. Last year they paid 4 per cent. in Victoria and in New South Wales something over 3 per cent.

*Mr. Owen*: Well, sir, you have £63,000 above your estimate. I must congratulate you on having done so well, but if you appropriate part of that to meet our request I do not think we shall be asking a very great deal. How will the ten hours you quote come in with an affair like this—ten hours or a hundred miles. That is a very important word—that little word a hundred miles. You take ten hours or a hundred miles: take a shunting-engine, you only allow it to book sixty hours.

*Mr. McKerrow*: You do not count shunting in the rate of wages; there is no fixed rate. It does not affect wages or anybody's pay.

*Mr. Owen*: If you run a man ten hours or 100 miles, if he runs over 100 miles, naturally he would consider that a day's work; if he did ten hours and did not do 100 miles, that would make a day's work. I think you will find that ten hours and 100 miles, does affect the rate men have been paid. We will leave that. I was taken aback altogether. Sixty hours is condemned all over the world.

*Mr. Maxwell*: You have obtained large concessions in standing time.

*Mr. Owen*: With regard to the dinner-hour; you will admit we get no dinner-hour. We shall have to take our meals on the engine.

*Mr. McKerrow*: Supposing a man is standing he will have plenty of time to have a meal in a proper way. We would not deduct that. We have tried to avoid, in making this arrangement, any troublesome sort of computation between the foreman and the driver. We want the men to be in as independent a position as is consistent with discipline. We want, in other words, that they shall be men and not slaves.

*Mr. Owen*: I may say you have levelled a blow at the locomotive men by these sixty hours.

*Mr. McKerrow*: I am sorry to hear that. It does not mean exactly sixty hours. We put it at that when we were considering the week's work; after that it will be time and a quarter. Standing time is to count in the sixty hours: formerly that was booked differently. Now we allow three hours at a spell; nothing is deducted unless it is three continuous hours. No notice will be taken of one hour and a quarter, but if you stand four hours then notice will be taken of it. It prevents booking off, and avoids irritation.

*Mr. Owen*: You say sixty hours a week. Does that include seven days' work?

*Mr. Maxwell*: No, six days. Sunday time is entirely independent of the sixty hours.

*Mr. Owen*: Then, Sunday time totals separately from the week's time in the rate that is to be paid?

*Mr. McKerrow*: Yes, time and a quarter.

*Mr. Winter*: It is no good wasting time. You have made it sixty hours; we have made it forty-eight. We could not accept your proposals: they would probably tar-and-feather us when we got back to Christchurch. Your own employes have decided that forty-eight hours shall be a