

week's work. I consider, now you have arrived at the conclusion to have sixty hours instead of forty-eight all that we have to do is to take word back to that effect. We do not see that there can be any compromise: forty-eight hours must be a week's work. We must admit that we could not get you to accede to their demands. If that is not conceded the matter must fail. The main principle all over the world will be forty-eight hours, and this is refused to the men in New Zealand.

*Mr. Edwards:* I rise to indorse the opinions of Mr. Winter. We could not compromise in the matter; we must take back the resolution arrived at. If there was a difficulty pointed out we could arrange accordingly.

*Mr. Maxwell:* It was pointed out that the exceptional cases were so many that they would subvert the rule.

*Mr. Edwards:* I do not see why we could not easily arrange it, even if there were a great number of these cases.

*Mr. Edwards:* I understand you to say fifty-four hours a week. In some cases men would vary over their meals.

*Mr. McKerrow:* In a case of standing it would not matter what time was taken.

*Mr. Owen:* Our idea was to eliminate any of this three hours' standing.

*Mr. McKerrow:* I quite understand you when you say you have to talk this matter over, and take back the answer to the Executive. But you are men of enlightenment. The whole business of the world, the making of laws, and so on, is all settled by compromises—that is to say, there is debate and consideration, and each party approximates or gives way a little, and a workable result is arrived at. I think, when you think this out, you will acknowledge that the Commissioners have gone a long way to meet you.

*Mr. Owen:* I cannot see why, having gone this distance, you cannot give another six hours. You admit that you have a good staff, and that the wages are low as compared with the other colonies. I do not think the climate has anything to do with the matter. Some people would not come here from the other side. I admit you have made great concessions, but, you see, it will cost only a little more. What, after all, is the cost so long as you do justice to the men? The railways should not be looked upon as a means of raising revenue: they should be looked on as a means of making the country prosperous. You say you have made £63,000 profit: why not give the men a little of that?

*Mr. McKerrow:* The country might not be so prosperous in a year or two. If you look at the statistics you will find that the revenue goes up and down. Last year was a singularly prosperous year. The products were never before so large as last year.

*Mr. Owen:* I think you will find that the products increase year by year. Why not give us some of the profits?

*Mr. McKerrow:* It is almost impossible to work the eight hours a day.

*Mr. Winter:* Forty-eight hours a week?

*Mr. McKerrow:* Forty-eight hours a week.

*Mr. Owen:* Do I understand that the porters, shunters, and other men shall, as far as possible, work forty-eight hours?

*Mr. McKerrow:* Yes; but it cannot be done at all the stations. It will be done as far as possible. We are all in favour of eight hours' labour, only we think we have to apply it according to circumstances.

*Mr. Owen:* Then, it is only the unfortunate running men who will get this blow levelled at their heads.

*Mr. McKerrow:* I think you will admit that there are a great many not running ten hours a day.

*Mr. Owen:* That is nine points in my favour. I can quote cases in England where men do not work six hours. They run from Bristol to Exeter—seventy-five miles—and back, and then they are done.

*Mr. Maxwell:* What wages do they get?

*Mr. Owen:* I believe, 7s. 6d. The North-Western Railway Company lately gave their men 6d. a day advance without being asked. They were getting 6s. or 7s. I am only quoting these cases to show what they are doing in the Old Country which we have left behind.

*Mr. Maxwell:* There is a lot of standing time in the sixty hours which was formerly booked off. Take the time from Christchurch to Oamaru: that is six hours five minutes: how long is a driver on duty there?

*Mr. Owen:* We are supposed to be round in the passenger-yards at 10.40. We have to be on more than an hour before. About half-past 9 is the starting time.

*Mr. Maxwell:* When do you get off?

*Mr. Owen:* About half-past 6 o'clock.

*Mr. Maxwell:* That is eight hours or eight hours and a half. That is a most important run. Now, look at some of the branch lines. The run in is three hours, standing five hours, and the run back three hours; that is eleven hours. If we adopt your proposal the driver would get a day and a half's pay—more than a more responsible man. He would be paid as much as the driver who ran a long and heavy journey.

*Mr. Owen:* My point is the standing. Many men have no cleaners at all. The fireman lights up the engine, and gets up steam. He runs down to the station, where he stops during the day. All that is marked in the standing column.

*Mr. Maxwell:* Time cleaning the engine would not count as standing.

*Mr. Owen:* No; but it would be put in the standing book. I have quoted a case in England where a man was standing five out of fifteen hours. He had to get the engine ready for the morning. It all totalled up to thirteen days, and he was paid for that.

*Mr. Maxwell:* On the tramway the drivers are paid 45s. a week for sixty-six hours.