

Mr. McKerrow : No ; I do not think so always.

Mr. Hoban : The objection is that it is an unhealthy stimulus.

Mr. McKerrow : No ; by piecework a man gets the reward of his industry.

Mr. Hoban : No ; his own industry will bring his wages down. These charges are averaged now and then ; and if you saw a man in your employ making double wages, do you mean to say you would not regulate that, and cut it down one-half ?

Mr. McKerrow : It is in evidence that we will not reduce the wages in any way, and will allow time and a quarter to be made.

Mr. Hoban : You say you will not reduce wages now, but by-and-by you will reduce them from £25 to £20 per month. You would cut it down so that a man would only make day-wages. Men work hard because of their avarice. I do not think the majority should suffer because of these men. The majority say they suffer under piecework, but you will go by the minority.

Mr. Winter : I think that was threshed out. I thought you admitted you would conciliate the men in this.

Mr. McKerrow : We do agree in the main to decrease it. We do not want to diminish your pay, and we will restrict even the present piecework.

Mr. Winter : If you see the necessity of restricting it, why not abolish it altogether ? They do not do it outside.

Mr. McKerrow : Do you say outside shops do not have piecework ?

Mr. Winter : No ; Scott Brothers, of Christchurch, and Anderson do not have piecework. I think we might agree that forgers should be excluded. It is not altogether piecework. A certain work is let to a man at a certain price mutually agreed upon. Leave forgers out of the question.

Mr. Maxwell : Wheelmakers come in the same category.

Mr. Winter : I do not think so.

Mr. Maxwell : Wheelmaking is done by the gang.

Mr. Winter : We have never made wheels at Addington.

Mr. Rotheram : No ; only at Hillside.

Mr. Winter : Have they ever been made on day-work.

Mr. Rotheram : I do not know. It is now all piecework.

Mr. McKerrow : Could it not be made by contract-work ?

Mr. Rotheram : Well, I believe we could take anything by contract-work.

Mr. Winter : If *bona fide*, we cannot restrict any man from taking contract-work.

Mr. Rotheram : The same as the brassfounder. He does the whole thing with an assistant.

Mr. Winter : No ; that is the mischief of the thing. The foreman makes a pound or two a week out of the assistants. The brass-moulder gets so much a pound for all the brass castings. He has two moulders working at the minimum rate of wages, and he does not do any great amount of work himself.

Mr. Rotheram : But he is skilled.

Mr. Winter : The assistants are also skilled labourers.

Mr. Rotheram : That is simply absurd.

Mr. Winter : If it is, then it is your fault, because they are two apprentices turned out of your shops. If we exclude these cases as *bona fide* contracts, will you agree to the abolition of piecework, then ?

Mr. McKerrow : I think we can meet you there.

Mr. Winter : Brass-moulders, forgers, and wheelmakers excepted.

Mr. Maxwell : It will knock off nine-tenths.—Is brass casting to be considered contract-work too ?

Mr. Winter : Yes ; they are men making money out of other men's work. Let all share alike. Let the brass-moulder employ them.

Mr. Edwards : If the moulder employs his assistants, mind, it will aggravate the case more than it does now.

Mr. Winter : Pay a certain man for being the leading man. Let each man have a fair share of the profits.

Mr. Rotheram : I think that is done.

Mr. Winter : I beg your pardon ; it is not.

Mr. Rotheram : Mr. Winter is speaking about things he does not understand.

Mr. Winter : I am speaking from information received from the men there. If I cannot trust the men I must abide by the consequences. It is now some little time since I was in Christchurch. If Mr. Rotheram has made alterations since I left, I cannot be expected to be cognisant of that fact. In contracting, as at present in vogue, the head man makes a profit out of another person's labours.

Mr. Winter : We again ask you to limit the cadets to the proportion. If it is necessary to take boys let them start, after serving five years, on the road to £140 a year. We think you might adopt one of these courses.

Mr. McKerrow : With regard to the limitation, we have talked that matter out. We shall employ only as many as are necessary. With regard to the cadets, the practice, as it works out, is very much like this : After serving six years they pass on to clerks, unless for some reason—such as inefficiency, or want of attention—they are kept back. After six years' service he goes on by £10 increases up to £140. A lad of fifteen would be put on for five years. He would be aged twenty when his time is served, but he is kept as a cadet until he is twenty-one. He would then pass on to be a clerk, and go on, arriving at £140 by the time he was twenty-four. Of course he stands still there for some time, but he may rise earlier if the vacancies occur, and he is expert and efficient.

Mr. Maxwell : He may be appointed at twenty.

Mr. Winter : These are exceptional instances, of course.