

is a cruel kindness to keep him in the service. At present if one man is not competent another one has to bolster him up and keep him going. It is manifestly unjust that those who can do superior work should only receive the same pay as those who are manifestly lacking. It is not a great concession either to ask for, that they shall receive £140 when they have concluded their apprenticeship. It will take four years.

*Mr. Hannay* : No, it will take three years.

*Mr. Haden* : Then they stop an indefinite time at £140. I do not come here to state my own personal case, but I am familiar with it, of course, and it is in point. I have stopped now four years and a half ; I have asked my superiors for a rise, and I am told I could not get it because four or five men are getting £180. When you take into consideration that it would take four years to reach that maximum, I do not think we are asking too much. Of course you will understand I am not pleading my case, but simply stating it as an instance.

*Mr. Maxwell* : Quite so. Did you serve your cadetship in the service ?

*Mr. Haden* : No ; I came on in Mr. Back's time.

*Mr. Maxwell* : But you did not serve as cadet ?

*Mr. Haden* : No ; but I served in the Old Country, and I think that is as good.

*Mr. Maxwell* : I do not call in question your qualification.

*Mr. Haden* : I think they should go up by annual increases. It is evident that the staff has to keep the work of a certain station going, and if they are dovetailed in (those who are incompetent with the competent men) it stands to reason that the competent men are bolstering up the incompetent ones. If a cadet has not got the necessary mental capacity he had better seek another field of labour, instead of living by the superior endowments of his fellows.

*Mr. McKerrow* : In all large services only a few can come out at the top ; many must be in the rank and file. What you point out happens in all classes. No doubt a competent man may be found in the fourth class—a man who may be more capable than the head of the department ; but the fact of the matter is this : he joined the service and cannot overstep others, and it is a case of wait. It is very trying, no doubt, to yourself and others in the lower grades, but there is no help for it. Length of service, efficiency, and so on, must count. Mr. Hannay might make a few remarks on this subject, with which he is familiar.

*Mr. Hannay* : I have nothing special to say, except that I do not take the same view as Mr. Haden as to taking too many cadets, or that the outcome of the work shows that we have too many. As a matter of fact—and this would answer Mr. Elvines' complaint as to country stations—every stationmaster in the country needs a lad. He does not need a man, though, as a matter of fact, we keep the lad on until he gets the salary of a man ; and therefore it is not that we have too many lads, but that we are really paying lads a much higher salary than is justified by the work they are doing. Instead of a lad at a country station doing a man's work, as a rule, though he may be getting £105 or £110 a year, he is only doing a lad's work. With regard to Mr. Owen's remark about shunting, of course we do not allow a shunter in charge of a yard to be a boy. He laid great stress on young men not being employed as shunters until they are twenty-one years old ; but it is something like what applies to the cleaners—we would never put a man into a large yard in charge of shunting unless he had had very great experience, and I do not imagine that it is the case.

*Mr. Owen* : It is not so much the case in yards as in the outside stations. There are junctions and stations where the stationmaster has to remain on the platform, and he has to be responsible for the actions of a lad shunter, and you have lad shunters at these outside stations who have to turn trains in on junctions, and the stationmasters feel aggrieved at having to be held responsible for the actions of these boys. A boy should not have control of a pair of points where a train may be turned over on its side.

*Mr. Hannay* : I do not agree that no one under twenty-one years of age, or who has not had two or three years' experience, should hold a set of points.

*Mr. Owen* : And act as shunter.

*Mr. Hannay* : But they are not, practically, acting as shunters. Now, you, as a driver, would rather go to a station where there is a lad with a year or two's experience shunting than where there is a man off the streets.

*Mr. Owen* : Yes, I should think so ; but I think twenty-one years of age is reasonable for a man to begin to order others, because it simply means that the driver of an engine takes his orders from the shunter, and in some instances the boys or lads make themselves very obnoxious. One man can say a thing to another—for instance, you could say something to me, and I would go away quite contented, not in the least hurt ; but somebody else might say the very same words and I might feel very sorely cut, and you know boys will be boys —

*Mr. McKerrow* : Bumptious ?

*Mr. Owen* : Yes ; — and, instead of speaking courteously as one man would do to another, actually bounce men, and it is rather hard for a man who has reached man's estate and got boys of his own older than the one talking to him to be bounced by these boys.

*Mr. McKerrow* : Certainly. But we are quite against the idea of having boys at that responsible duty as a regular thing in the large yards. In the junctions and little country stations, however, it would be very expensive to have a man there, where a lad could do the work. I think that is what Mr. Hannay wants to bring out.

*Mr. Owen* : In some instances boys have taken the places of porters and shunters, and have caused derailments.

*Mr. McKerrow* : Unfortunately, derailments happen with men as well.

*Mr. Owen* : Yes, but men look out ; if it occurs with lads it may be on account of carelessness.

*Mr. Hannay* : This last month or two half a dozen have occurred, and not a boy concerned. If there had been it would have been blamed on him, I suppose. They were all experienced men.