

ter, so that his pay came to 14s. 9d. a day. But had he been paid for the fourteen as you suggest—that is to say, eight hours for the day, time and a quarter for four hours, and time and a half for two hours forty minutes, his pay would have been 24s. 9d. per day; and the fireman would also have to have proportionate increases. The difference per month is that in the one case £30 was paid to the engine-man and fireman, and under the new scale it would be a little over £50. In your case you say the man would prefer eight hours and no overtime. I say that would simply double the expenses, because we would require two sets of men.

*Mr. Owen*: In that one instance.

*Mr. McKerrow*: Well, it is a typical instance, because it is not at all exceptional. This is a case of a branch-line running down to a main-line.

*Mr. Maxwell*: Have you any limit to put to the day's work, the number of hours per day, in a general way?

*Mr. Owen*: We simply ask that the man should not be asked to go on duty again until he has had eight hours' rest.

*Mr. Maxwell*: But what is the extreme limit you allow a man to work in the ordinary way—the extreme length of the day? You propose eight hours a day, but you are also proposing they should work overtime. What is the largest day's work you allow a man?

*Mr. Owen*: We leave that to the Commissioners. Forty-eight hours a week is what we stipulate. They work it in Sydney, and give the man eight hours off.

*Mr. Maxwell*: There are four questions involved—What is the greatest number of hours per day a man should work, what number of hours constitute a day's work, what number of hours of this intermittent work should constitute "working-time," and what shall be the rate of pay. As to the first, are you going to run the man fifteen or sixteen hours.

*Mr. Owen*: Yes, provided you work him only forty-eight hours in the week.

*Mr. Maxwell*: You let him work any reasonable number of hours per day.

*Mr. Owen*: Yes.

*Mr. Maxwell*: You only limit it to forty-eight hours per week? The second question is what should be the number of hours per day that constitute a day's work, and you have answered that you say eight. Now, I have listened to you, and you have been referring specially to drivers' time. Of course, this is a large question that you are on. Eight hours' continuous work is recognised as a day's work, but that does not apply to intermittent work: eight hours is a day's work in the shops, and eight hours' continuous work is recognised all round. But the intermittent services—those of drivers, firemen, stationmasters, and some other employes who work time on and take time off—are different. Do you propose to have all those men who work intermittent services paid on eight hours a day, the same as those who are working continuously?

*Mr. Owen*: I was speaking principally with regard to drivers and firemen.

*Mr. Maxwell*: But I want to get to this question. Do you want us to make the intermittent workers who work broken time count eight hours a day as if they were working continuously? They have many intervals in which there is nothing to do. Are you proposing that the time for those men shall be reduced to eight hours a day?

*Mr. Owen*: It has been done in some stations in this way, that some go on at a certain hour, others come on later, and so on. Before that, the men would be working ten or eleven hours a day.

*Mr. Maxwell*: But what is the general principle you demand? I do not want to ask about what we are doing or what we may have altered. Is that the general principle you want us to adopt—that intermittent workers are to be limited to eight hours?

*Mr. Owen*: To a great extent that is the principle. By re-arranging the work many intermittent workers could be kept continuously at work.

*Mr. Maxwell*: That does not affect the question. We must have a very large number of men who are on and off during the day, and you are proposing that these intermittent workers shall only have eight hours, the same as those who are working continuously—such as mechanics in the workshop, and so on?

*Mr. Owen*: It is for you to employ the men.

*Mr. Maxwell*: But I ask, is it a general principle?

*Mr. Owen*: Perhaps some of my colleagues would like to answer you.

*Mr. Maxwell*: There is the blacksmith, he works like a nigger for eight hours. It is different with the porter at the station, who only works an hour or two together throughout the day, with five or six trains passing in and out. It is just the same with the stationmaster. He is made to reside at his station, as a rule, and some of them go on at six in the morning, and are off and on at different times during the day.

*Mr. Hoban*: We want them all to be treated the same. When a man goes on to work, you are keeping him there all the time. You give him a couple of hours off, but you practically keep him going all day, and that is what we say is unfair. The service could be so arranged, I think, that a man could do his eight hours' work properly, and not impair it a bit. With regard to this £50,000, if the 3 per cent. you folks have saved had been placed in the direction we indicate, the public would not have blamed you a bit, because they would have seen you were relieving men who deserved it. The public are with us from one end of the colony to the other—the Maritime Council, the Trades and Labour Council, they are all with us. Every member of the House and every right-thinking man will say that eight hours should be a day's work; and, if the Commissioners like to apply the money they have saved in this way, these people would not blame them at all. If the Commissioners persist in not giving them relief, you will find it will be very hot work before the session is over. Of course, understand I do not want to threaten at all, but I am simply putting what is the fact.

*Mr. Maxwell*: Yes, that answers the question. It does not matter whether it is broken time or whether the man is working continuously—you apply the principle to all classes.