

*Mr. Hoban:* That is the instruction we received from our Executive.

*Mr. Maxwell:* That it is to be for all classes?

*Mr. Hoban:* Yes.

*Mr. Maxwell:* How can you do that without increasing the cost of working?

*Mr. Hoban:* It may increase it for the present, but by-and-by the men will be so contented with it that it will come back to you again. At the present time the men are very dissatisfied, and a great number of things are lost to the colony. If they could be relieved, there would be a difference in many things you do not know of.

*Mr. Maxwell:* You spoke of the Trades and Labour Council. I see by the newspapers—and I suppose it is correctly reported—in connection with the tramways running here there has been some difficulty, and the Trades and Labour Council has claimed that the tramway drivers shall work 66 hours a week, for which they are to be paid £2 5s. Now, that is a very great difference when compared with what we have been demanding from our drivers, who get £3 to £3 12s. for 60 hours. I mention that because I noticed it, and think that the Trades and Labour Council realise that broken work should not be treated on the eight hours' system. It has never been the practice to treat it on that system, and it is pretty well recognised by the outside public that it should not be so treated. For instance, I understand if we brought an engine-man on duty in the morning and he had to run a train, and was taken off, and put on again in the evening, you would consider that he was to be paid for all the time he was booked off?

*Mr. Hoban:* We say that from the time he is booked on till he is booked off he should be paid.

*Mr. Maxwell:* If a man goes to a country station where there is a room for him to wait in, and he is booked off, you will surely not say he ought to be paid for his whole time?

*Mr. Hoban:* You will very seldom find that a man gets a room to wait in. Take Culverden: if you send a man to Timaru for two hours, you would book him off two hours and let him roam about Timaru?

*Mr. Maxwell:* Not necessarily; but where a man has to "stand" six or seven hours, and then has to take his engine back, you say he ought to be paid for the time he is standing?

*Mr. Hoban:* Yes; I think you should pay him for the time he is away, as I pay my clerk for the time I keep him.

*Mr. Maxwell:* But do not you pay your clerk by the year?

*Mr. Hoban:* No; by the week. If he works over his regular hours he is paid overtime.

*Mr. Hannay:* You mean that there is to be no booking-off in the middle of the day?

*Mr. Hoban:* No.

*Mr. Maxwell:* You include stationmasters, porters, and all intermittent workers under that heading? The stationmaster goes on at 7 a.m., say, to see trains off. He leaves at 10 at night, and is to be counted as doing three days' work, or something of that sort?

*Mr. Hoban:* Of course there is a difficulty with regard to stationmasters, which had not struck me, and which I did not try to solve. But even they could be worked. In the country it is a very difficult thing, I admit.

*Mr. Maxwell:* How would you do it?

*Mr. Hoban:* I have never thought the thing out.

*Mr. McKerrow:* With respect to Mr. Maxwell's illustration, that a stationmaster starts at 7 and is there till 10 at night.

*Mr. Hoban:* If his work requires him to be about the station all day long, I should say he ought to be paid.

*Mr. McKerrow:* But he has a great deal of leisure time, which he can go and spend with his family if he likes.

*Mr. Hoban:* I admit that I am in a difficulty with regard to that.

*Mr. Hannay:* What about porters?

*Mr. Hoban:* Well, they are different; but, at any rate, my instructions are to demand eight hours for the whole of the employés. Little things like this would have to be arranged; but as to the men themselves, their hours can be remedied—there is no question at all about that. No doubt there are cases where exceptions would have to be made, but they are exceptional cases.

*Mr. Winter:* We acknowledge there is some difficulty about country stationmasters, which will have to be overcome by mutual consent. Our principal object is to establish the principle—eight hours a day or forty-eight hours a week must be recognised. But of course we have this fact: that the rule, if it is enforced, may be injurious to some employés—crossing-keepers, for instance. Therefore we say that in these cases, where we find it is not workable, we should have to come to a mutual understanding. If you say, "We will establish the principle of forty-eight hours a week, except that there are instances where it is not practicable," we should be queer men indeed not to say that you are correct, admit it, and give way. There need not be the slightest difficulty about that. But, as far as porters and stationmasters are concerned, there is a rule that men must give the whole of their time to the service, and not engage in any other work—if they do they are to go out. Now, if you claim a man's body and soul for the whole of the time, then you should be prepared to pay him, with the exception of a few very rare instances where it is shown to be impracticable.

*Mr. McKerrow:* These are not rare instances. The country stations are in a majority; there are not many like Christchurch.

*Mr. Winter:* We would make a concession immediately. We would be the very first to meet you. I cannot admit that porters are exceptions.

*Mr. McKerrow:* At country stations?

*Mr. Winter:* At any station.

*Mr. McKerrow:* Then, you would require two porters at each country station, because the train generally goes away in the morning and comes in at night.