

Mr. J. Wright,—

I would like to say a word on this subject. I think, while specializing men produces more work for a shop, it is a great disadvantage to the mechanic.

If you take a mechanic and place him on one job for years, when he comes off that job he will probably be expert in the line of work he has specialized on, but put him at something else and a "green hand" could do better.

I remember a man who came into the shop where Mr. Walsh and myself were employed. He had been fitting links for years. He could fit two pairs of links on a locomotive faster than an ordinary man could do one pair, but put him at another job, and he was practically useless.

I think that this is the great disadvantage of specialization. Keeping a man on one class of work for a number of years is going to make him forget a whole lot of his general mechanical knowledge.

Mr. M. A. Humber,—

Of course, it should be remembered, if a man is competent he will not be on one class of work too long. He will be advanced. It should be understood that an apprentice is not specialized until he has completed his apprenticeship and has received a general mechanical experience.

Mr. W. C. Sealy,—

I have been an interested listener to the paper this evening, having come from Stratford where I have seen the system in force. Possibly some of the gentlemen who have asked questions have not quite grasped some of the points of the paper and are not familiar with the details of the system, which would of course still leave them somewhat skeptical.

There is one point; the system outlined in the paper could not, of course, as it stands, be applied to all shops, but taking local conditions into consideration, it should be possible to adapt it to any shop.

In regard to contract labor. I think Mr. Brown has not just grasped the idea of the contract system at Stratford. Contract labor is not contract labor in that sense at all. It is more in the line of piece work. A man gets paid his rate and he has the opportunity of earning say 25 or 30 per cent. on that. When he first starts on a job a man may not be able to earn contract over and above his regular rate, but after he gets a little practice he will be able to earn considerable contract money, that is, if he adapts himself.

It is certainly not to a company's interest to transfer a man