Mr. TAIT—We are obliged to equip our cars with automatic couplers. There is a variety of commodities carried in railway cars and we are obliged to build our cars to suit these commodities. Some of these commodities are very bulky. Furniture, for instance requires a specially high car; dressed beef requires a high car because it is hung from the roof. Flat cars have no body of course. Take two cars of the same height when empty and load one and the roof of the loaded car is not of the same height as the roof of the empty one. So that while cars may be of the same height at the floors and draw bars it is impossible to have the roofs of the same height or to have a continuous platform.

Mr. CASEY—The bill only requires that box freight cars shall be of a uniform height.

Mr. TAIT—That includes ventilator cars, refrigerator cars, and furniture cars.

Mr. CASEY—Your view is these special cars should be excepted from the rule?

Mr. TAIT—More than that. As you know, there has been a steady increase ever since railways were built in the size of freight cars. The old standard of 10 tons was increased to 30,000 pounds, then to 40,000 pounds, and then to 50,000 pounds. Now, almost all the box cars built are 60,000 pounds or 30 tons, and railways have been building 40- and 50-ton cars. The additional capacity can be obtained some in length, very little in width, and some in height. To-day we have cars varying from 20 to 50 tons. These are box cars pure and simple.

Mr. CASEY—Then it is not merely furniture and refrigerator cars which you build at a greater height than the ordinary cars?

Mr. TAIT—No, sir; because the modern car is of a greater height than of the car built six years ago, of which we have a good many, and which have a good many years of usefulness yet.

Mr. CASEY—Do you consider that the difference of the height of the roofs of these cars caused by an actual difference in the size of the cars as an inconvenience or as a danger to trainmen?

Mr. TAIT—I do not, in the future, and for this reason: our trainmen in the future will not have the same duties to perform as in the past.

Mr. CASEY—No; but at present while they have to run on the top of the cars?

Mr. TAIT—I think not, because they have all been trained to look for a difference in the height of cars. I would like to explain that the difference of a foot in the height of a car is not as dangerous to the trainman as a difference of three or four inches, because he is not so liable to trip over it. You are more apt to trip over a small difference in the level than a high one. You can never overcome a small difference, because if you take two cars of exactly the same height, and load one, it will be three or four inches below the other.

Mr. CASEY—I take it that Mr. Wainwright has some notes, and we had better, perhaps, go on with him.

Mr. WAINWRIGHT—I have simply to make a statement in regard to the brakes and couplers. We are equipping our cars just as quickly as we possibly can. In regard to this work, we are in the hands of certain manufacturers. It has been said, "If you are doing this work, why do you object to a bill of this kind to go into law?" I say that if the time was fixed for this work to be done and it is understood we are then in the hands of the people who are making these appliances. We are in the same position that the railways of the United States are to-day in regard to the interchange of cars. By 1898 these appliances have to be on all cars doing work in the United States.

Mr. CASEY—Is that the law in the United States?

Mr. WAINWRIGHT—That is the law. But there is now under consideration an extension of that law to 1901, because the railways have represented just what I have represented here to-day, that they cannot do impossibilities. The Pennsylvania and New York Central cannot without closing their works up do this work within the time.

Mr. INGRAM—That is within 1901?

Mr. WAINWRIGHT—No; they are asking for an extension of three years. I think that the time limit is now 1898.

Mr. TAIT—Yes, July 1st, 1898.