

public opinion would form a tolerably effective deterrent to breaches of the law. If a tradesman be asked whether he could manage all his sales during eight hours of the day, as a rule he will tell you that he could do so in half the time. As things are, shopkeepers and their assistants spend a large proportion of their time in mere waiting for custom, shifting about of the goods, gossiping with customers, and watching the people on the other side of the way. So far as shops are concerned the proposed limitation of the hours seems readily applicable. In the case of druggists' shops and public-houses the attendants would simply have to work in relays. This means that two persons would have to be employed where one serves at present, which would in turn necessitate an increase in the expense of management; but both druggists and publicans are credited with being able to afford that.

Now, as to the railways. Of course trains are run during more than eight hours out of the twenty-four. But they could be run throughout the whole twenty-four, and yet the railway servants need not work more than eight hours a-piece per day. Indeed, the signalmen at very busy parts of a line do not work more than eight hours as it is. By working in "shifts" the carrying business of the country could be as efficiently managed as it is at present. Nay, by shortening the hours of labour it could be conducted more efficiently than it is at present; for it has been found that not a few of the terrible railway disasters which occur from time to time have happened through fatigue and want of alertness on the part of the overworked signalmen and pointsmen. The hours worked by railway servants vary; but it is stated on good authority that on English railways it is not uncommon for a man to hand in a time-bill for the week of 112 hours, which, divided by seven, gives 16 hours a day! This, of course, includes overtime; but it is said that overtime is systematically worked. In answering a question as to whether he was prepared to support a measure enforcing an eight hours day on railways, Mr. John Morley has stated that such a regulation could not be put into operation all over, as there were many stationmasters at small country stations who had only to work for a few minutes now and again throughout the day. Well, whether these officials are constantly employed or not, if they are "on the spot" they deserve all the remuneration they get at present for eight hours' work. But in any case these sinecurists form the rare exceptions to a rule; and the Legislature can frame exceptional regulations to deal with exceptional cases. Another difficulty was raised by a writer in the *Newcastle Chronicle*. He argued that