

points. You have advanced your arguments in a very fair and moderate manner. The evidence will be printed as soon as possible, and we will send you copies to your hotels, I hope, to-morrow. We will then be in communication with each other for the final meeting, as to the decision we have come to.

Mr. Hoban: I wish to mention that some of the deputation are employés themselves, and the usual course is to apply to the departmental officers for the leave required, but they thought it would be better to mention it to the Commissioners now, as they are here.

Mr. McKerrow: We shall be most happy to grant the requisite leave.

Mr. Hoban: Thank you very much.

Mr. Elvines: Before we leave, I should like to draw the attention of the Commissioners to the case of the workmen.

Mr. McKerrow: The bridge-men, and so forth? Those you belong to?

Mr. Elvines: Yes. They have to leave home on Monday morning, and do not return until Saturday night. On pay-day they are allowed to come down by the mid-day train, if there is any, and of course it so happens now that at a very few stations only there is a mid-day train; and the men would like you to grant that they may come down by the morning train, provided they make up their time to forty-eight hours before they leave. And they would like you to allow them time for going to their work on Monday morning, because it would press very heavily on them to have to make up their time both going to work on a Monday morning and coming back on a Saturday night.

Mr. McKerrow: Mr. Lowe is here; we may hear what he has to say on the subject. He is the officer concerned.

Mr. Lowe: There would not be daylight during winter in which men could make up their time.

Mr. McKerrow: You say they would have to leave their work in some cases on Saturday mornings?

Mr. Elvines: In most cases they could; but in cases where it is impossible to do so they would have to stop till night. As it is now, it is impossible for those men to get to their homes until late every Saturday night during the month.

Mr. McKerrow: It is only once a month you would like them to get in in the morning.

Mr. Elvines: Yes.

Mr. McKerrow: That is to say, where there is no mid-day train?

Mr. Elvines: Where there is a mid-day train they could go by it. The rule allows them to go by the mid-day train, and at the time that rule was made there was always a mid-day train from north to south, and in most parts of the South Island, to their destination; but the mid-day train was knocked off, and they cannot get in except by the train at night; and that often happened to be the express, which comes in at 9 o'clock; and it is very late for a man to be able only to get into town at that time every Saturday night in the year.

Mr. McKerrow: You are away on an average about three months in the year?

Mr. Elvines: These men are away, most of them, all the year round. There are some only away, on an average, three, four, or five months.

Mr. McKerrow: I promise you the thing will be considered.

Mr. Winter: There is one additional reason why these men should be able to return earlier on a Saturday. We have now the early-closing movement, and all the shops close early, and will, in all probability, down our way, at least, close at 6 o'clock on Saturdays, as well as any other day; and when these men come home, having drawn their pay, there is always some little shopping to be done, and when they come home so late they have not an opportunity, neither have their wives, to do the shopping. When a man has been away sometimes a month he likes to go out and do his shopping with his wife, and this privilege would be within their reach if the men came home by the early train.

The Conference adjourned at 3.40 p.m.

SATURDAY, 21ST JUNE, 1890.

The deputation met the Commissioners at 10 a.m. in order to receive the reply of the Railway Commissioners to the proposals submitted at the former interview.

Mr. McKerrow: Mr. Hoban, before I proceed to make known the proposed altered regulations, I will ask Mr. Maxwell to explain the present regulations.

Mr. Maxwell: There are a few points it is desirable to mention. During the discussion that has taken place it appears that the Association have recognised that special circumstances must be treated specially, and that we cannot lay down a hard-and-fast rule for the transaction of the business of a railway. Now, looking at the present scale, it is one which has stood pretty much the same for the last ten years. At any rate, you will see, as we all know, that eight hours' continuous labour is the basis on which we work—that is, eight hours' continuous labour per day for all workshop and way and works hands—probably 2,500 employés. These men have only three days' leave on pay during the year, and if they work overtime they get paid extra for it. That describes briefly the conditions of employment of that portion of the staff. The remainder of the staff—put it roughly at 2,000—comprises all traffic hands and running hands. Now, take the traffic hands first. The stationmasters are a very exceptional group. A stationmaster's work on a railway is never done so long as there is a train on the road. He may be called on at any time to attend at his station. In some cases the stationmaster needs assistance, and there are a few large towns in the colony where a stationmaster cannot supervise the work all day long, and he may have one or more assistants. At country stations, as a rule, he has to do all the work. The stationmaster, on account of the inconvenience