

125. I want to get at this: whether those men were actually malingering and causing the Department to lose money, or whether they were really driven to desperation through the holiday leave accumulating and they could not get it, and then being forced to take the step they did?—I do not think that was the case, because we were putting on additional relieving officers all the time. In that particular district the Department put out sixteen to try and pull up the leave; but notwithstanding that fact it was not until the new regulation became operative and it was definitely decided to deduct all leave that the position was altered, and it then altered immediately.

ALEXANDER THOMAS ENNIS further examined. (No. 23.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Traffic Inspector at Invercargill.

2. I understand you are now going to deal with clause 14 on behalf of the institute?—Yes. The clause is as follows: “14. That officers are required as circumstances arise to go on duty on Sundays in connection with—(a) Ordinary suburban trains to and from seaports; (b) trains leaving starting stations on Sundays; (c) trains leaving starting stations on Saturday and finishing the run on Sunday; (d) alteration and repairs to running-track and signalling-apparatus; (e) other duties in connection with accounts, &c., which must be done on Sundays and which cannot be done on the Saturday immediately preceding or the Monday immediately following. That officers receive payment for duties performed in connection with matters coming under headings (a) and (b), and also for alterations and repairs to running-track and signalling-apparatus when such work is authorized by the General Manager, but they do not receive payment for the performance by them on Sunday of any other duties.” I wish to state that in the Railway Department there is probably more Sunday duty worked than in any other Government Department. The Railway officers have to work a considerable amount of Sunday duty. Some stations are open for train-running purposes all day on Sunday; others are only open occasionally at holiday times and for special trains that may be required to run on Sundays from time to time. In these cases, if officers are specially called on duty they are paid one day's salary at ordinary rates. There are, however, a number of cases where trains leave the centre on Saturday night and run into Sunday morning. For attendance on the latter train officers are not paid anything extra, as it is ruled by the Department that the train is simply one which started the running on Saturday night, and, the work being continuous, it does not constitute Sunday duty. A train may leave a point on Saturday and not reach its destination till some time on Sunday. In such cases, although an officer may be specially brought on duty to attend to that train at, say, 5 a.m. and had to remain on duty one or two hours, he receives no payment owing to the ruling that when a train starts its journey on Saturday and finishes on Sunday no payment will be made for Sunday duty. If the train were to leave the starting station at 4 a.m. on Sunday and finish its run at 9 a.m. the officer who had to be in attendance from 5 a.m. to 7 a.m., or any other officer brought on for the same train, would receive one day's pay at ordinary rates. Then why should not payment be made in the preceding case? We would also point out here that an officer brought on duty to attend trains on Sunday has to attend to *all* trains that day, and may have to start at an early hour; also attend during the day and late in the evening. Some officers are on duty fourteen and fifteen hours on Sundays, and look upon that day as one of the heaviest in the week. At chief-station booking-offices it is absolutely necessary for the clerical staff to work on the Sunday following the close of the accounting period, as it is not possible to complete the accounts after close of business on Saturday night without so doing. In these instances no payment is made, although the Department is aware that the staff are brought on duty for this purpose, and that the work cannot be done at any other time.

3. *Mr. McVilly.*] Will you tell the Committee, Mr. Ennis, the stations at which this fourteen and fifteen hours' continuous duty is done on a Sunday?—I could not name them all, but could give an example—Auckland, for instance.

4. By whom is that done?—The officer in charge of the station for the Sunday, or one of them.

5. How does he go on?—He has to be on before 7 o'clock for the mail train in the morning, and the last suburban train leaves there at 9 o'clock at night.

6. And he is on continuous duty?—He may be off an hour or so during the day, but not much more.

7. There are intervals?—Yes, he could go away for an hour if he had anywhere to go to.

8. Then the duty is not continuous—it is intermittent?—It depends on what you call continuous. An hour is not much good to a man sometimes.

9. Well, if a man is able to put his hat on his head and go up town for two or three hours, would you call that continuous duty?—I should say it is practically continuous duty.

10. Then, if he went home and went to sleep for those two or three hours, would you call that continuous duty?—Well, if he could go home and go to sleep he may be entitled to get the time, but in these large centres it takes the best part of an hour for a man to get home sometimes.

11. Well, do you consider that a man who is sitting at home or a man who is down at the wharf is on duty?—I should say he is practically on duty, because the time is of very little value to him.

12. He is not on duty when off the railway premises?—No.

13. Then he is not on duty when he is down at the wharf?—He might just as well remain on duty for all the value the time is to him.

14. Is he on duty when he is on the wharf?—The Department has ruled that he is not then on duty, but it is hardly fair to consider him off duty when the time is of no value to him at all.

15. If you were employing men and they were at home or off your premises and not carrying out any part of your work for two or three hours a day, would you consider that they were on duty doing your work then?—Well, I do not think it would be fair to consider them off duty when they could only go off for a limited time like that.