

1882.  
NEW ZEALAND.

## PETITION OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES.

(REPORT OF PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE ON PETITION OF W. HILL AND OTHERS, TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE AND APPENDICES.)

*Presented to the House of Representatives, 6th September, and ordered to be printed.*

### REPORT.

HAVING carefully considered the petitioners' statements, and the admissions made by Mr. Maxwell, the General Manager of the New Zealand Railways, the Committee are of opinion that the petitioners have shown sufficient cause for an inquiry into the grievances complained of, and recommend that the petition and the evidence taken be forwarded to the Government, with the view of a fair and impartial inquiry being instituted by competent persons, not being members of the Civil Service, and any reasonable cause of complaint removed.

THOS. KELLY,  
Chairman.

6th September, 1882.

[For Mr. Maxwell's report, on which the following evidence is based, see page 8.]

### MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

MONDAY, 28TH AUGUST, 1882.—(Mr. KELLY, Chairman.)

Mr. MAXWELL, General Manager of New Zealand Railways, examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Maxwell, taking the merits of the petition, I will ask you, first, how is overtime allowed to drivers and firemen?—Each individual case has to be considered on its merits. For example, if a man were to run out five hours and back five hours, and were to stop four hours between, he might not get the whole of the time he stopped at time and a quarter. We cannot lay down any general rule, but can only take each case by itself. If a man gets an easy day and only does half a day's work, he gets paid for a full day. The petition says that we run one day into another. I am not aware of any case in which that has been done: it is not the rule. There must be cases in which everything does not go straight when you have a large number of men stationed about the country. You cannot adopt any regular system without exceptions.

\*2. There are instances given here of long hours being worked—there is a case of sixteen hours thirty-five minutes, and another of sixteen hours five minutes. Suppose a man had been on duty sixteen and a half hours, I suppose there would be a certain proportion in which he would not be working. Would he get overtime for all over ten hours?—He might get the whole six hours. It would depend on circumstances. Gangs work ten hours a day as a rule; if a man was on sixteen hours, and out of that he was standing for five or six hours, he would not get paid for the whole time. We endeavour to make a reasonable allowance in each case. We cannot put on two gangs to do the work, or the men would not be working half their time. If we put on one gang for the whole time we should not pay for long periods in which it was not working.

3. Do they often work such long hours as these?—No, not as a rule. We try to keep to the normal time of working as much as possible, but there are contingencies, such as accidents and breakdowns, and so on, which cannot be foreseen: they happen every day. A special train may be called for, and there may be no means of giving it except by putting a man on for a long time. All these things break the time-scale; they are absolutely unavoidable. If there was an attempt to rule that no man should work more than ten hours on some days the services would stop altogether.

\* Mr. Maxwell took exception to the time-table in the drivers' petition as misleading, and promised to call for a report in detail from the Locomotive Superintendent, Hurunui-Bluff, which is appended. (See page 15.)