

599. That is near the railway too, is it not?—Yes.

600. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Assuming there was no coal imported into the colony, and we had to do with our own, do you think we could manage to run the railways all the same?—I cannot say; we would try very hard. We might have some trouble at first, but I think we would succeed in a short time. I have great faith in Shag Point coal.

601. *Hon. Mr. Ormond.*] In reference to the general management and general direction of railways while lines are in course of construction, is it or is it not necessary that there should be some general control?—Undoubtedly it is.

602. Is it not necessary to have distinct management of constructed lines and lines in course of construction?—They are two different things, requiring different qualifications. A man may be able to make a railway and yet may know nothing whatever about managing it when it is made. General Managers as a rule are not Civil Engineers at all. A Civil Engineer would have only to do with the maintenance of railways.

603. You are aware that there are a number of small lines in course of construction in the North and South Islands, and that while that is so there are two distinct branches of work—constructed lines, and lines in course of construction. Do you think the present system is the most advantageous while there are lines in course of construction?—It would be difficult to separate the two things.

604. Would a construction officer be thoroughly competent to have charge of the whole of the permanent way and locomotives?—The permanent way, certainly. The locomotive branches would require to be placed under the control of a mechanical engineer. In England it is customary for railways to be operated by three officers—engineer of the line and locomotive superintendent, who is a mechanical engineer, and takes charge of the rolling stock; a traffic manager; and over the whole a general manager, who is not necessarily an engineer at all—he is not an engineer as a rule.

605. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Do you think that if night and morning trains were run on the Hutt line that such would pay, and be a benefit to the City of Wellington?—I do not know much about Wellington, but, judging from the population here, I think it would. I should be inclined to try it.

606. *Hon. Mr. Ormond.*] At what hours are the trains run from Ravensbourne?—At a quarter to 8 in the morning, and leave town at a quarter past 5 in the afternoon.

607. *Mr. Lumsden.*] There were few passengers at first?—Yes.

608. But is it a great help to the line now?—Yes.

609. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] With reference to locomotives, you say the engines made in Dunedin cost £1,200, and that 9½-inch cylinders imported cost about the same?—Yes, £1,250.

610. Do you wish the Committee to understand that these engines are of similar effective strength to those imported?—No; the difference would be as the squares of the diameter of the cylinders, which would be very great.

611. Can you give us the relative strength of the two?—It would be as 64 is to 90·25.

612. You have given evidence on the question of the block in Canterbury. If the Government had had simply to perform the work of carriers, and not of storers as well, could the railways have carried all the grain?—Yes; if the grain had been taken away as fast as it was delivered at the stations, there would have been no block.

613. You have said you would not interfere with the present passenger fares anywhere?—No; except, of course, in cases of competition. If a coach took passengers for 9d., I would take them for 8d. The railway must have the traffic.

614. In many instances reference has been made to a "Commission" on railway management. Was any Commission appointed?—No; we did not meet as Commissioners. I never heard of the appointment of a Commission.

615. *The Chairman.*] I wish to know whether you think you could manage the railways with less cost to the public and more satisfactorily if you were more untrammelled—had more complete charge of the railways?—These things can only be ascertained by actual experience. I may say, however, that at present there is a great deal of correspondence and trouble in telegraphing—far more than I like.

616. More than you think necessary?—Yes; and the Minister for Public Works agrees with me that something must be done to lessen it. It was spoken of during my last visit. I may say I am several hours a day engaged in performing the work of a clerk, and I cannot get out of the office.

617. It detracts from your power as General Manager?—Yes; I should not be confined, but be free to go anywhere to see after matters.

618. Do you think the revenue from the railways would be increased by a further increase in the fares?—I do not. I would not support any further increase.

619. You state that our fares bear favourable comparison with those in force in Victoria?—Yes.

620. Do the expenses of maintenance compare with those on the Victorian lines?—I cannot say.

621. Do the railways there cost more per train mile than ours?—Yes, somewhat more.

622. Yet we charge as heavy fares?—I will say this, that cheap lines cost a great deal more to maintain, and the money must be had somewhere. I have no doubt that in some instances the extra cost of maintaining light lines would more than pay interest on the larger sums which would have had to be borrowed in the first instance to make the lines heavy and durable.

623. Your title is Assisting Constructed Engineer?—No; Superintending Engineer.

624. Whereas you are really General Manager?—Yes.

625. And not Engineer?—No; it is a new title to me, and I cannot really understand it.

626. *Hon. Mr. Ormond.*] It merely describes the position you hold with reference to the Engineer-in-Chief?—Yes; he is principal engineer of railways in construction, and is at head of all. I am called Superintending Engineer of Constructed Railways. I call myself an engineer. I am an associate of the Institute of Civil Engineers, and a member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

627. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] In reference to the Lyttelton Harbour Board, and your answer to question 393, I understand all the Harbour Board want is that railway trucks shall not be left at night opposite ships' gangways?—Yes; I believe that is the request.

628. *The Chairman.*] I have a letter here from the chairman of a public meeting in the Rangiora