

Mr. Billing.
—
23rd Aug., 1867.

762. When you spoke just now of the profit or loss on the Auckland railways, were you aware that this line in question returned £4,204 towards the payment of interest last year?—I was not aware of it.

763. Do you consider that a fair return for that line?—In comparison with the manner in which we worked the line, it is.

764. Do you consider under the present condition of affairs—the increased requirements of the public—that that is a fair return to get for that length of line?—The length is 40 miles. A railway of such a length in such a district should return five or six times that amount.

765. Do you consider it ought to pay working expenses and interest as well?—I should think so.

766. *The Chairman.*] Which do you think preferable—a system of weekly or monthly accounts?—As a matter of economy, I should think the simplest thing would be to appoint travelling auditors, as is done on the lines at Home. Let each one have charge of a certain section, and be made responsible for that section, and report to the head Audit Office.

767. Would that do away with the necessity for weekly returns?—Well, a man in that position could detect anything going wrong and set it right at once, thus not requiring a frequent system of returns.

768. We have a local audit and a general audit. Every Stationmaster furnishes to the local audit even the way-bills, which, together with the other returns, have to be sent to the Audit Office in Wellington. Do you think that necessary?—I think it is superfluous.

Mr. Buckley.
—
28th Aug., 1877.

TUESDAY, 28TH AUGUST, 1877.

Mr. BUCKLEY examined.

769. *The Chairman.*] We wish to get some information from you, Mr. Buckley, with regard to your experience of the working of the system of vending railway tickets as carried on in America?—I was travelling in America nearly four months last year, and had an opportunity of seeing how the principle worked.

770. Will you be kind enough to explain to the Committee what facilities you had for obtaining the information we are desirous of getting?—In all the large hotels tickets can be purchased, and should you not be able to get them at the hotel, they can always be had close by, at one of the regular ticket offices. The ticket offices are also combined with the offices of forwarding agents for luggage, &c.

771. Do you know what facilities are offered by the railway companies to those forwarding-agents and ticket-sellers? What terms and conditions do they enter upon? Have you any idea?—I do not know what is the usual arrangement they make with respect to forwarding luggage. From the forwarding-agents can be obtained the checks which are usually given on the railway for luggage. These agents would come to the hotel and take the luggage away, charging for their own services as well as for luggage, should it be overweight.

772. How long are these tickets available?—You can get them for almost any time. The ordinary time is for one month, but they can be got for six months. I myself held one that was available for six months. It carried me through the greater portion of the States and also through Canada, then to New York, and by steamer to Liverpool. I had the alternative of travelling by steamboat through the lakes, and by coach across country.

773. Could you travel over the different lines of railway with it?—Yes, over the different lines owned by different companies.

774. Have you ever heard any complaint in America about the losses that accrue in consequence to the companies?—I have never heard. The system is generally adopted both in America and Canada, and I believe has proved satisfactory. I fancy there are no losses. The ticket system appears very simple. The tickets are issued in the form of coupons. Nearly all the railways are divided into sections, and for each section upon which you travel there is a coupon. The conductor enters the carriage at the first station of the section and marks the coupon, and when he reaches the end of his section he takes the coupon away.

775. What kind of mark does he place on the coupon?—Just the usual one. He nips it.

776. Is each one differently nipped?—Yes, according to the different company or line.

777. Do you consider that system of great convenience to the public?—Of very great convenience. I never used to get tickets at the stations. I always got them at the hotel, or somewhere close by outside, even if I were only travelling a short distance.

778. The tickets are not dated?—Those at the ticket office are not dated. At the railway ticket office the usual tickets are issued, and bear a date. Those issued by the ticket offices appear to be a plain ticket, in the form of coupons attached to each other, with the necessary information printed upon them, stating the place it is for, &c. I would remark that the ticket office stamps each coupon with their name and date of issue.

779. With regard to luggage, do you consider the system of transferring luggage, and the town-delivery system, a good system, and convenient to the public?—I consider it affords great convenience to the public.

780. Then you know no reason why the same system of selling tickets and town delivery of luggage could not be adopted in New Zealand?—No; I do not know of any reason why it should not be adopted here. I believe, when I was in Melbourne in May last, they were thinking of introducing the American plan of delivering luggage in Victoria. The system is so very simple, and wherever you go you can have your luggage forwarded. If you wish you need only keep part of your luggage with you; the rest will be forwarded on for you. I very often did not see a portion of my luggage for a fortnight or three weeks. Where it is detained for any time, the company charge some small sum, as is done in deposit offices. If you intend to stay at any place along the way, you see one of the ticket agents who come into the carriage. From him you can obtain what checks you require, for he will