

have a number belonging to the railway companies. If you want your luggage transferred for any particular place along the route, he takes charge of it. If you wish it, he will forward to any hotel you intend putting up at. All that you have to do is to give up your checks, when you will very often find your luggage at your hotel as soon as you arrive yourself.

Mr. Buckley.
—
28th Aug., 1877.

781. Can this be done on any stage along the line?—Yes.

782. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Would tickets issued—take, for instance, the Wellington and Hutt Section of railway—be available for any time?—Yes, for that short line. If you did not ask at the ticket agencies, and specify the period for which you required the ticket, the agent would give you a ticket for a month; but you could get, by asking for, any time you liked. By getting it at the railway ticket office it only serves for a day. But you can get other tickets at the offices, if you apply for them. The time-tickets that are issued are in the shape of coupons; the ordinary tickets the same as we have here. The ordinary tickets have a date stamped upon them.

783. Did I understand you to mean that the ticket you had took you right through, without your getting other tickets for the road you travelled over?—Yes. When referring to the railway sections, I should have pointed out that all the railway companies' lines in America are divided off into sections, each section taking in about a day's journey. To these different sections are appointed conductors, who come on the train and take charge of the tickets. When he comes on first he marks the tickets of all the passengers, and looks after all those who enter at the stations along the way, and when he leaves he takes the tickets with him.

784. *Hon. Mr. Ormond.*] When you start do you define your route and get coupons for the different sections along that route?—Yes. You must travel over the particular line for which you get the coupons.

785. *Mr. Macandrew.*] I understand the ticket agent does not pay cash for the tickets?—As I understand the system, he remits every week the proceeds of what he has sold. He sends a list of the tickets he has sold and sends in the remittance every week.

786. *Mr. Stevens.*] I suppose they give security?—I do not know whether or not they give security. Most of the large ticket agents hold tickets to take any one over every line of the States and Canada.

787. *Mr. Macandrew.*] What is their profit?—I believe they derive some small commission from the sale.

788. *Hon. Mr. Ormond.*] Does such a system open the way a good deal to fraud, or not?—I can hardly say. The conductors have to produce their tickets, and the company check the returns sent in by the ticket agents for the sale of coupons.

789. Supposing a person in Canada produced a ticket got in San Francisco, and that ticket were stamped fraudulently, what means would there be of detecting the fraud?—Well, I fancy they might be imitated in that way; but I should imagine it was not done, or they would not continue to carry on such a system. You get all the coupons, as it were, attached, so that you can tear one off when you need it. I should mention that on these coupons there is a private mark of the different railways, not merely a simple printed form. The railway authorities also stamp tickets in America. There is apparently a private mark on each coupon. In some cases they have a signature attached to them.

790. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Do you know anything about the system of audit on these lines?—No, I do not.

Mr. PILCHER, examined.

Mr. Pilcher.

791. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Pilcher, I believe?—Yes. My name is Thomas William Pilcher. I am a forwarding agent and railway carrier, residing in Wellington.

792. Will you state to the Committee what information you desire to give them, or whatever complaint you have to make?—My opinion is that the excessive charges along the line at the present time under the new regulations will prevent there being so much traffic for the railway as there has been hitherto. I think, in fact, I can prove this myself. In July, 1876, I chartered railway trucks at the rate of £2. I paid for that month £89 to the Government for trucks alone; and in July, 1877, I paid only £43 to the Government.

793. How was the deficiency caused?—Owing to the falling off in trade.

794. Was it owing to the increased rates on the railway, or the want of conveyance?—I think it was principally owing to the increased rates. I asked the Government last year to make a further reduction in the charge for trucks. They made a reduction, but it was not sufficient. The consequence was I could not hire the railway trucks to bring down the wool. Instead of having, as I expected, something like 300 bales of wool brought into town per week by train, I got about fifty.

795. Perhaps it would be well to state what were your proposals to the Government?—To have trucks for goods and wool at 1s. per mile haulage, equal to 20s. for trucks to the Upper Hutt.

796. All you wanted was simply to hire the trucks at reduced rates?—Yes.

797. Was this traffic, which you say was lost to you, lost also to the railway?—Yes, of course it was. The carriers who brought in the wool went back full.

798. The wool lost to the railway was brought in by drays, and those drays went back from town with goods that would otherwise have been sent by train?—Yes. If they could send empties, and let trucks for firewood out at 15s. 10d., they could afford to let me have trucks both ways at 20s. each. Empty trucks are daily being sent for a return load of firewood at 16s. 8d. each.

799. Can you draw any comparison between the old charges on merchandise, and the present charges under the new tariff?—The difference between the old rate of 8s. per ton measurement and the present classification is about 1s. 3d. less, such as corks, millinery, furniture, fancy goods, tea, &c.; but all dead-weight goods are much higher than the old rate of 6s. 4d.—viz., flour, nails, soap, iron, hides, butter, potatoes, coals, &c.

800. Anything else?—Yes; I have a few items here. Butter under Class C is now 9s. 2d., instead of 6s. 4d. The minimum of the old rate was 1 cwt.; the minimum now is 2 cwts.

801. *Hon. Mr. Ormond.*] Are nails under Class C?—Yes; 9s. 2d. a ton.