

Mr. Pilcher.
28th Aug., 1877.

802. Is not flour lower?—No; it is 6s. 8d., and 12s. 6d. under two tons, in terms of a memorandum dated the 27th June, 1877.

803. *The Chairman.*] From whom is the memorandum?—It was a slip from *Gazette* No. 58.

804. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Do you mean to say that under the present regulations a man can send two tons of flour for 13s. 4d., while one ton costs 12s. 6d.?—I paid it myself only yesterday. As per memorandum, or *Gazette*, of 27th June—I think that is the date—any quantity of flour under two tons is to be paid for under Class A, instead of Class E.

805. What is the operation under Class A instead of Class E?—Under one class a ton of flour can be sent for 12s. 6d., and under the other 6s. 8d.

806. *The Chairman.*] It merely doubles the charge then on a ton of flour?—Yes.

807. What is it you say about the regulations under which you can carry a ton of flour for 12s. 6d., and two tons for 13s. 4d.?—I speak of the clause in the regulations of June last.

808. *Hon. Mr. Ormond.*] What was it you said you paid yesterday for the carriage of a ton of flour?—12s. 6d. for a single ton for twenty miles. It was for Greytown, taken by Walker, the carrier.

809. *The Chairman.*] And that you paid yesterday?—Yes.

810. And you could have taken two tons the same distance for another 10d.?—Yes; I will read three or four lines from my agents at the Upper Hutt:—"One ton of flour cost 12s. 6d., when two tons would only cost 13s. 4d." I have been paying at this rate for about the past week. Unless I could make up the quantity of flour to two tons I had to pay 12s. 6d.

811. *Mr. Bunny.*] Then, the instance of yesterday is not the only one?—No; there is more than one instance. There is another great complaint about the carriage of sheep. They have to be paid for at the rate of so much per score or fraction of a score. If the number of sheep sent is twenty-two, two score have to be paid for under the old tariff.

812. How about one sheep?—Have to pay for one score.

813. *Hon. Mr. Ormond.*] If you exceed the score by one you are charged for two score?—Yes. *Mr. Cruickshank* is my authority.

814. *The Chairman.*] You spoke of potatoes just now. If you had any onions what class would they go under?—I have had so few that generally I put them under Class E, with potatoes, &c.

815. Is there a different charge for potatoes than for onions?—Yes; they go under Class D. Potatoes come under Class E.

816. I saw by the Canterbury papers a different price is charged for onions than for potatoes. Will you explain concisely what was actually your arrangement with the Government?—Up to the end of September, 1876, I had an arrangement with the Government to hire trucks at the rate of £2. I then paid £1 13s. 4d., with the right of putting 5 tons of any class of goods, taking upon myself all responsibility of loading and unloading, and receiving and delivering. Since the 30th June I have been unable to get trucks on that arrangement. It has been stopped, and I now pay the ordinary tariff according to classification.

817. *Mr. Macandrew.*] I understand you to say that formerly you got trucks at 20s.?—No, never less than £1 13s. 4d. They were £2 at the commencement.

818. At all events, I understand you to say that the railway receipts have fallen off about £40 a month?—In July, 1876, I paid the railway for that month £89, and the corresponding month this year I paid £43.

The Chairman: *Mr. Pilcher* says they have lost that amount of traffic from him alone.

819. *Mr. Macandrew.*] There is a loss of £46. Has this trade gone through any one else?—It has gone straight into town; not through any one else. I will read a portion of my letter written to one of the Ministers:—"Statistics for two weeks ending 27th January, 1877: Wool and timber from above the Upper Hutt railway station—680 bales wool, brought in by 25 wagons, 9 brakes, and, taking a fair average, they would return with 126 tons of goods; against 12 trucks sent by me through rail, including Upper Hutt goods, equal to 60 tons; 68,000 feet timber by 28 wagons, which all take a few goods outwards; amount of wool through me for corresponding period 106 bales." I wrote this letter to *Mr. Ormond* in February, and received a reply in June. These are statistics I got from the toll-gate keeper, Kaiwarra, and checked by myself.

820. *Mr. Reader Wood.*] Can you say positively that if you had obtained the sanction of the railway to your original arrangement, the railway would have had all the lost traffic?—Not the whole of it.

821. What proportion?—I could almost guarantee, say, one-half.

822. *The Chairman.*] Half of the wool brought into town by the drays?—Yes.

823. You would have got half of that wool if you received the concession you asked for?—Yes, being agent for seven carriers at that time.

824. *Hon. Mr. Ormond.*] You stated just now that, in consequence of your having been refused the concession you asked for with regard to the trucks, the railway receipts fell off to a loss of £46 a month?—They were £89 in July, 1876, and only £43 corresponding month 1877.

825. Was that from your own business?—Yes.

826. Are you aware of the relative returns from the different railways during those months?—No.

827. Are they more than doubled?—I do not know whether they are doubled this month. It could not be on the goods if they are. It must be through firewood and timber. There has been a great deal of timber and firewood carried by rail.

828. As I understand you, the railway receipts have fallen by a certain amount per month, in consequence of your not getting trucks?—They fell off last wool season by my not getting trucks. If they agreed to my offer, and I got the wool, the train would not have had to run twenty miles empty wagons. I was prepared then to get the wool, deliver, and charge less than railway tariff. My profit consisted in the goods sent back.

829. You spoke just now of the tariff having been raised after that time. Was there any alteration in the tariff about that time?—I do not say so. The tariff has been raised since the 1st July, 1877.