

830. Are you not aware that in many things there is a considerable reduction?—There is in some things that are included in Class A, such as tea. *Mr. Pilcher.*
 831. Is there a large reduction in the carriage of flour?—It is the reverse; the old rate was 28th Aug., 1877.
 6s. 4d., the new rate is 6s. 8d. and 7s. 6d.
 832. You are taking a single ton?—Yes.
 833. What is the present rate for flour for two tons and upwards?—13s. 4d., that is for two tons. The single ton formerly was 6s. 4d., it is now 7s. 6d. (Class D, *Gazette* No. 62, 19th July, 1877.)
 834. For what distance?—Twenty miles.
 835. It is now what?—6s. 8d., two tons and over.
 836. *The Chairman.*] That is not according to the public list of charges; there the charge is only 4s. 2d.?—Yes, add 2s. 6d. terminal charges will make 6s. 8d.
Hon. Mr. Ormond: The charge is 2½d. a mile.
 837. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] Are you prepared to state, Mr. Pilcher, that the turnpike road at the Upper Hutt was in as good order in July last year as in July this year?—It may be a little improved now. It was earlier than July when the bridge was broken down.
 838. Was it not the case that the traffic on the road was very seriously interfered with during the winter months last year, and to a greater extent during the winter months of this year?—I do not recollect any serious complaint, but have heard that the road is worse this year. That was not the reason for the difference in receipts.
 839. *The Chairman.*] I would like to ask you one question: Suppose goods are put on for Ngahauranga, would the railway company carry them there?—No; Mr. Tyler sometimes puts off sheep-skins and hides over the fence.
 840. What becomes of the goods left in truck?—The railway company carries them on to Wellington, and they have to be carried back by dray. I tried to see if I could get a truck to go to Ngahauranga, but the railway authorities would not allow it.
 841. Does that system obtain on other stations?—No.
 842. *Mr. Bunny.*] If goods are coming down from the Upper Hutt, will not the train stop?—Yes, for a little while, to land and pick up passengers.
 843. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] Is there a siding there now?—Yes.
 844. *The Chairman.*] You do not know if the same thing obtains at other places?—No.

WEDNESDAY, 29TH AUGUST, 1877.

Mr. Lawson.
 29th Aug., 1877.

Mr. J. LAWSON examined.

845. *The Chairman.*] What is your position in the Railway Department?—I am General Manager—properly speaking, Traffic Manager.
 846. Will you state what experience you have had in railway matters and so forth, whether at Home or in the colony?—I have had about seventeen years' experience at Home.
 847. That is, in the management of railways?—In the management of railways.
 848. How long here?—Three years.
 849. You were a member of the Railway Commission, I believe?—Yes.
 850. I should like to have your opinion as to the weekly system of accounts that has been adopted recently—whether you consider it is necessary, convenient, and inexpensive?—Well, in the first place, as I stated at the Commission, I consider it is unnecessary. It was the system in vogue upwards of twenty years ago where now they have the calendar monthly system.
 851. What were your particular and general objections to it?—I considered it unnecessary in the matter of the expense involved in maintaining it. I may say that when I went to Canterbury I found that the weekly system obtained there, and I got permission from the Provincial Government to change it to the monthly one. I consider that the change was a complete success, and it was generally admitted by the employes that it was so.
 852. Then the employes under the weekly system have more work to perform?—It is incessant work. Under the monthly system the clerks had time before the next returns came in to get everything in order, and to perform their other duties more perfectly.
 853. Have there been any extra men employed or any extra labour in consequence of this weekly system?—Yes, at the principal stations.
 854. Can you give the Committee an idea how many there were in Christchurch?—I have got some information upon that point. In the accountant's office it necessitates very long hours for the general staff, and the accountant tells me in his letter here that he considers it will take two additional clerks in his department. He complains very much of the hardship and incessant long hours to get up the work, and he gives as a reason that many hands cannot get on to the work at once. At Lyttelton it will ordinarily take four extra hands, and he goes on to say at least two more will be wanted during the busy season.
 855. That is eight?—And at Christchurch four additional.
 856. In what department is that?—In the goods department.
 857. But does it affect the passenger department?—Yes; and in a similar way it will affect the other larger stations, such as Timaru and Oamaru. But it will affect all stations. In this way it will affect small up-country stations, where there are not men accustomed to making up accounts and balance-sheets, and in making up these they make a great labour of it. It occupies a great deal of their time. That will not matter much during three-fourths of the year, but during the busy season they will be engaged on these when they ought to be in the shed tallying grain. Thus it really affects every station. I may mention that to small up-country stations it is a very serious matter, because