

1291. *The Chairman.*] Do you think it would conduce to the more satisfactory working of the railways in Canterbury if the railway authorities had sole control of the stores and rails on the wharves at Lyttelton?—I think it would be desirable.

*Mr. Lawson.*

1st Sept., 1877.

1292. Do you also think it would be desirable that the railway authorities should have the power of saying where ships should load and unload, and at what hours it should be done—that is, where it is done either into or out of the railway trucks?—Yes.

1293. You do not think it would be proper that the Harbourmaster should have the power of interfering?—No.

1294. *Mr. Richardson.*] Are you aware whether he has now that power or not?—I do not know.

*Mr. Richardson:* I wish to state to the Committee that, by an arrangement between the Government and the Harbour Board, the railway authorities have the entire control of the rails and traffic on the wharves at Lyttelton. The only way in which the Harbourmaster can interfere is to see that the loading and discharging is done in such a way that it shall not be dangerous to vessels lying alongside the wharves.

1295. *The Chairman* (to witness).] Have those by-stores on Gladstone Pier always been considered to be part and parcel of the railway?—I have always considered them so. [See Appendix A.]

Mr. GRANT examined.

*Mr. Grant.*

1296. *The Chairman.*] Will you be good enough to give your name and position in connection with the railways?—Alexander Grant, Traffic Manager. For the purposes of the Act—viz., “The Railway Regulation and Inspection Act, 1873,” clause 8—I have been against gazetted General Manager, but have the supervision of the traffic department only.

1297. Where at?—Dunedin Section.

1298. I want to ask whether, in your opinion, the adoption of the weekly-account system has led to any increase of labour on the part of the railway officials in that division of the railways, and additional expense?—Where the traffic is very light it has not added much to the expense or labour, but where the traffic is heavy that system has rendered the work very laborious.

1299. And added to the expense?—In a slight degree.

1300. Have there been any persons employed by reason of this?—The older hands have been harder at work, and cadets have been taken on; that is the only increase. At small roadside stations it matters very little whether weekly or monthly accounts are kept, but at Port Chalmers, Dunedin, Milton, and other large stations, the change has rendered the work very laborious indeed.

1301. Will you require any more hands besides what you say you have taken on?—Yes, as the work increases—during the grain and wool season.

1302. Will you say whether the weekly system, as against the monthly, has given satisfaction or dissatisfaction, not only to the officers of the railway, but to the general public, or does it interfere with the public?—It does not interfere with the public, but it does with the staff.

1303. Do you not have to make your accounts weekly to the public?—Not in shipping traffic.

1304. You do not observe instructions as to weekly accounts, so far as the public are concerned?—With reference to shipping, we are exempted from the general rule, being impracticable.

1305. Do you believe there is any greater security against fraud upon the Government in weekly accounts than there is in monthly accounts?—There is no greater security.

1306. Then, as to the audit. You still have a local audit in Dunedin?—Yes.

1307. Still the same staff as before?—Slightly increased; there is an extra cadet employed.

1308. Have you increased in the store department also?—No.

1309. You believe, then, it is necessary to have the system of central audit as it obtains at present?—I believe, for the sake of despatch, in the local audit.

1310. You have greater despatch under a local audit than under the present system of central audit?—Decidedly.

1311. What is your opinion with regard to the classification that has been adopted?—I have been so long accustomed to elaborate classification at Home, that I am favourable to it.

1312. Do you believe the present classification is correct, or that it will have to be modified as exigencies arise?—I believe it will have to be enlarged.

1313. You have in Otago a system of classification, but it is not so elaborate as at present?—Yes, but it is not so elaborate as the new classification.

1314. Did you find that to work well?—Yes.

1315. Then why do you think a much more elaborate one is better than the one that worked so well in Otago?—Our traffic was comparatively light; the shipping being the principal item of our traffic on the Dunedin Section, which is carried according to bills of lading, not by classification. As the business increases, I believe a more elaborate classification will be necessary.

1316. Then the provincial system would not work so satisfactorily when there is much traffic?—I believe, with classification it would work better.

1317. Is there any more traffic on the railways now than when the province had the lines?—No. In view of a large traffic I believe that classification will give more satisfaction.

1318. Are you aware upon what principle the charges in those classes were made—whether upon distance solely, or the cost and construction and maintenance of the railways?—I could not say.

1319. The charges have been reduced, have they not, upon the Dunedin and Port Chalmers line?—Yes.

1320. How many times have they been reduced during the last month?—Twice.

1321. When was the last reduction made?—A fortnight ago.

1322. Do you think, Mr. Grant, that it would contribute anything to the satisfaction of the public, and also to the profit of the railway, if tickets were issued by the railway authorities, to be used at any time, instead of being restricted as at present?—I would have return tickets restricted to a certain period.