

1404. And is it not the case that the large majority of the sleepers used in England are soft wood?—Yes; that is where they do not need them to last long. Where there is a great deal of traffic they employ soft wood, but where there is a light traffic they use hard wood. The renewal for heavy traffic would be as frequent as the other, and the soft wood costs less. *Mr. Henderson.*
4th Sept., 1877.

1405. You are aware that jarrah sleepers have been used in New Zealand?—Yes.

1406. What life would they have?—Twenty years.

1407. And from what you have seen of black pine or matai, how long would that last in comparison with the hackmatack, larch, or Baltic?—It ought to last, I should think, nearly half as long again. It is a superior class of timber altogether.

1408. *Mr. Macandrew.*] What is your opinion of the relative advantage of iron and steel rails?—The great advantage is this: When getting them out you pay £3 or £3 10s. per ton as freight, but then the life is six to one. It is cheaper to get steel rails at first.

1409. Could that not be equalized by reducing the weight of them?—You could reduce the weight of the steel rails.

1410. With advantage?—The steel rail will carry more than an iron rail, weights being equal.

1411. Then, in point of fact, they would not be dearer?—Not a great deal. All over Australia nothing is used but steel rails.

1412. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] Could you say from your own knowledge that a steel rail of 36 lbs. weight can be shaped in such a way as to give permanently the same strength as a 40-lb. rail?—If you like I will give information to-morrow in writing. [See Appendix B.] I could not say from memory. The maintenance of a road with a light rail is much more costly when laid down than a heavy one. The maintenance of a line with 30-lb. rails is much more costly than one with 40-lb. rails.

1413. That applies to steel or iron?—Yes; it is about 15 to 20 per cent. more costly.

MONDAY, 10TH SEPTEMBER.

Mr. Tippetts.

10th Sept., 1877.

Mr. G. W. TIPPETTS, Goods Manager, Christchurch Station, examined.

1414. *The Chairman.*] Can you tell us whether there has been any extra work created in your department in consequence of the regulations which came into operation in July last?—There has been a considerable amount of extra clerical labour. That extra labour is sure to be required if the weekly system of accounts is to continue, because it multiplies our work by four every month.

1415. Then what has been the increase in your staff?—Four new hands.

1416. What would be the aggregate amount of their salaries?—£400 or £450.

1417. Do you consider the weekly system affords any greater security from errors, or greater facility in discovering errors?—No doubt, to a certain extent. Errors would be detected earlier, but I think the liability to error would be greater, because there is less time now to make up the accounts. We used to give the abstract clerk four days to make up the abstract; now he gets but one day.

1418. How many returns do you furnish weekly?—Summary, abstract, balance-sheet, pay-sheets, and press copy of all way-bills.

1419. Can you give any information as to the central system of audit?—I cannot.

1420. My attention has been directed this morning to certain incidents which occurred at the Christchurch Railway Station in June and July last, in reference to the starting of trains—passenger trains—while goods trains were coming in. Do you know anything of the occurrences?—Only what I have been told by the Stationmaster, from which I gather there was no danger. The trains were ordered to move into the straight siding, to make room for another train then arriving, and not to start on the main line. I do not think there was the slightest danger.

1421. Do you know whether the tariff and charges brought into operation in July have made any difference in the traffic?—I can hardly tell; the traffic is increasing month by month, and, judging by the way-bills, I do not think there has been any falling off.

1422. Do you think the classification satisfactory?—Not at all, either to the public or to the officials.

1423. Do you think an elaborate classification desirable?—No; I think the simpler it is the better. The present classification is by no means an improvement on the old one, which worked very well. For instance a merchant may buy fifty tons of potatoes, say, from a farmer—if the farmer sends in a load of three tons it is charged for under Class E, but if he sends in less than two tons it is charged for under another class. The result is that for the same consignment various prices are charged, and we are continually applied to for explanations.

1424. Here is a paragraph which has been cut out from a paper: "Railway Vagaries.—A short time since the Cust Road Board ordered from Christchurch forty drain-pipes, which were duly forwarded by rail to Cust. The charges on them were 15s. 9d. About a fortnight later another lot of twenty were ordered of the same size and forwarded as before, but the charge demanded was no less than 27s. 9d. The Chairman of the Board declined to pay this exorbitant sum, and wrote to the Traffic Manager asking for an explanation of the difference. In reply it was stated that the twenty pipes only weighed 30 cwt., and were considered as a small consignment and charged under Class A, and if the Board objected to this, the railway had the option of charging as a full truck-load—namely, 10d. per mile—which would bring it to 26s. 8d. Another lot of seventy-two drain-pipes has been received since, and the freight on them was 26s. 8d." Is that correct?—I believe it is.

1425. *Mr. Stevens.*] There have been considerable modifications in the classification?—There have been several modifications. The minimum has been altered to 2 cwt. 5 cwt. I think small enough. The rates on flour and grain, and sawn timber and other things have been changed. These are modifications which had to be made simply because it was an impossibility to work with the original charges. I think the classification still requires very considerable modifications. I think the classification here must have been taken from the Customs, for in a great many cases it is almost useless