

Mr. Arthur.
11th Sept., 1877.

1552. Do I understand you to say that if an article worth £1,000, taking a few feet only of room, is carried, it would be carried at a higher expense than an article valued at £100 would be carried?—By all means, if the railway is responsible, there ought to be a very much higher charge. If the authorities carry a package worth £350, measuring three feet, and are responsible for its safety, it is necessary that a higher rate of freightage should be charged than for a piece of stone measuring four feet, and valued for £5 or 3s. 6d.

1553. Is the rate of carriage guided by the value of the goods carried?—The value of articles must be taken into consideration, which is plainly shown in the classification sheets.

1554. The responsibilities of the officers of the railway are charged for as much or more so apparently than the actual wear and tear caused by heavy traffic. You appear to say that the freightage is regulated by an *ad valorem* charge?—To a great extent.

1555. Therefore it is on the guarantee principle?—The wear and tear is also taken into consideration.

1556. Is that the usual way to regulate the charges on the railway?—I think it is.

1557. Mr. Conyers, you say, is Superintending Engineer?—Yes, he is.

1558. Is that the usual title in connection with officers in that position on the railway?—I am of opinion that it is not, and think he should be termed General Manager, from having full control of the railways in the Southern Section.

1559. You mean that the title he has is an unusual one?—I am of opinion it is an unusual one.

1560. That he is doing the work of practical Manager of the railways?—Yes.

1561. You said that the sale of railway tickets outside the ticket office would, in large populous places, be beneficial, but not so in small places?—I did.

1562. Why would the difficulty be more in small than in large places?—I cannot see how the sale outside the department would induce any one to travel by railway. A commission would have to be allowed for the sale of the tickets.

1563. Would not the department gain by the number of tickets continually in circulation?—I do not think it would. Those who wish to travel must come to the station, where tickets are supplied.

1564. Would it not influence the sale of tickets that were not actually required for immediate use?—I do not think so.

1565. Do you mean to say that if the public had the convenience, they would wait until the train was going, and then go to the ticket office?—In so far as the sale of tickets outside the department is concerned, it would only relieve from pressure at the ticket offices, and be convenient to those securing tickets in a less-crowded place.

1566. I cannot understand why there could be any objection to tickets being sold outside. I should fancy there would be no risk in the management of such a system?—There is no risk whatever in the management of such a system. If such a system were adopted, the tickets should be paid for when supplied. At the same time it would be necessary to have special tickets printed for that purpose, so that it might not interfere with the consecutive numbers issued by Stationmasters.

1567. Then there could not be any more risk or inconvenience in such a system being in force in Invercargill than in Dunedin?—No inconvenience whatever; it would simply be a loss to the department, seeing the traffic is not large, and we should lose the commission paid to those who sold them.

1568. That would be the only loss?—I believe so.

1569. You are aware that a commission is allowed on the sale of postage stamps?—I am.

1570. That does not affect the working of the Postal Department?—No. I think in populous districts it would act very well, but in Invercargill I am of opinion that it is not required. Still, it might be well to give it a trial.

1571. Do I not understand you to say that Mr. O'Toole's salary had been increased two or three times?—I recommended an increase for the office, and that was in view of the extra labour likely to accrue.

1572. How long had he been in the Railway Department?—About sixteen months.

1573. And you consider him a very efficient officer?—Not one more so in the railway service at the present time.

1574. That is, when not under the influence of liquor?—Yes.

1575. How many times has he been under the influence of liquor in the sixteen months?—Four times to my knowledge. At the same time he was not incapable of performing his duties.

1576. Is he in the service now?—He has been reinstated by Mr. Conyers.

1577. You are not aware whether Mr. Carruthers was aware or it?—I am not aware.

1578. Mr. Macandrew.] I understood you to say with respect to the new regulation for keeping accounts, that you do not consider it any improvement upon your branch, as compared with the former?—It is no improvement.

1579. And involves an additional expenditure of £550?—Not at the present time. It will, to work the new system of weekly accounts efficiently.

1580. With regard to the railway regulations, do you think they are capable of being simplified without detriment to the railway and the public safety?—They are indeed.

1581. Would such simplification in the respects to which you allude enable any saving to be effected: For example, there is now a regulation providing that a ganger shall walk over six miles of railway twice a day, morning and evening?—There is.

1582. Is that regulation carried out?—It is carried out on the Invercargill Section, and is directly under the Assistant Engineer. I do not wish to say whether it should be done away with or not.

1583. In what other respects do you think those regulations could be simplified, so as to save expense?—I have not considered them generally.

1584. The regulation provides an extra man for holding the brake?—It does.

1585. Do you think that necessary?—Quite unnecessary.

1586. What saving would be effected if that were done away with?—£500 on my division. It has been done away with on the Invercargill Section.

1587. When?—Fourteen days ago. The travelling clerks are under notice now.