

Mr. Carruthers.
17th Aug., 1877.

114. I understand that at present the practical Manager is responsible to you, and that you are responsible to the Minister?—Yes.

115. Within your own knowledge is there any salaried officer in the Railway Department of the colony engaged or receiving remuneration from any business outside his duties in the Government service?—Do you mean without the knowledge and consent of Government?

116. I am not asking this question from any motive of inquisitiveness, but this fact should be elicited and furnished in the report.—I should be glad if you would give me some definite question.

117. I will repeat the question. Within your own knowledge is there any salaried officer in the Railway Department of the colony engaged or receiving remuneration from any business outside his duties in the Government service, either with or without the knowledge of the Government? Of course, you as chief officer may have that knowledge; but within your own immediate knowledge do you know such to be the case?—Within my own knowledge there is no salaried officer of the Railway Department receiving salary for or engaged in any business outside of his official duties.

118. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Does that apply to yourself?—Yes; it applies to myself.

The Committee rose at 1 p.m. Adjourned until Monday, at 11 a.m.

20th Aug., 1877.

MONDAY, 20TH AUGUST, 1877.

Mr. Carruthers's examination continued.

119. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Is it your opinion that it would be best for the country that the Government itself should carry on the business of the public carrier, or that the railways should be leased?—I think decidedly that railways should not be leased. I do not know that anything can be said in favour of leasing them.

120. Not if strict conditions were imposed?—I think it almost impossible to fix conditions, and to be able to carry them out, by which the contractor could be compelled to return the rolling-stock in the condition in which he got it.

121. Is it your opinion that there should be one uniform rate on railways in all portions of the colony, irrespective of the cost of construction, of the cost of the rolling-stock, and irrespective of the competition there may be?—No, I think where the cost of construction has been excessive, or the cost of the work very high, it would be but fair to charge higher rates.

122. In that respect you disagree with this report (E. 2.)?—No; I think it is recommended in that report.

123. At all events it has been adopted?—Yes, but it is not a recommendation contained in the report. It was adopted by the Minister.

124. I think you stated you would be in favour of calling for tenders in the Australian Colonies, America, and England for material wanted?—I would be in favour of getting supplies at the cheapest rate possible.

125. You would be in favour of purchasing timber and other materials out of the colony, if you could get it cheaper than in the colony?—Yes.

126. Do you think it desirable that the rolling-stock should be imported instead of being constructed in the colony?—I should think it a matter of indifference whether it was imported, if it were got at the same price, and as good in quality.

127. Has any attempt been made to obtain wagons and materials in the colony?—Yes; there have been some wagons made in the colony.

128. Where?—In Dunedin.

129. Was that before the railways were taken over by the General Government?—No; the General Government have had some wagons made.

130. At whose place?—I think it was Sparrows'.

131. Lately?—Some time ago.

132. Are you aware that carriage wheels and axles can be made in the colony?—I know there is a steam-hammer in the colony which is sufficiently powerful to make axles, but I doubt whether the work could be done except in so far as using up scrap-iron goes.

133. By using up scrap-iron you think it could be done with less cost to the colony than the imported article?—Yes, assuming we have sufficient scrap-iron; and I think we shall have soon.

134. And that will be made use of?—Yes; I should recommend it at any rate for making buffers and axles. No doubt buffers and things of that character can be made at Port Chalmers; and I should recommend that, even though it entailed loss, work of that class should be given to the Port Chalmers establishment, because it is very desirable to keep the machinery in use.

135. Has any attempt been made to get locomotives made in the colony?—Yes; the Provincial Government had one or two made.

136. I mean by the General Government?—No; except three little things, which were made here, in Wellington; but they could hardly be called locomotives.

137. Can locomotives be turned out in the colonies?—Not so cheaply as in England. At the Avonside, Beyer and Peacock's, and Stevenson's. At those places they have appliances which no establishment in the colonies has or is likely to have for many years to come.

138. Would it not be well for the Government to obtain those appliances for their own workshops?—I do not think so. It is a matter for calculation of what it would take to get such a thing started. I do not think we could make locomotives so cheaply as we can import them; and there is a great deal more than the actual manufacture to be considered. In all these workshops in England they have men trained to particular parts of the work, and it would be very difficult indeed to keep up a staff of such men out here.

139. You are not aware that there are hundreds of skilled workmen—engine-fitters and so forth—in the colony who would be glad to work at the same wages as are paid in the old country?—No; I think it is only a temporary depression, which leads men to take up that position.