

recognized channel, and then the collection of tickets would be so much easier. There would not be the same necessity for examining tickets. *Mr. Thomson.*

1867. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] Is what you are now indicating the French system?—I do not know what the French system is. I am describing the London and North-Western. There is one point I did not state in passing; it is this: that the value of a train can never be ascertained if tickets are sold indiscriminately; and the railway authorities do not know how many passengers will go to that train. On the English lines, every train is numbered, beginning with the first in the morning; and every ticket issued bears that stamp; and the railway authorities can tell, for months afterwards, the value of any given train. And a train can be taken off, delayed, or made earlier, for the accommodation of the public. That would be defeated if tickets were sold elsewhere, and no date upon them. 14th Sept., 1877.

1868. Are you aware whether on any of the Victorian lines this system of selling tickets as postage stamps has been adopted?—I am not aware of any.

1869. Nor in New Zealand?—Nor in New Zealand. There was an agency once opened in Christchurch. That was a positive failure.

1870. How long is that ago?—About three years ago. It was open about six months.

1871. With what results?—I was given to understand that the person did not take as much altogether as would pay his commission.

1872. The Chairman asked me to put this question: If the railways in the Canterbury District were put into your hands, what would you do to make the management more satisfactory to the public?—I am pretty well certain there are a great many accounts which would be simply useless, involving a great deal of labour. I should endeavour to simplify them, and reduce the labour; and also, I think, the arrangements for the traffic are not just so good as they might be. I think in many stations I could point out where the employés are in each others' way from the faulty arrangements; and no matter how great the traffic, or how many men they put on, they cannot do any greater amount of work, because the traffic blocks itself. I would instance the Lyttelton station. Each department seems to be in the way of the other. The passenger station blocks the whole yard. When a train is drawn up there, you stop the work, bodies of men are kept waiting until it gets out of the road. The turn-table system I condemn—I think them traps for labour. Where there is plenty of room I think they should be lifted where possible. I should direct my attention to the simplification of these matters, and the keeping of each department separate and distinct; in other words, I should put the passenger department out of the way, and give the goods all facilities.

1873. Having put all the Chairman's questions, I will now put some of my own. Can you tell me, Mr. Thomson, from your experience, whether, in your opinion, there should be a depreciation fund on these New Zealand lines?—In all railway companies at Home they have a depreciation fund.

1874. Could you tell me whether the practice is uniform?—I think that in all companies (I am speaking now from memory) in former times there used to be an allowance made for depreciation and the renewal.

1875. When did that take place?—As those lines progressed and new ones opened; the new ones invariably commenced with a very slight percentage.

1876. Could you give some idea how it was calculated—whether it was calculated on the expenditure of capital in the line and rolling-stock, and so on?—That I am not prepared to say.

1877. You do not know whether it was a percentage on that, or a percentage on the gross earnings?—I am of opinion that it was a percentage on the gross earnings, but that is merely an opinion.

1878. Then, is it your opinion generally there should be some form of depreciation or renewal fund on these lines?—It is.

1879. Would you tell me what your experience or opinion is as to provision being made for railway servants being injured by accident?—I believe there are societies now started at Home, the railway companies giving some slight assistance, and the servants themselves contributing. The rules I have not got, but I know they are in existence. If I recollect, it was something like half which the railway companies give.

1880. Supplemented by 100 per cent.?—Something like that.

1881. Do you think that would be sufficient to answer the purpose in this country?—I think so.

1882. Are you aware of any principle on which that is divided in case of accident?—It was not in existence when I was connected with the railway at Home.

1883. Are you aware whether it exists on the Hobson Bay line?—No. It was on the London and North-Western. I know it does exist.

1884. *Mr. Larnach.*] What profession or calling are you?—I am now supposed to be a watch-maker and jeweller. My proper business is in connection with railways. My father-in-law left my present business to me, and I do nothing else.

1885. You were brought up on the railway?—I was seven and a half years on the London and North-Western.

1886. Why did you leave the Hobson Bay line?—Because the line was closed pending the arrival of the engines.

1887. Have you been in America?—No; I have not had the slightest experience in that country.

1888. Are you aware that the system there is somewhat different to that adopted in Britain, particularly in reference to the sale of railway tickets?—Yes; I have heard that they sell them like postage stamps.

1889. Are you aware that system works well?—I have heard it said by those who have had experience in it that it does.

1890. You do not appear to be in favour of any change of system in the colony in the sale of tickets?—I do not see what is to be gained by it.

1891. How do I understand you "to be gained by it"—the State or the public?—By the public.

1892. Would not a great convenience be gained by the public? Have you not seen a great crush at the stations?—I consider that is owing to faulty management. To gain the platform I would