

1916. Can you tell us what the length of those lines were, and anything about the receipts?—*Mr. Thomson.*
The Liverpool and Manchester line was 31½ miles; the Manchester and Crewe, about 33 miles; and the Grand Junction, from Newton Junction to Birmingham, about 83 miles; and the London and Birmingham, 112 miles. The whole of the traffic was checked in London, and used to average £50,000 a week, goods and passengers.

1917. You said you had been Home seven years ago. Did you find still only one audit?—Yes.

1918. And these lines enormously increased since you left?—There were 47 clerks in the audit when I left, and about 140 when I returned; the receipts had increased to about £140,000 per week.

1919. And that was all audited in one office?—Yes; and they had the North London added.

1920. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Your principal objection to the sale of tickets outside was, I understood, that you could not ascertain the value of the trains?—Quite so. I have either misapprehended the question, or given a reply rather hastily. It is one objection, but not the principal. As a railway manager, I would object to any person doing for us that which we could do much better ourselves. I also think we could check one office, where tickets were issued, much easier and better than twenty offices. I think I can also see greater facilities and temptations to fraud by collusion.

1921. Is it very essential the value of trains should be ascertained?—In companies they profess to run trains that will yield most money, and be of greatest convenience to the public.

1922. You would not set the question of paying against the public convenience?—Certainly not. I am aware that on Government railways the public is consulted to a very large extent. Trains are run, independently of their cost.

1923. *The Acting-Chairman.*] You have probably formed an idea, in the Provincial District of Canterbury, as regards the quantity of wagons that are necessary to meet the maximum of work at the grain season. Do you know what the provision will be for next season?—I know that the number of wagons to the mileage is under three; and I see that this is to be largely increased by about one and a half wagons to the mile; that will make it somewhere about four wagons to the mile.

1924. Have you formed a sufficient acquaintance with the traffic at that period of the year to give us an opinion as to what is necessary per mile to do the maximum work?—The number of wagons must depend upon the facilities for getting rid of the grain. If consignees will take rapid delivery, it will make all the difference, but if they are inclined to make the Government store it, it will require a greater number of wagons. If wagons are not emptied as they come in, it will cause a greater number of trucks to be used; and if they accumulate, the expense is very much greater in working.

1925. *Mr. Macandrew.*] One remark you made was that on the Canterbury lines there are more hands than are necessary. Will you explain how that happens, or how you can obviate it?—I had in my mind the Lyttelton station, where every wharf, with the exception of one, is communicated with by turn-tables, and this necessitates an unnecessary number of men. Then the passenger station is placed right in the middle of the yard, which necessitates some of the work being suspended until the passenger trains get out of the road. There are goods sheds behind the station, and the people have to walk over the line of railway in passing into or from the station.

1926. To what extent do you think a saving can be effected if all these improvements, which you suggest, were made?—I am quite sure that if, in discharging, the cranes were kept constantly at work, they might do 25 per cent. more work per day, and this would tend to prevent the blocks that have occurred. For a crane to discharge sixty tons a day is child's play.

1927. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] You are aware that the "Wakatipu" took in 350 tons in seven hours?—I was not aware of it.

1928. Are you aware the Government have announced that they are going to put a new passenger station in Lyttelton, and make all the wharves communicate directly with it?—No; I may say that as far back as 1868 Mr. Dobson prepared all the plans to lift every turn-table and put the passenger station behind Matheson's Agency, where the gasworks now are, and the amount was voted in the Estimates of 1868.

1929. *The Acting-Chairman.*] You are generally aware of the present classification?—Yes.

1930. Do you think that the classification is one calculated at once to meet the convenience of the public, and also to conduce to the profit of the railways?—I do not. I think the public, generally speaking, do not know exactly what the tariff is. It seems to be a trouble to them, and I am quite sure it must be an immense labour to the Railway Department.

1931. What is your main objection to it?—When goods are presented, it is difficult to find what tariff they are to go under. The classification just now seems to me as if it were intended for some immense traffic which might take place in those various articles at Home. Goods should either be taken by dead weight or measurement, but to take baskets and furniture by dead weight seems extraordinary.

1932. How would you carry gold?—That is different. It is carried at per cent. if the railway becomes responsible for it.

1933. Do you think, then, that the tariff could be simplified with advantage?—I do indeed; very materially.

1934. By having it less elaborate?—Yes.

1935. Supposing it was stated that the policy of railway companies in England is and has been in the direction of elaboration rather than their generalization, what would you say?—I would say that probably the circumstances of the case demand it there.

1936. What would be these circumstances?—I think enormous competition and enormous traffic that take place in certain specified articles. I noticed one alteration when I was last at Home. The whole of the London and North-Western line was divided into districts. I am speaking now of goods. The reason why they divided the line into districts is this: They appointed a person over so many miles, to scour the districts all round in order to get the traffic. Of course, many districts were famed either for manufactures, minerals, or something else, and it was necessary to hold out certain inducements to these articles, and that has brought about this classification of merchandize, but in New Zealand it has not come to that. There are certain articles, coal for instance, that might be specified