

Mr. Thomson. different from ordinary general merchandize; but taking the goods traffic from Dunedin and Christchurch by ships, it would be a general assortment. I think it would be far better that measurement goods went at a certain rate, and dead-weight goods at other rates, with certain exceptions, such as dangerous goods, and goods liable to be broken. [See Appendix H.]

Mr. J. C. Brown.
20th Sept., 1877.

THURSDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER, 1877.

Mr. STEVENS, Acting Chairman.

Mr. J. C. BROWN, M.H.R., examined.

1937. *The Acting-Chairman.*] Mr. Brown, I do not know whether you would wish us to put questions to you, but I think it would be better for you to state precisely what is the nature of the evidence you have to give, on what particular point your evidence would bear, or whether it is of a general character?—I may say that my object in being here was to give some evidence with regard to a case in point, showing the delay in meeting matters that can very well be disposed of on the spot, instead of in Wellington. I do not know whether that comes within the scope of the inquiry.

The Acting-Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Brown: I may say, then, that the first matter I would bring before the Committee is that a person in business at Lawrence, named Tolcher, applied for a siding in March last. He was told by the local department—that is, the Dunedin department—that there would be no objection to it, and that the siding would be of course laid down as soon as the railway was opened; that would be in the course of a few weeks. The railway was opened, and some time elapsed before anything was done. He then made another application, and was told that he would be required to show a statement of his traffic. That he did, and four or five weeks more transpired, and then he was asked to give a guarantee that his freight would come up to a certain amount per year. This was done. From that time up to the present he has been in communication with the Dunedin authorities—Mr. Conyers and Mr. Grant—and he has found after all that these matters have to be referred to Wellington from time to time. I saw Mr. Carruthers the other day respecting it. He told me that, this being a matter where the cost will have to come out of loan, it would require to have the sanction of the Minister for Public Works, and that was the delay. I got a telegram from Mr. Tolcher on the following day, and that caused me to see the Engineer-in-Chief again. I saw Mr. Grant when in Wellington, and also Mr. Conyers, and both explained to me that so far as they were concerned it was granted long ago; but there was a good deal of correspondence about it, and they would look the matter up with a view to the thing being done. I saw Mr. Carruthers a second time, and he then stated that Mr. Tolcher's application was informal, and that the papers were sent to Mr. Conyers just the day before. It is a matter of very great inconvenience and considerable expense to Mr. Tolcher, as his business place is exactly opposite the terminus, and it necessitates his carrying all his material across the road. What I desire to bring before the Committee is this, that a crossing would not involve over £50, and yet there should be over six months' delay about it. Under the old Provincial system, a crossing (if approved of by the authorities) was put in in the course of a week, or not more than a month. I know of several cases in which not more than a month has elapsed. I asked Mr. Tolcher to give me the particulars of his application, and this morning I received the following letter and statement of freight. [See Appendix F.]

1938. *Mr. Larnach.*] What you most complain of is the difficulty of getting sidings or any other urgent matters of that kind sanctioned and carried out without reference to Wellington?—Yes. I know of other applications which were made under the Provincial Government. They were granted, and put in within a month; and this has now taken six months, and still undecided.

1939. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Was the siding to be put in at the expense of the Government or the applicant?—The applicant would have been prepared to have borne the expense, but the Government put in sidings themselves, and will not allow any one to put in a siding like that, as I understand. The Provincial Government used to provide the material. This party will provide anything, in fact everything, himself.

1940. I suppose if that condition were necessary, he would have complied with it?—Yes; he would have rather paid the whole thing than been without it. It is a serious matter to him having to carry all his goods across the road, a good deal of the material being timber.

1941. And he has given a guarantee that the traffic will not be less than £300 a year?—Yes, that is what they asked, and his traffic for five months is over £300.

Mr. Dodd.
21st Sept., 1877.

FRIDAY, 21ST SEPTEMBER, 1877.

Mr. WILLIAM DODD examined.

1942. *The Acting-Chairman (Mr. Stevens).*] What position do you hold in the public service?—I am Chief Clerk in the Railway Branch of the Audit Department. My duties are generally to superintend that branch. I specially pass the "pay" vouchers.

1943. What is your opinion as to a weekly and a monthly system of accounts?—I consider the weekly system of accounts the best for the present traffic.

1944. In the case of an increase of the present rate of traffic, would you consider the weekly or the monthly system the better—an important increase I mean?—It is a question I could not answer. I should say that the weekly system has special advantages over the monthly, but if the traffic were very large these special advantages might be counterbalanced by disadvantages.