

Motion lost.

Mr. Macandrew then proposed the following, as an amendment to the report :—

Having heard Mr. Vaile and Mr. Maxwell at considerable length, and taken the evidence of officers of the Railway Department and others on the question, the Committee is of opinion—

1. That, although the principle upon which Mr. Vaile bases his proposals, viz., that “by cheapening supply demand will increase,” is sound; yet the results of this principle in the present case must needs be very much a matter of conjecture until tested by actual experiment.
2. That the proposed reduction of railway rates would undoubtedly be a great public benefit, *per se*, affording encouragement to settlement and manufacturing industries.
3. Assuming that the proposed reduced scale of fares were to result in a direct loss to the revenue, which is by no means certain, the indirect advantages to the colony would fully compensate for such loss; while there is the possibility that the revenue would be increased.
4. That the application of the proposal, in the first instance, to passenger-traffic only does not appear, from the returns furnished to the Committee, to involve much, if any, loss to the revenue; while its success or otherwise would afford data upon which to judge of its probable results as applied to goods-traffic.
5. That, while the question is one, from its nature, on which it would be unwise to express any dogmatic opinion, yet, under all the circumstances of the case, the Committee is disposed to recommend that the experiment be fairly tried; and that, as the estimated receipts are based upon a general average, such experiment should be applied to every Government railway in the colony.

Motion lost.

The report was adopted for presentation to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. Richardson, it was decided that half the cost of preparing returns for the Committee should be refunded to the Railway Department.

A unanimous vote of thanks was accorded to the Chairman.

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