

291. Do you not think that return-tickets ought to be either totally abolished or issued on every day. I am asking your opinion as a Traffic Manager?—You cannot abolish return-tickets; it is impossible.

292. Then ought not they to be issued every day?—Well, it depends on circumstances.

293. I will put the question in another way. Before return-tickets were abolished except on Saturdays was not the passenger-trade very much more even than it is now?—I cannot say.

294. If we had sufficient passengers to separate our passenger- from our goods-traffic should we not be able to work the lines more cheaply?—No; it would be decidedly more expensive.

295. You have said that under my scale of fares there would be such a large increase of holiday-traffic that you would not be able to deal with it?—Well, at present our plant is taxed to the utmost on holidays, and if there was such increase as your scheme anticipates it would be of no financial advantage to us, because your fares are so low we should not be able to deal with it, for reasons already stated.

296. You say that every carriage you hook on to a train largely increases the cost of running that train?—It always increases the cost to some extent—sometimes largely.

297. About how much?—I cannot say that; it depends on circumstances. As I said yesterday, one extra carriage put on at Dunedin sometimes requires an additional engine to Palmerston and back—eighty-six miles.

298. Can you tell me what the charge is in England for the use of a first-class carriage?—I think it is about 2s. a mile for a private carriage.

Mr. Vaile: The charge for a first-class carriage in England—not to the public, but between one company and another—is $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per mile—that is, for the use of the carriage only. The charge for a second-class or third-class carriage is $\frac{1}{4}$ d. These charges are for the use of the carriage, and cover depreciation and ultimate absorption of capital, but do not cover the cost of haulage.

Mr. Whyte: What is the capacity of the carriages?

Mr. Vaile: Some of them carry as many as forty people.

299. *Mr. Vaile* (to *Mr. Grant*).] Can you say what is the cost of hauling a train in New Zealand?—I think it is about 4s. 9d. per train-mile.

300. Well, if the use of the carriage only costs $\frac{3}{4}$ d. a mile, and the cost of haulage is 4s. 9d. for a whole train, where does the great price come in? I want to show the Committee that the extra cost of carrying these passengers is not so great as is endeavoured to be proved?—You are speaking from theory.

Mr. Vaile: I am speaking from the figures of the department.

301. *Mr. Whyte*.] How is it that you find it so expensive?—As I say, one extra carriage sometimes requires an additional engine. We have had to do this many times.

302. *Mr. Vaile*.] You have expressed an opinion that the fares and rates charged have nothing to do with the work done. Do you adhere to that statement?—No; I said that up to five miles your scheme would make very little difference in revenue.

303. I think what you said was more particularly in reference to goods-traffic—that no reduction in the freight would alter the amount of work done?—What I said was that our present rates are reasonable. I think the question put to me was, if we reduced our rates to one-half, would it not reduce the traffic.

304. You distinctly stated that no reduction would affect the amount of trade done. I suppose you are aware that in March, 1884, there was a large increase made in the rates?—Yes; the rates for grain.

305. It was on agricultural produce generally. Did you have anything to do with arranging that tariff?—No, I do not think so.

306. I take it that all you Traffic Managers were applied to for suggestions?—Yes; I made some suggestions.

307. And on the suggestions supplied by the various Stationmasters this tariff was arranged?—Yes.

308. Are you aware that the object in raising these rates was to add £150,000 to the revenue?—I know it was to raise the revenue.

309. Are you aware whether that was done?—There was a considerable increase; but I cannot say now how much.

310. The net increase was about £25,000. You give it, then, as your deliberate opinion that the adoption of this scale which I propose would not materially increase the traffic?—I stated that I believed it would increase the traffic over ten miles to about double.

311. But not under ten miles?—Up to five miles there is little difference between your rates and ours. I do not think it would increase at all up to that distance.

312. Up to fifteen miles what do you think it would do?—My opinion is that over ten miles the traffic might be doubled. On the Hurunui-Bluff line we now carry about two millions of passengers, and more than half of these are for distances under ten miles.

313. Can you say how often the English companies shift the population of Great Britain?—I believe it is something over twenty times a year.

314. Do you know how often we do it in New Zealand?—I think you stated that it was about five or six times.

315. Do you think that bears any proportion to the work done in England?—There is no comparison between the two countries.

316. No; we have the advantage. Our people are richer, and have more leisure?—I do not think they have.

317. Then you think there is a reason why we should not shift our population as often as they do theirs?—No; I should like to see them shifted as much as possible, from a railway point of view. I know that we could not do it to the extent it is done in England.