

can travel for a little over a halfpenny a journey. People can live at Onehunga and travel daily, first-class, for about 4d. a journey, counting two journeys—one to town and one back. I think this is sufficient to meet the regular traffic, and there are no regular daily travellers anywhere, except those who go backwards and forwards to their daily work. That is evident from the fact that the London railways carry a much larger number of people in proportion to their mileage than other lines having a much greater mileage. The North London line carries yearly about thirty millions of passengers on twelve miles of railway; the Metropolitan, about a hundred and twenty millions on about forty miles of railway; and the Great Western, with 2,300 miles of railway, carries fifty millions of passengers a year—the fact being that in the latter case the journeys were longer, and the number of people using the lines were fewer; whereas in the case of the metropolitan railways people usually travelled twice a day—viz., to and from their daily work.

336. *The Chairman.*] You stated just now that on the occasion of the excursion to Litchfield you carried passengers for £1 and 15s. return: if you had reduced the fares to 10s. and 5s. would you not have increased the numbers?—No, I do not think so. On our first Saturday to Monday excursion to Te Aroha we ran the train up on a Saturday afternoon, starting at ten minutes past 1 o'clock, from Auckland—the most favourable time possible, as most people would have finished their week's business—and we returned on Monday morning, reaching town at half-past 10 o'clock. That was under the most favourable circumstances you could imagine, and we earned £63 by the train. The next time we tried it we only got £30, under exactly the same conditions. The distance is 116 miles there and 116 miles back.

337. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] Suppose the fares had been half, should we have got the same amount?—I do not think we would have got the same.

338. Are there any excursions run up there and back in the same day?—Yes; on Good Friday we ran an excursion to Te Aroha, Te Awamutu, Mercer, Helensville—in fact, to all parts of the system. We returned the same day, with the option of “stopping over” at an advanced fare. The result was that we earned about £420, all over the line, on that day. The amount cannot be considered excessive; but still, it fairly paid, and the fact that it was a leisure day for the people must be considered.

339. *Mr. Whyte.*] That first train to Te Aroha was a very large one?—Yes, too large altogether.

340. How did the second and third excursions to and from Waikato compare with the first?—The excursions during the first year to Waikato were the best, and the first from the Waikato was the best. But we have never exceeded one day-trip excursion a year from the Waikato; so that people have looked forward to this as a cheap trip down, and they come in large numbers.

341. Do you think that a cheap excursion once a month to the Waikato would pay?—I am quite sure it would not. We have now an arrangement whereby any one may call on us to run an excursion train by guaranteeing eighty Saturday return-fares: that number will not pay expenses, but we are willing to take the risk above that margin.

342. You think, then, that the reason people will not travel is the want of time, coupled with the expenses incurred?—Yes, I do; and another reason is, want of an object: you must get up some amusement or offer some attraction, to make the thing a success.

343. Do you remember the train which went to Cambridge on the occasion of the turning of the first sod, at Kihikihi, of the North Island Trunk Railway: did that excursion pay?—It paid very well.

344. *Mr. Maxwell.*] If you book a ton of potatoes from Te Awamutu to Auckland, and ten miles back on the Helensville line, is that as cheap or cheaper than booking direct to the same point on the Helensville line from Te Awamutu?—No; in the first case the charge would be 18s. 1d., and in the second, 16s. 8d.

*Mr. Whyte:* In justice to Mr. Vaile, I think he will be shown to be right to some extent, if you take the through-charge to Avondale, say, as compared to the charge to Auckland and then on to Avondale.

345. *Mr. Maxwell.*] I find from the evidence that Mr. Vaile said this: “To illustrate what is done here: if a man wishes to send potatoes from Te Awamutu to any place within a seven-mile radius round Auckland, it would be cheaper to send these potatoes to Auckland and then pass them back along the lines than it would be to send them direct to the station for which they were intended. Is that correct?—No, that is not correct.

346. *Mr. Whyte.*] I believe that is so, if you booked back along the same line; but would the rate to Avondale, we will say, be more by going first to Auckland and then taking the goods on to Avondale?—Yes, it would be more.

*Mr. Vaile:* The through-charge to Auckland is 13s. 4d., but if you stop short of Auckland or if you pass beyond there is 25 per cent. added on; so it is clear I may have made an error in the number of miles goods may be passed back: but there must be a point at which they can be passed back cheaper.

347. *Mr. Gore.* The rate from Te Awamutu to Auckland is 13s. 4d., and from Te Awamutu to Newmarket it is 15s. 10d.; why should it be more for the shorter distance?—Because it is an export rate: we give this low rate for the purpose of encouraging the export of grain, &c.; also we have arrangements for dealing with large quantities of traffic at Auckland which do not exist at Newmarket.

*Mr. Gore:* It seems to me you are putting a very heavy tax on the small population.

348. *Mr. Maxwell.*] What do you think the result of adopting Mr. Vaile's system would be on the passenger-traffic within a ten-mile radius: do you think there would be a large increase?—No, I do not; for the simple reason that the people who travel frequently are the people who have season-tickets.

349. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that there was a large increase, that it was doubled;