

509. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] Take the morning-train from the Wairarapa to Wellington—I think it comes in full: is that train now running with as much rolling-stock as your engine-power will take?—Yes, it is.

510. That train comes in full, and it runs all the way with the same number of carriages; but for part of the journey some of the carriages must be partially empty. If the traffic was largely increased beyond the Upper Hutt, or wherever it becomes full, would you not require additional rolling-stock to that train to carry the people?—Yes, undoubtedly we should.

511. And if your long-distance traffic were much increased, although these carriages are running for part of the distance half-filled, I understand you would have to put on additional rolling-stock, and thereby add to the expense?—Yes.

512. I suppose the only way you could provide for that would be to break up your train, and bring a carriage less from Masterton?—No; we must bring the same number of carriages from Masterton as we do now to give reasonable accommodation to passengers.

513. *Mr. Vaile.*] Are these trains mixed trains?—Practically all our trains are mixed trains.

514. *Mr. Maxwell.*] Do you think, then, that this statement of Mr. Vaile's is correct: "I contend that on a general average we can carry five passengers for one we carry now without additional cost"?—Certainly not.

515. Can you give the Committee any sort of idea as to what it might cost, supposing we added a percentage to our train-mileage over the Hurunui-Bluff line, in case the traffic was doubled?—An answer to a question of that kind is not very reliable; because, as any one who has had anything to do with the arranging of time-tables and trains will know, it is only in actual practice that we can ascertain what the additional cost would be. It is very difficult to say what a supposititious traffic would cost. Of course, every train-addition is very carefully considered as to whether the alteration affects the staff or the stock. It may be, in some cases, that additions may be made without affecting either, and at other times the addition may mean an entirely new set of rolling-stock and staff. This is specially the business of the district officer, and it is reviewed at the head office before the alteration or addition is made. But I have had a good many years' experience on the Hurunui-Bluff section, and have had to do with all train-alterations and additions, so I have jotted down some particulars of probable increased mileage required to carry double the passengers. Our train-mileage—goods, passenger, and mixed—on Hurunui-Bluff section for the year just ended is, in round numbers, 1,790,000 miles, and the cost was 4s. 8½d. per train-mile. The section is 978 miles in length. One extra train each way a day on the main line only, Waikari to Bluff, would be about 870 miles, and extra suburban trains, say, 130, or, in round numbers, a thousand miles a day, or 312,000 miles a year for week-days only. I have considered that probably this extra service would not cost as much as our present rate of 4s. 8½d., but I have placed it at the very low reduced rate of 3s. 6d. a mile, or nearly £55,000 a year, without the additional capital required for stock of all kinds. It will be seen that I do not make any provision for increased trains on the branches, being nearly half of the whole section. At Mr. Vaile's average fare of 1s. it would require more than double the present passengers—that is to say, 4,000,000 passengers would hardly produce the same gross revenue as now, which is nearly £213,000; and it would cost over £50,000 more to get it.

516. Then, getting double the number of passengers and the same revenue would cost, in round numbers, £55,000 a year additional?—Yes.

517. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] To do this, what additional rolling-stock would be required?—I have not considered that, but a considerable number of carriages and engines would be necessary.

518. *Mr. Vaile.*] I understand you to say that to double the number of passengers on the Hurunui-Bluff line would entail an additional expense of about £50,000, without considering the capital cost or the extra stock required?—Yes, that is so.

519. *Hon. Major Atkinson.*] What is the percentage to the total cost of working the line?—The total cost is £423,000: it would be about 12½ per cent.

520. *Mr. Maxwell.*] During the evidence which has been given it has been suggested that, if Mr. Vaile's system were brought into force, the number of accounting-stations on a line might be reduced to the number of ticket-stages which Mr. Vaile proposes to have?—I understand you to mean that we should only have officers at places where Mr. Vaile had ticket-stations.

*Mr. Maxwell:* I understand that is what Mr. Vaile did mean.

521. *Mr. Vaile.*] What I mean is this: As I see by the published returns, the number of accounting-stations on the Auckland line is twenty-five. I am of opinion that this number might be greatly reduced under the proposed system, and that it would be necessary only to keep an account for each stage or ticket-station, which would reduce the number to seven?—Yes, I think I follow you. I do not think your proposed introduction of stages instead of stations would affect the accounting in any way whatever. If we require a station-master at Huntly now, we should require him there under your plan; if we require an officer at Mercer now, we should also require him then. There is a great deal of work to be done besides accounting; and where it is necessary to have an officer at a station it is not a mere matter of accounting.

522. *Mr. Maxwell.*] Then, there is something which is outside of railway-business altogether. We are at present working a number of postal and telegraph offices?—Yes, about a hundred and twenty.

*Mr. Vaile:* I presume there is an account kept at each of these twenty-five stations for all the tickets issued, and for the tonnage of goods and everything else. Now, there can be no necessity for keeping these accounts under my system.

*Hon. Major Atkinson:* How would you book goods, say, from Huntly if you did not keep a man there?

*Mr. Vaile:* There would be a receiving and delivery account kept, but that is all; and they would be passed on daily to the ticket-stations, where the general accounts would be kept. There