

698. I believe, in England, fifteen passengers are reckoned to the ton?—That is, passengers alone; but that is not the practice in New Zealand.

699. With reference to the brick-trade. Hunt's Siding you say is nine miles out, and the rate is 1s. 9d. a ton, while the coal rate is 2s. 6d. a ton: is there not some stipulation with Mr. Hunt that he must supply so much tonnage to the line?—Not precisely. Mr. Hunt's works are situated on a siding away from the station, and when he made the proposal some years ago to start brick-works there was a stipulation made that he should be charged a certain rate per ton, and that he should provide certain loads, and that all the loads were to be full trucks.

700. And through the year he was to supply not less than so many trucks?—No, that was not stipulated; certain quantities were to be supplied at a time.

701. Was there no stipulation with Mr. Hunt which practically amounts to this: that he was to supply the railway with so many tons of freight during the year?—No, there was not.

702. Was there not with other brickmakers?—Not that I am aware of; if there was it was before my time. The stipulation was to give full loads.

703. What is the meaning of full loads?—Five tons and so many trucks; I forget the number.

704. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] I understand you to say that you have an arrangement made that whatever number of trucks you send out he has got to fill them?—Yes; it was proposed that we should not take away one truck but get several at a time so as to have large loads. Mr. Hunt wanted to establish extensive brickworks out in the country; we had no traffic of any kind at this part of the line; he proposed to start these brickworks if we gave him a reasonable rate; on the other hand he was to give us reasonable loads to take away. Hunt's place is off the main line, and the object is not to send the engine off the line for small loads.

705. *Mr. Vaile.*] Then, it amounts to this: that if he did not supply full loads you would not take them along?—He should be made to fulfil his agreement.

706. Then, I take it for granted that if a man started, say, four miles out, and he had only half the quantity of bricks to supply, you would not make the same arrangements with him?—That all depends upon the circumstances; you cannot lay down a general rule.

707. According to the scale the smaller man would have to pay 2s. 6d. per ton on his bricks?—It entirely depends upon circumstances.

708. Is not that differential rating in favour of the man and not of the industry?—No; I think that the Government would be prepared to grant the same concessions to any one else who required them.

709. Who would supply smaller quantities?—Of course small quantities would cost more to move; that would be under different conditions.

710. What I want to point out is, that this differential rating, instead of encouraging industries, in reality is in favour of the individual, because all the smaller men are cut out.

711. *Mr. Macandrew.*] You want to make out that differential rating is purely arbitrary?—Yes.

712. *Mr. Maxwell.*] There is no doubt it is purely arbitrary; but, so far as my experience goes, no Government would refuse a like privilege under like conditions.

713. *Mr. Gore.*] You can hardly say that it is purely arbitrary in every sense: take the dross from the coal-mines, which was formerly thrown to waste—when the Government reduced the freight on dross, the railways got the benefit of the carriage?—Yes; it was used for lime-burning, and the Government were able to get the lime; and it was of advantage to the country generally.

714. *Mr. Vaile.*] Suppose I book a hundred tons of goods, Class D, from Te Awamutu to Auckland, and on its arrival there I find that I want to pass fifty tons on to Helensville, shall I have to pay the terminal charge, or the cartage-charge, on that fifty tons?—Under ordinary circumstances it would be charged; but, if such a contingency as you mention arose, I should think that the Government would immediately consider the position, and make proper regulations to meet it. But no such contingency has or is likely to occur.

715. Is it not the case that these cartage-charges are always collected whether the people avail themselves of the use of the railway-carts or not?—Yes; invariably. That is provided for under "The Public Works Act, 1882."

716. In the case that I suppose a man would be called upon to pay £4 3s. 4d., for which he received no benefit whatever?—If such a contingency were likely to arise, the regulations could be amended to meet it.

717. They do arise to a greater or less extent every day?—I think not.

718. *The Chairman* (to Mr. Vaile.)] If, as you stated, there were fifty tons for Auckland and fifty tons for Helensville, would it not cross the line at Newmarket?—Yes; I am only putting an extreme case.

*Mr. Richardson:* Far less extreme cases than that have recently been wired about; and the regulations were made to meet them within a few hours, and would be again if it were necessary.

719. *Mr. Vaile.*] As regards that terminal charge, I should like to ask how much goes to the carter, and how much to the railway?—I think the whole goes to the carter. It is not usual to take anything for cartage for the railway, except where the contract-price has been for an odd halfpenny; in that case we always charge the full penny. Cartage is paid to the contractors in Christchurch, Dunedin, Invercargill, and Auckland.

720. *Mr. Whyte.*] In such a case as Mr. Vaile has mentioned, cartage would not occur?—If we had such cases, the regulations could be amended. I do not think in that case we should be justified in charging cartage. The object in carting by contract is to prevent confusion, and to keep the sheds clear.

721. *Mr. Vaile.*] Can you tell me, when the Onehunga line was in the hands of the contractors, and they carried their fares for 6d., if they did not make a considerable sum of money by it?—I think that was before I came to New Zealand. I find on reference that the contractors' fares were: