

1893.
NEW ZEALAND.

VAILE'S SYSTEM OF RAILWAY RATES AND CHARGES.

(REPLY OF COMMISSIONERS TO QUESTION RELATIVE TO CIRCULAR LETTER BY MR. VAILE.)

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, dated 13th July, 1893.

Ordered, "That there be laid before this House a copy of the reply of the Railway Commissioners to Question No. 24 on the Order Paper of the 6th instant."—(MR. BUCHANAN.)

THE statements of Mr. Vaile referred to are inaccurate. The rates are gazetted according to Act, and always have been. A very moderate amount of intelligence applied to the *Gazette* will enable any one to ascertain that the rates in Canterbury and Otago are not lower than in Auckland. The carefully-prepared data supplied in the annual report enables any well-informed person to ascertain that the average rate per ton per mile paid on the Auckland Section last year was lower than that paid on the Hurunui-Bluff.

It is stated by Mr. Vaile in his letter as follows: "I have no means of ascertaining the distance goods travel on the two sections, but there can be no doubt that they travel a much longer distance in the South than they do here [that is, in Auckland] which makes the difference against us greater."

It is quite apparent that Mr. Vaile's knowledge of the railway business is, as he intimates, very limited. The average distance goods are carried is much greater on the Auckland Section than on the Hurunui-Bluff—the reverse of what Mr. Vaile assumes. The reasons for these conditions of traffic are obvious upon careful consideration of the railway statistics and local circumstances. The charges in Mr. Vaile's letters are built up on this erroneous assumption.

All the annual reports of late years contain statistics of facts which entirely refute Mr. Vaile's conclusions, while the *New Zealand Gazettes* of rates published from time to time are clear evidence of the untruthfulness of his suggestions.

Mr. Vaile's statement that all the figures he gives are taken from the Commissioners' reports is not true. He may possibly have incorrectly compiled statistics on his own account from the *Gazettes*. He has given incorrect figures of the tonnage carried by omitting the whole of the live stock on the Hurunui-Bluff, 790,844 head; and on the Auckland Section, 114,990.

In arriving at the amount which he incorrectly gives as the average receipt per ton, he has included the revenue derived from this extensive traffic.

The blundering is so obvious as to need no further comment.

For the Commissioners.

E. G. PILCHER, Secretary.

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