

55. But the Southland people would be at no greater disadvantage than the Canterbury people?—They would be longer on the journey than at present. There are connections between Orepuki and Dunedin, and Gore and Dunedin, and Kingston and Dunedin, and all places south of Invercargill.

56. But by the delay in leaving Invercargill we would be doing away with the stoppage at Clinton—the mails could come in from all sides by 2 o'clock?—You have two mails leaving Invercargill daily now.

57. *Mr. Duthie.*] You mention that at certain times in connection with the arrival of the San Francisco mail you put on an express train?—Yes; between Lyttelton and Dunedin. The Post Office engages them, and pays 5s. a mile for them. That is the cost price; there is no profit out of it.

58. Would it not be cheaper for the Postal Department to pay for an express train from Auckland to Onehunga, so that the mails might go by a steamer in time to catch the mail train at New Plymouth?—You refer to the delay which took place at New Plymouth lately, when you came down. The delay there was caused by the wires being down. The local Chief Postmaster has power to order special trains as required.

59. I want information with regard to the cost; in the service between Onehunga and New Plymouth there are two tidal harbours to navigate, and it is important to catch the tide; if, then, you delay in Auckland and are late at New Plymouth you delay the service?—Unless the mails are put on shore in a boat.

60. Could not the whole delay be avoided if the steamer had left the Manukau an hour and a half earlier?—Yes.

61. And if the Postal Department had paid for an express train from Auckland to Onehunga you would have enabled the steamer to leave an hour and a half earlier?—Yes.

62. And the cost would have been considerably less?—Yes; the cost of an express train between Auckland and Onehunga would be very small.

63. *The Chairman.*] When the express service between Dunedin and Christchurch was last altered there was an alteration involving an additional ten minutes—the express used to arrive at 8.50 p.m., and now it arrives at 9 o'clock, making some additional stoppages. You remember the alteration?—Yes. The time became too fast, and the trains were unable to keep time on account of the additional stoppages.

64. The alteration was made to enable the express to make more stoppages: how many stoppages did she make?—Speaking from memory, I think there were two or three.

65. I can supply the information; there were six additional stoppages, and to make up for the delay caused by them the express only required an additional ten minutes?—I can explain how we gained the time. The time-table was rearranged. Between some stations there had been rather too much time allowed, and by adjusting the time-table the additional stops were enabled to be made by allowing the extra ten minutes only. We had to rob from the time between some stations, and so we managed to make it on the whole into ten minutes additional.

66. Still, six additional stoppages in ten minutes is a large gain to the public convenience?—Yes.

67. Stress has been laid upon the inconvenience that would be caused by the branch services not being accommodated by the alteration in the time-table; you say now they all work in?—The major part of them. They all make connections with the express. We try as far as possible to arrange the time-table so as to make the connections, but it cannot be done in all cases.

68. Is it not a fact that a person wishing to leave Mount Somers for Christchurch on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings has to wait at Ashburton from 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.?—Yes; I believe that is correct.

69. Six hours?—Yes.

70. So that if there are to be some trifling irregularities of that kind at the Gore–Invercargill end of the line it would be no worse for the settlers there than it is for the Canterbury settlers now?—That is so; but you cannot compare the branch line between Mount Somers and Ashburton with the line from Gore, which runs through a very large country; and there are besides the lines from Kingston and the other places to the south of Invercargill.

CAPTAIN ALLMAN sworn and examined.

71. *The Chairman.*] You are Nautical Adviser to the Government?—Yes.

72. The purpose of this Committee is to inquire as to the possibility of accelerating the speed of passage between Lyttelton and Wellington and *vice versa*, in order to connect the railway systems of the two Islands by a quicker steam-service, and avoid the delays which now take place, and I wish to ask you, assuming that we were to run a ten-hours service between those two ports, what tonnage of vessel would you think suitable?—Well, it is a general condition of guaranteeing speed that you should have a big boat. You would require a 2,000-ton boat to do it.

73. The information I want is as to the displacement of a steamer that would be a safe boat, and one not subject to be delayed by weather?—I should say a 2,000-ton boat—2,000 tons gross.

74. Have you any knowledge as to what such a steamer would cost?—It would make a hole in £100,000. It is the speed which adds to the cost. You could build a vessel with nominal horse-power to drive her ten knots for much less. To get a ten-knot speed out of a 2,000-ton steamer of a fairly good model with sharp ends she would require engines which would indicate 970-horse power. If you want a twelve-knot boat, in order to guarantee it you would have to give a little more horse-power than is absolutely necessary. She would require 1,600-horse power. Twelve knots is about the best result you can get out of any boat at medium cost. If you want to jump from twelve knots to sixteen the horse-power would nearly double itself. That is where the con-