

12. Flour, I think, comes from the South Island?—Yes.
13. How do you get that up at present?—Via Wanganui, in the steamers of the Canterbury Steamship Company.
14. Are you able to get direct shipments of flour to Foxton?—Not now.
15. What was the last boat that used to bring up shipments of flour?—The "Wootton."
16. Has she given up calling?—Yes. I do not know where she is now. I think she is trading between Lyttelton and Wellington.
17. The shipowners will not risk the likelihood of the boats being held up for a week or so in Foxton?—Yes.
18. Is there any difficulty about the insurance of goods and the boats?—I do not know anything about the vessels. We do not insure our goods. We have our own insurance cover and carry the risk ourselves.
19. I suppose on this question of flour your evidence is the same as Mr. Young's—you would prefer to get the flour up direct from Lyttelton or Timaru than to have it sent to Wanganui and then railed?—Yes.
20. You heard Mr. Young's evidence on that point?—Yes.
21. Now, with regard to sugar, how do you get your sugar at present?—It comes to Wellington, and is then transhipped from Wellington to Foxton by boat and then railed here.
22. Would there be any chance of getting a direct freight from Auckland if the port was improved?—Yes.
23. How do the Wanganui people get their sugar?—Direct boat from Onehunga.
24. That goes to the Wanganui City Wharf?—Yes.
25. With the Foxton bar improved you think you could get your sugar direct from Onehunga?—Yes.
26. Would that mean a big saving?—Yes, it would mean a saving on the present method of about 10s. 6d. a ton. That is allowing a very liberal amount—say, £1 per ton—for sea freight, which I do not suppose it would be from Onehunga to Foxton.
27. *Mr. Myers.*] I should suppose from your evidence that you have found it necessary to import to Palmerston more and more goods by rail and less and less by steamer during the last few years?—No.
28. Then, have you been importing more by steamer than you used to?—Well, owing to the irregularity I have had to open a depot at Foxton to keep goods there. We could not do any business if we had to get our goods by rail.
29. You have opened a distributing store at Foxton?—Yes.
30. And you make that your bulk store?—It is a depot; our bulk store is here.
31. I take it you distribute from there to some extent to your customers?—Yes, we distribute certain articles which we had to keep there on account of the steamer being held up, goods such as kerosene and sugar. It was built specially for that.
32. Is it correct to say that although the steamers have been held up you have been importing more and more goods year by year through Foxton?—I do not know quite what you mean. We are naturally getting more goods via Foxton because the business has increased, and the Palmerston business has increased.
33. Your importations then have increased due to your increased business?—Yes.
34. Can you tell us whether or not your importations by rail from Wellington have increased or decreased?—I think they have increased in this class of goods.
35. In all classes of goods you deal in?—Yes, they have increased.
36. How long have you been in business here?—On my own account, thirteen years as a wholesaler.
37. I suggest to you that during the last eight years your importations through Foxton—that is to say, sea-borne from Wellington—have doubled: would you say that?—I could not tell you that without referring to my books, but it would take a day or two to find out, because we are shifting to another building.
38. Could you by any research also tell us to what extent your importations by rail from Wellington to Palmerston have increased or decreased year by year?—Yes. I understand that when we get certain classes of goods—for instance, A, B, C, and D—by rail it is because we have to, as we cannot get them via Foxton, and it is a great loss to get them by rail.
39. *The Chairman.*] A, B, C, and D goods are general merchandise?—Yes.
40. *Mr. Myers.*] But the same thing would apply to years gone by as to the present time—you would naturally get goods by rail from Wellington when you could not get them by sea?—The goods that are suitable, yes.
41. Does that observation apply to the days when the Manawatu Railway Company were carrying on business?—Not to such a great extent.
42. Is that because the Manawatu Railway Company were bringing goods up at a lower rate than you could get them by sea?—No; they did not bring them up at a lower rate.
43. Did they bring them up at the same rate?—Certain goods they did.
44. Well, in those days did you not bring up those goods by rail?—Certain goods we did.
45. In preference?—Yes.
46. Of the train, of course?—No, not necessarily the trains, because the trains are hopeless now: they are too unpunctual. We could not get them up at the same time as we could by the Manawatu Company.
47. *The Chairman.*] Was there a difference in the train service between the Manawatu Company and the Government?—Yes. The Manawatu Company did not have so many trains coming as the Government have now. The Government have so many passenger-trains running that it is difficult to get even goods up by rail punctually.