

79. And there has been an interchange of traffic of Government trucks throughout the whole of that period?—Some of the Government trucks, yes.

80. It has been found, has it not, that at Himatangi an ordinary siding practically served for the traffic on this tram?—Plus the use of the Foxton Branch.

81. But no elaborate siding or interlocking appliances have been required for the traffic?—No.

82. Do you recognize that it is and always will be upon this minor proposal a purely local concern designed to carry only the traffic to and from the district of Sandon?—The conditions of the main line at Marton are not the same as at Himatangi.

83. I want you to assume for the moment that the traffic upon this temporary branch from Marton to Foxton will only carry the local traffic—the traffic to Sandon district in and out. Is there any real reason why the present system could not be followed of interchanging the railway-trucks at Marton?—But if it is for purely local traffic, why make the junction at Marton?

84. Do you suggest that it is good business that this tramway should run for fourteen or eighteen miles and terminate in a metal wall or metal quarry?—It all depends upon the class of business. I am assuming what you say, that it is purely local business: then under those conditions I do not see why you want a junction at all.

85. Why not?—It is for you to say.

86. The evidence that has been given to us is that it will save an enormous cost in the handling of produce and getting produce north from Marton, and enabling them to go into profitable farm production?—Then you are going away from your assumption altogether—that it is local business.

87. I was speaking of incoming and outgoing business. Have you any grain-trucks of so large a dimension that would prevent them, as they have been doing with safety, going on this tram-line, and, as I believe, they are doing now?—They have not been doing so, and there are some that could not possibly go on the line.

88. With regard to timber, for example, are there not timber-trucks which are of greater weight than would permit them to be run on this line?—They are nearly all of dimensions that would not be permitted to be run there unless you partially load them.

89. Is it not a fact that all your goods-trains have to be marshalled at various stations?—It is not a fact.

90. Do you not marshal them at Marton?—Yes, some.

91. What difficulty would there be in a selection being made of the trucks to go on this line at Marton?—You have to get hold of them to select them first. If they are not there you cannot select them.

92. You think the difficulty is insuperable?—I think it is impossible for the Department, as it would be too expensive. You have to begin by collecting all the trucks at the northern and southern limits of the traffic.

93. Supposing this fourteen miles of tramway is converted into a railway of the character of the Foxton line—that is to say, a siding—your objections then vanish, do they not?—No; that is one of the troubles with the Foxton line, which you were referring to as a standard line—because we have to limit the standard of the trucks to go on the Foxton line.

94. Then it is not insuperable?—It would land us in very serious expense.

95. *The Chairman.*] I presume there would be no objection if they changed the contents of the trucks on the railway to the trucks at the siding?—If they transhipped the goods there would be no objection at all, but there would be no use of the junction then. They might just as well do without a junction.

96. *Mr. Skerrett.*] Is there any objection on the part of the Railway Department to the extension of this tram-line to a station at or near Marton Station so as to enable goods to be transhipped to a truck on the tramway from a truck on the railway?—Are you asking for my opinion or experience as a railway engineer or a railway manager? If you are asking from my point of view as a railway manager, I say there are very serious objections.

97. I understand that any sidings that are put in for the purposes of connection are always paid for by those who desire the siding?—Yes.

98. So that the cost of any siding would be paid for by those who desire to connect?—Perhaps you misunderstand the position. It is not only the siding itself that has to be paid for, but any other siding involved by the construction of that siding.

99. Do you suggest that even assuming a junction there would be a necessity for expensive interlocking costing £2,000?—I do not see how you could get out of it.

100. You do not think the conditions at Himatangi could be repeated at Marton?—I am quite sure of it.

101. This interchange siding would be paid for by the county?—Unless, as in the case of the Rangitikei Bridge, where you suggested pressure of public opinion might force the Government to pay for it.

102. But as far as the Railway Department is concerned the interchange siding would be paid for by the people who desire it?—Yes.

103. Do you think any interlocking appliances would be necessary?—Yes, if junctioning with the main line they would be absolutely necessary.

104. *Mr. Hannay.*] Is there any portion of the Marton siding on the Bull's side of the railway?—Yes [plan referred to]. As I explained, the junction comes in on the middle of the station.

105. *Mr. Skerrett.*] Is it not an axiom that those concerned in railway-construction and railway management say that a branch line does not of itself pay?—I think not. It is the first time I have heard that as an axiom.

106. Do you know Mr. Wellington's book?—Yes.