

56. Can you not be a little more candid about the matter? What proportion of goods-trains has to be marshalled at Marton?—Well, a small proportion of them. There are trains from the Main Trunk running through to Palmerston: those are not marshalled.

57. Those are express goods from Auckland or some other place to Wellington, are they?—Yes; say to Palmerston or some other station.

58. Necessarily, you would not have to marshal an express train?—There are no express goods-trains.

59. Those are through goods-trains?—Those are the trains working traffic from the Main Trunk to Palmerston North.

60. Are those the trains which carry goods from the north to Wellington?—Not necessarily to Wellington: to anywhere south of Marton.

61. How about goods that are destined for Wanganui and New Plymouth?—Those are necessarily put off at Marton.

62. How often per day are they carried on to their destination?—Four or five times a day.

63. Then there would be eight or ten trains marshalled at Marton per day?—No; not marshalled. As I understand “marshalling” it means to reconstruct the train. Putting a vehicle off and putting another on is not marshalling.

64. There are eight or ten trains per day on which trucks from Marton have either to be attached or detached?—Yes; that is so.

65. I understand you to suggest that if there was a siding from the tramway at Marton that process would be intensified, and would be expensive?—It depends on whether the tramway connected with the railway or not.

66. Supposing there was a siding connected with the railway: would the process simply of attaching and detaching trucks be expensive?—Yes; there would be an expense.

67. But is not that expense negligible?—No; certainly not.

68. Will you give me any idea of the expense per train of the attaching of an additional truck?—It is not only the attaching of the additional truck—you have to shunt it into a siding, and have the train ready to take it, and the cost of that is something additional.

69. You know the Legislature only last year passed an Act giving facilities for the construction of light railways, and their connection with the Government railways?—I believe that is so.

70. I understand you give no evidence yourself as to a possible diversion of trade by this connecting line?—That is so.

71. What are the sizes or descriptions of those trucks which are too heavy to run on the Sandon Tramway?—Any trucks which convey a load of more than 8 tons.

72. Well, are any of those trucks supplied to collieries or timber-mills?—Yes.

73. What is the proportion of the heavier trucks compared with the total rolling-stock?—I could not tell you without referring to the report of the General Manager.

74. Is it half?—It is in the annual report.

75. You can think of no practicable system by which trucks carrying the Sandon-Foxton goods can be replaced by your own trucks?—I do not say that. The tramway-trucks can be used, and are used at the present time.

76. Has it created any difficulty during the last thirty years?—No.

77. Why should it create any difficulty in the future?—Because at the present time, so long as the connection is merely at the Foxton end, we can work the trucks we use at the Foxton end, but when you connect with the main line between Wellington and Auckland, then these heavier trucks are constantly passing to and fro on that line, and do not go on the Foxton line.

78. This objection presupposes a considerable goods traffic from the north, does it not?—Yes.

79. And being diverted on to the Sandon line?—Yes.

80. I do not suppose you suggest that the lack of room at the present time for a siding is a serious matter?—That is a point for an engineer. I could not say.

81. We have heard from one engineer who was called that there was room for a siding?—He said there was room for a junction, I think.

82. I think the witness referred to a parallel siding?—I do not know.

83. It appears quite clear that the Railway Department could not prevent the extension of the tramway to some site at or near Marton?—They could not prevent it, of course. They could object, but they could not prevent it.

84. That would entail the handling of Sandon goods at Marton, would it not?—If there was a connection it would—such goods as could be handled there.

85. As you point out, and as the Commission are well aware, that extension to Marton, unless brought into the premises of the railway-station, would involve extra cartage?—That is so.

86. I am going to put in a return showing that the Railway Department collected during the year 1915-16 for the Sandon Tramway freights to the amount of £667. That would be approximately correct, would it not?—I have not those figures. If the return is made out I have no doubt it is correct.

87. My object in asking you this question is to ask you whether it is not a fact that a corresponding amount would be collected by the Sandon people and paid over to the Railway Department?—Yes, the Sandon people show in their return an amount that is paid over to the Railway Department.

88. If the traffic originates on the Sandon Tramway line they collect the freight at Foxton?—Not always. It is a question of whether the sender of the goods wants to pay the freight, or whether he does not. If he does not pay it we may collect it.

89. But the Sandon people have on occasions to look to you for a portion of the freight?—Yes.