

90. The last year's truck-hire, I am told, amounted to £578 ?—I have no doubt that would be correct.

91. *Mr. Myers.*] What is your maximum load on any of the trucks ?—30 tons on a 14-ton truck—that is, 44 tons altogether.

92. And your loads vary from that to what—what is the lightest truck fully loaded ?—The lightest truck fully loaded is about 12 tons.

93. Of which 8 tons is the load and four tons is the truck ?—Yes.

94. They vary from 12 tons, including the truck, to 44 tons, including the truck ?—Yes.

95. And the load varies from 8 tons to 30 tons ?—Yes : that is, our full loads.

96. *Mr. Skerrett.*] Supposing a truck of timber comes from the Main Trunk line on to the tram at Himatangi, are you able to say whether any practical selection has been made of the trucks in which the timber or coal is carried ?—The selection is made simply by our people, who have instructions as to what class of trucks may or may not be run on that line. Say, for example, that a sawmiller loaded 25 tons on to a truck, that truck would not be taken on the line.

97. Is a selection in point of fact made ?—Yes, by us.

98. For timber and coal ?—Yes, and for heavy materials.

99. Coming from the north ?—Yes.

100. *The Chairman.*] Do you change goods from one truck to another truck, or is the selection made by the coal-miner or the timber-worker ?—The selection is made by the person who loads the truck. They naturally load into the smaller trucks. The heavier trucks may go on the Sandon line, but not fully loaded.

101. *Mr. Myers.*] The heavy trucks are not supposed to go on that line at all, are they ?—No, not with a heavy load. It is all a question of the load.

102. So far as such traffic is concerned which you have had over this tramway in the past—is it considerable or negligible ?—I have not the particulars, but it is not a great deal.

103. If it were to increase materially how would it affect the question of the selection of trucks—would it increase the difficulty ?—Of course it would.

RICHARD WILLIAM MCVILLY sworn and examined. (No. 49.)

*Re Foxton Wharf.*

1. *Mr. Myers.*] I want first to deal with the question of the Foxton Wharf. You told us in Foxton that this wharf has always been operated as an integral part of the railways ?—That is correct. It was built by the Government for the railway, paid for out of railway capital, and has always been operated and owned by the Government Railways Department as part of the railway system.

2. Now, is it correct to say that throughout whenever the request has been made that this wharf should be handed over to the Foxton Harbour Board the answer of the various Governments has been that it was not in the public interest to do so ?—Yes, that is absolutely correct.

3. Would you mind just stating shortly when the first effort was made by the Foxton Harbour Board to obtain this wharf ?—The wharf was completed in 1873 as part of Foxton-Palmerston Tramway, which afterwards became Foxton Railway. The Harbour Board was constituted by Act in 1876. It came into being in 1877, and on the 10th March, 1877, the first Chairman of the Board, Mr. A. Gray, wrote the Marine Department requesting that the boundaries of the Harbour Board be defined, that the necessary information as to demarcation of boundary between the railway and the wharf should be given to the Board, and he desired particularly to know whether the Board was compelled to take over control of and provide for the pilot services if they waived their claim to dues for pilotages.

4. At all events, the Board was not endowed with the wharf ?—No ; the wharf from the outset was railway property, and has always continued so.

5. Was there any question at that time as to the boundary between the wharf and the railway ?—Yes. The Chairman asked for that information, and on the 26th March, 1877, the Secretary to the Customs Department, with the approval of the Hon. George McLean, who was then Minister of Customs, wrote to Mr. Gray, who was the first Chairman of the Foxton Harbour Board, "With reference to the wharf, I have been informed by the Public Works Department that there is no boundary between the wharf and the railway, as the wharf is an integral part of the railway." In April, 1877, the Chairman of the Board made a further effort to obtain possession of the wharf, and on the 12th April, in writing to the Minister of Customs, he stated that "some grave omission must have been made from the Act." He also stated that "the Act mentioned, as part of the endowment to the Board, the wharf." That statement was not correct. The Act did not endow the Board with the wharf. Then he said, "the Act made no reference to pilot services." These the Board wanted to get rid of because they would not pay. He concluded by stating, "On behalf of the Board I request that the wharf now occupied by the railway be secured to us, and the care and cost of the pilotage service removed from our supervision." Correspondence in the same strain continued till 1879.

6. There is a letter from the Government in 1877 ?—Yes. The Secretary of Customs pointed out to the Minister of Customs and Marine that effect could not be given to the desire of the Foxton Harbour Board to obtain the wharf, and in the meantime the Government's powers under the Marine Act had not been delegated and the Marine Department were maintaining the staff.

7. Then, in September, 1877 ?—Mr. Maxwell wrote to the Minister of Public Works in connection with the same question. He pointed out that the Foxton Wharf was part and parcel of the railway ;