

by district railway people. There was endless trouble, frequent delay, constant complaint, and ultimately a demand that the Government should take it over, which the Government properly did. Then we had the Duntroon-Hakataramea Railway. It always ends in the same way. At the time the Manawatu line was constructed the Government were not in a position to finance it, but ultimately purchased it. In regard to the running of the tramway to Greatford or Marton, the Department have already told the County Council that it cannot object to that and does not object to it, but the Department would not agree to connection with the Government line. We were told at once that unless the connection with the Government line was made, which would obviate the necessity for the transshipping or handling of goods at Marton or Greatford or Kakariki, wherever the junction was, it would be useless to the County Council. Transshipping under any circumstances, either from a broad-gauge railway to a narrow-gauge railway, or two lines of the same gauge, is neither satisfactory nor profitable to the railway people. In Victoria, where they have light lines coming into stations and connecting with their broad gauge, they find the cost of handling the goods is out of all proportion to the revenue received.

237. Are you speaking of what we call terminal sidings?—Yes. In Tasmania the main-line railway was originally 3 ft. 6 in. and the original Government line 5 ft. 3 in. They junctioned about twelve miles from Launceston, and all goods had to be transhipped. In that case the company were glad to enter into an arrangement which permitted the narrow-gauge line to lay a third rail on the broad-gauge line for the purpose of running the narrow-gauge rolling-stock over it.

238. The transfer from one truck to another being expensive?—Yes, and unsatisfactory in every respect.

239. What do you say as to the question of a terminal siding for this tramway into the railway at Marton?—I do not consider that such a siding should be allowed: it would only be a beginning.

240. Have you anything to add to what you have said with regard to that particular question?—No. If you have a siding there are the same objections as to a dead-end.

241. *The Chairman.*] Supposing the siding was simply a siding proper and not a loop line; supposing you had a terminal siding, with the provision that on that siding nothing was to be run except goods to be used in the district?—We would still have to incur expense.

242. But supposing you charged for it?—Unfortunately, we do not always charge for those things. The railways referred to in the Act, I take it, are railways that will be built under the District Railways Act, and in it provision is made for the Government ultimately acquiring the line.

243. You could make that condition with the siding in the same way?—This is not the kind of line we desire to acquire.

244. Supposing you had a mere terminal siding, how could you be affected if you restricted it to goods only to be used in the district—supposing you had a parallel line running alongside?—It would create a state or condition that would end in a very short time in an actual physical connection being made, and no restriction of business could be maintained; but, further than that, this district is already well served by a Government line on the one side, by the Sanson Tram, and by good roads, and there is no necessity for any extension of the tram to the railway-line.

245. *Mr. Myers.*] Quite apart from what may ultimately happen, do you think it is in the interests of the railways, or to the convenient working of the railways, that there should be this connection or parallel siding?—No. I have already stated that any connection made would involve the Railway Department in additional expense, and it is, moreover, unnecessary.

246. Referring to the question of a junction again, I had asked you to state how the traffic would be affected as between Wanganui and Marton, the northern Main Trunk towns, and Palmerston and Marton?—The effect of the junction would be to shorten the distance by railway between Foxton and Marton, and bring Marton three miles nearer to the seaport of Foxton than it is to Wanganui. Wanganui has a large traffic, and all the facilities are there for dealing with a large traffic. There is a liberal train service for the business that is done there, and the Department considers it should retain its own business. The Department should not give facilities for diverting from its own line traffic that we have already got. Assuming there was a diversion of business, you would have a difference in freight of from 9d. to 2s. per ton on goods, according to the classes they belong to, that is going on the assumption that the Government scale of rates and Government classification is adopted; but as we have already seen, the Sanson Tramway does not apparently adopt the Government classification in regard to benzine. If the classification were not adopted, the difference in freight as against Wanganui would be greater, and we would see competition via Foxton and Sanson Tram against the railway at Wanganui.

247. In whose favour is the difference in freight—Wanganui's or Foxton's?—It is in favour of Foxton.

248. *Mr. Hannay.*] I understand you to say that if the tramway were continued to Marton, even with a parallel junction, all Marton traffic would go to Foxton?—I should expect that as a natural consequence. We know that the steamer to Foxton makes a rebate in rate of 2s. per ton in favour of the sea-borne goods that are to be railed inland, as against ship's goods for local delivery at Foxton; and I should expect when it came to the question of competing with Wanganui that they would probably cut the steamer freight still further, and that would increase the advantages of the Foxton route.

249. *The Chairman.*] But the steamers at Foxton will not have for years and years to come anything like the facilities in the harbour that they have at Wanganui?—Yes, that may be so; but we have already been told by the steamer people that if the freight was there they would put on other boats. They have now only the "Queen of the South," but if they put on another boat like the "Queen of the South," running an every-day service, they would take a lot of traffic away from the railway at Wanganui.