

upon the wharf of a wharf-owner, and credited the wharfage charge to the dock account. The service of taking the goods to the railway-shed to be sorted was performed by the railway as an extra service, and for this we received the port haulage and handling charges, which receipts were credited to the railway account.

4. *Mr. Williams.*] Could you define distinctly to the Commission exactly the services that are rendered by a dock company to a railway company?—I think the line of demarcation recognized in England between where the dock-owner's responsibility ceases and the carrier comes in is when the goods are received from the ship in the sling, or put on the wharf, or dumped on the adjacent wagon or cart. Then the dock company's responsibility ceases.

5. But does not the ship's responsibility include the depositing of the goods upon the wharf?—Yes. If the dock company performs the work of discharging the ship they charge the shipping company for it. The practice at Home is for the stevedore either to discharge by the ship's gear or by cranes at the cost of the ship. If the dock company provides the cranes they charge the ship extra.

6. *Mr. Myers.*] So that wharfage is paid for the use of wharf accommodation?—Yes; solely for the provision of the wharf and whatever staff they provide on the dock-side or wharf.

7. *Mr. Williams.*] Whatever goes with the wharf?—Yes. I should like to carry that a little further. The question has been raised as to whether the wharfage charges also include the conservancy of the port. Certainly, if the New Zealand practice in regard to docks is framed on the practice in England—and I believe it is—the wharfage does not include any items for the conservancy of the port. Take the Port of Hull again as an instance: the docks were owned by the railway company, and they collected and retained the whole of the wharfage charges as dock-owners. The shipping docks were about ten miles up the River Humber—a river which is probably more heavily burdened with mud than any other navigable river in England—and dredging is a very serious item, also the maintenance of the channel, pilotage, and lighting. These expenses have to be paid for by the Humber Conservancy from charges raised by them from pilotage, lighting, ship's, dues and port dues, which charges are entirely apart from the charge for wharfage.

8. The ownership you speak of by the railway company simply included the dock-entrance?—It simply included the dock and dock-entrances; the dock companies being responsible for dredging in front of the wharves at the immediate entrance into the dock and, of course, inside the enclosed docks.

9. *Mr. Myers.*] All the river-work was done by the Humber Conservancy?—Yes.

10. And they charged port and other dues, but had no portion of the wharfages?—None whatever. I think it desirable to make the point clear also that this extra service of taking goods from the slings and dealing with them until unloaded and sorted on the platform of the railway-shed is not, and should not be, a service to be performed by the railway without extra charge as part of their railway service. It is an extra service entirely, and is not covered by the ordinary railway rate for conveyance.

11. Apart from wharfages?—Yes; and therefore I would not like it to be imagined that the suggestion that the Railway Department will have to charge for the extra handling and hauling if they lost the wharfage is a threat at all. The fact that they have not charged for these extra services up to the present is probably an oversight. I was not aware until we made inquiries recently that the charge for dock haulage and handling was not being made.

12. You want to make the position of your Department plain. You as a Department reserve the right to make the charge whether the wharf remains under your control as now or not?—That is so; we make the charge for these extra services at other ports.

13. It does not follow that you would make the charges here—that is a matter you would keep open?—It is a matter we would look into.

14. Supposing you did not earn this wharfage—supposing you did not have the wharf—could the Railway Department do the haulage and handling which it does now without making this regulation charge?—Oh, no; it would be most unfair to do so, because somebody else would have to pay it. The Department would be performing a distinctly expensive service, and if not paid at Foxton would have to recoup themselves for the loss in some other way.

15. So that the Harbour Board would require to keep a certain amount of labour on the wharf, apart from the labour you supply?—Certainly, if they were wharf-owners.

16. So that goods would be subject to a higher tax if the wharf belonged to the Harbour Board than, at all events, they are subjected to now?—Unless the Harbour Board were prepared to pay us for extra handling and haulage entirely out of their wharfage.

17. *Mr. Hannay.*] The position is that if the wharf belonged to the Harbour Board and they charged the same rates as now the public would have to pay 1s. 6d. more on their goods?—Yes. We are entitled to include wharfage 2s., and 1s. 6d. as well for handling and haulage in connection with the wharf traffic.

18. Could you barrow the goods into the shed at Foxton as you do at Wanganui?—No. I am not as conversant with the arrangement at Foxton as the officers in the Department responsible for working this port, but I know the plan of the wharf, and it is quite clear to anybody who sees that plan that barrowing in most cases would be impossible without serious interruption of business, because you would have to barrow across the rails which are used for feeding the ship with wagons even when the ship is opposite the shed. This barrowing would also stop the working of wagons to any other berths on the wharf, therefore if you barrowed across those lines you would block the use of the rails.

19. *Mr. Williams.*] Is not that what is done at Auckland at the present moment?—But the sheds and rails are not situated in the same way. When a ship is being worked at the end of the wharf to a shed opposite you can understand arrangements being made by which you can barrow across the