

81. You told me that the maximum charges were based on giving the dock company or the railway company a fair return on the capital expended on the erection of those docks?—That is so.

82. You had to keep special accounts, I suppose, owing to having taken over this enterprise which had been carried on under a special Act?—Yes.

83. Can you tell me the rate of interest you paid on the capital involved?—We did not separate our accounts in that way. I do not think we ever showed whether we paid interest or not. You may take it that dock companies at home, as a general rule, are not paying propositions. They are regarded as a necessary part of a railway in England as feeders.

84. You would not show a balance-sheet like you have shown in regard to this wharf, so far as the wharfages are concerned?—We have not shown a profit on this wharf. We have shown what we would lose if it were taken away.

85. But you have shown what you would lose out of wharfages. You have separated it just as you did at Hull. Mr. McVilly has been careful to separate the expenditure in connection with the wharf and the revenue derived from the wharf?—The railways would do the same, of course, at Hull if their ownership were attacked there.

86. But you would not show a return of 50 per cent.?—We would show the actual figures, whatever they were.

87. With regard to the question of the duties of the railway and wharfage, I understand that at the wharf the ship takes delivery of cargo for export, or hands over the cargo brought in, on the wharf in slings. Is that not so?—It depends. Some cargoes, such as fruit, for instance, could not be dealt with in slings. Such cargo is barrowed from the ship's gangways.

88. They take delivery at the ship's side on the wharf?—That is so.

89. The wharfinger takes delivery on behalf of the consignor, and either hands it over to the consignee if the consignee brings down his own vehicle to take it away, or puts it into the shed?—No, he does not put the goods into the shed: he puts them on the wharf.

90. Mr. McVilly has told us that in the expense he has charged are the expenses for taking the goods across from the wharf and putting it into your railway-shed?—It is an extra railway service.

91. That is in connection with the wharf?—No. Mr. McVilly was careful to explain that it was not.

92. We will take it now that the Harbour Board is the owner of the wharf?—That is a supposition.

93. If the Foxton Harbour Board takes cargo from a shed and puts that cargo into the goods-shed, are you going to charge them for that?—No. If we do not perform the service we should not charge for it.

94. So that I may take it that all the general cargo which is taken by the Harbour Board from your goods-shed, or from the ship's side to your goods-shed, would not be charged for?—No, not if the Harbour Board do it.

95. I take it that goods that are brought by the Harbour Board to your goods-shed to be sent away are just in the same position as are goods brought down from Foxton to be sent away?—You are presupposing that the Foxton Harbour Board is going to perform a service and not charge for it. They do not take it to our shed at present.

96. *The Chairman.*] Supposing there is a ship discharging at the Queen's Wharf and they want to send goods to Palmerston North: the owners of the goods would cart the goods to your shed at Thorndon and you would forward them?—Yes; then the intermediate charge would not arise.

97. *Mr. Weston.*] Say we take it to your goods-shed at Foxton?—You must be careful to define which shed—it is one thing taking it to our railway-shed, and quite another thing putting it into a Harbour Board shed.

98. *The Chairman.*] If you had no moving work from the ship to the shed the Railway Department does not charge?—That is so; we would not charge in such a case. We should not, however, allow shipment traffic to be put into our shed unsorted.

99. Supposing I came along with a cargo of goods and said, "I have my own labour and shall do the work myself," and I wanted the goods sent to Palmerston North, where would I put them?—You would bring them into our railway-shed.

100. *Mr. Weston.*] If the Commission says we are to have this wharf the Commission will give us the right of access by a public road. You are saying that because we have to go through your yard you will not provide a right of access to get to your shed?—Who said that?

101. What is your objection otherwise?—We are not raising an objection. We are discussing the charge for a service.

102. Do I understand this: that if the Harbour Board says, "We will take care of your goods and we will take them from the shed and put them into your shed," there is no charge by the Railway Department?—If you come to us as a local trader and offer your goods at our shed we will take them; we should not charge for the intermediate service if there were no intermediate work performed.

103. In regard to the question of intermediate service, I can understand that in the case of the Wellington Harbour Board, to charge 1s. per ton when you bring the trucks down. If we had the loading on the wharf there, you have to bring the trucks down a considerable distance over the permanent-way, but here at Foxton your lines are practically alongside the wharf. For instance, take a particular case: a big cargo of benzine is brought in. Would it not pay you better not to charge anything for bringing your trucks down alongside the ship, provided the Harbour Board does all the loading into the trucks?—We have performed one service already—viz., haulage.

104. You would say, "I will charge you a haulage fee for bringing the trucks down alongside the ship." Look what it saves you. You bring it down practically the same distance as you would bring the trucks to get your own goods from the ship?—Still, there is an additional service.