

173,000 sacks per annum; (10) permit Sandon district to compete by railway against steamers at the seaports mentioned; (11) to compete with fodder arriving at Auckland in large quantities from Victoria; (12) to save Government railways expensive haulage from Marton to Himatangi, which in long-distance freights cannot be remunerative; (13) prevent railage charges on these consignments (Marton to Himatangi), would land them at settlers' doors; (14) generally to give settlers the direct and quick access to the Main Trunk line that their pioneering work in light railways fully entitles them to."

121. "At seaports mentioned" means Wanganui, New Plymouth, and Auckland?—Yes. No. 11 does not apply.

122. *Mr. Hannay.*] If there was a connection to Marton the bulk of the traffic would be inward traffic to Foxton. Do you intend that the Government Railways should hand you over that traffic?—It would not be all the traffic, because we would come in competition also with Wanganui.

123. If there was connection with the Government railway at Marton would you expect that traffic from Foxton would travel over the tram?—That would be a matter for the Government.

124. You are assuming in your statement it would, because you say, "To save Government railways expensive haulage from Marton to Himatangi, which in long-distance freights cannot be remunerative." Mr. Skerrett elicited the fact that there is not much traffic to Foxton but from Foxton?—What we had in mind there was the expense for haulage, particularly in regard to coal and timber—very heavy traffic—where the slight increase in the cost between what would be landed at Greatford and round at Himatangi would be saved to the railway. We say it does not pay them. In the case of timber or coal coming down from the north into the Sandon district, we raised the question whether it was worth while the Government hauling it from Greatford to Himatangi at a very small rate.

125. *Mr. Skerrett.*] I understand that paragraph relates to the carriage of goods over long distances, from the north to Foxton or to Himatangi?—Yes.

126. And then either by Foxton or to Sandon?—Yes.

127. And it is a comparison between the cost of freight from the north or Taupiri to Greatford as against Taupiri to Himatangi?—Yes.

128. What port does Marton usually deal with?—Wanganui.

129. And its trade connections are north of Wanganui?—Yes.

130. Have the Wellington merchants much connection with Marton?—A reasonable amount.

131. Do you anticipate that there would be a marked increase in the inward traffic via Foxton destined, say, north of Marton?—No, it would go by the present means.

132. I think the bulk of the coal is imported from the north?—The Huntly coal we use.

133. Do they import much coal through Foxton to Marton?—No, none.

134. To Sandon?—Yes, a good deal of it in my time.

135. Why was it imported through Foxton in preference to the Auckland line?—There was no through connection at that time. The Main Trunk line to Huntly was opened later.

136. But if this extension were created would it not give preference to Auckland coal?—Yes, decidedly.

137. Is there any other topic you wish to refer to?—There is only the question of whether it is worth while for a man carting chaff from below Bull's.

138. *The Chairman.*] I understood you to say there would be a difference, supposing it is taken from Himatangi 150 miles beyond Marton; and the difference between the cost at the end of taking it from Himatangi and then taking it from Marton would be something like 10s. per ton?—I said from 5s. to 6s. per ton.

139. What happens is this: that the Sandon farmer will now pay more than the Marton farmer by 5s. 6d. per ton, assuming he has to send it round?—And assuming 150 miles is about the average distance.

140. *Mr. Skerrett.*] I understand that your district does not export grain?—No, it is always working on an import basis.

141. That district does not grow sufficient grain for its own consumption?—I do not know that that is a fair way of putting it—that is, if you include the demand from other districts north of Marton; but if the grain grown there were used we would have more than enough.

142. So that you say the production of grain is limited by the local demand?—No, by the outside demand I have mentioned. The position is this: we often sell off our chaff and perhaps buy oats from the South Island for our own use.

143. Have you any grain available for export?—No, only in the way of chaff: occasionally small lines of oats and wheat.

144. I understand you to say that when a man is five miles or over from a railway-station it becomes doubtful whether he would crop at all?—Yes, you begin to side-track him then.

145. I was going to ask you for that instance you mentioned?—The instance of carting from a farm half a mile away from a station is an actual case. We were able to load with one two-horse team four trucks per day. Ten miles away from Greatford a man with two five-horse teams was only able to load three trucks in two days, so the difference is enormous. It costs one man £10 to load three trucks and the other man £1 15s. to load four.

146. *Mr. Myers.*] You say it does not pay a farmer to cart chaff more than five miles to the station?—Yes, practically.

147. Will you repeat what you said it would cost a farmer to cart chaff from five miles into Marton?—I said, from about 7s. 6d. to 9s. per ton.

148. And people do that, do they?—Up to five miles.