

2199. And to Jackson's?—I really could not tell you from memory.

2200. Was it late?—I think in March, 1894.

2201. You have carefully considered this whole matter?—Yes, I have carefully considered it; it is a rough estimate; it is my best estimate.

2202. *Mr. Blow.*] You were assistant traffic manager?—Yes.

2203. When did you commence your duties in that position?—I think it was in 1891.

2204. Who was traffic manager?—Primarily, Mr. Steele.

2205. During the whole period?—No; up to the time when I became assistant traffic manager.

2206. Who was traffic manager after that?—Mr. David Wallace.

2207. Did Mr. Wallace have any connection with the working of the railway at all prior to 1891?—I was wrong in saying that Mr. Steele was traffic manager. Mr. Steele was manager of working railways and Mr. Wallace was the traffic manager.

2208. And Mr. Wallace was located on the section?—They were both located on the section—one in Greymouth and the other at Stillwater.

2209. Where is Mr. Steele now?—In Scotland.

2210. Do you know where Mr. Wallace is?—In Dunedin.

2211. Can you define what Mr. Wallace's duties were, and your own?—Mr. Wallace, during the period I was associated with him, was traffic manager; he had sole charge of the traffic department.

2212. And you assisted him in a clerical capacity?—Yes; and also in a managerial capacity.

2213. If Mr. Wallace's opinion is taken in the matter of the traffic, do you think he would be in a position to offer an opinion?—Yes; but it would be only an opinion.

2214. Yes; but as traffic manager it was his duty to watch the traffic from day to day: he made it his special study, did he not?—Probably to the same extent as I did myself.

2215. You had nothing to do with keeping the construction accounts, had you—the cost of construction?—No.

2216. Consequently you do not know what amount in the construction account is debited for the carriage of goods over the railway?—Yes; but I could not say without reference to the books; but the construction account for carriage was always debited to the ledger account of the construction department.

2217. Yes; but I want to know from the books of the working department?—The carriage account for the construction department was merged in the traffic accounts.

2218. But when goods were consigned over the railway by an ordinary consignor he paid freight in cash, but the company did not do so?—Yes.

2219. The latter account was kept in the traffic branch?—Yes.

2220. Can that be produced?—I presume it can. I have been away from the department for some years. I have no knowledge of what has become of the books.

2221. You are aware that such an account was kept?—Yes.

2222. What stationmasters were on the Reefton line at the time you left?—There was a stationmaster at Ngahere, a cadet at Ahaura, a stationmaster at Totara Flat, and another one at Reefton, and at Stillwater the station duties were supervised by the traffic manager.

2223. Who was the stationmaster at Ngahere, and what is his present address?—He is dead now.

2224. Who succeeded him at Ngahere?—He was stationmaster there at the time of the seizure, and he continued in charge of the station for some time afterwards, and he died when in the service of the Government about two years ago.

2225. Who was the cadet in charge at Ahaura?—A young man named Pavitt.

2226. Do you know where he is now?—In the Working Railways service.

2227. Who was in charge at Totara Flat?—A young man named Thomson.

2228. Is he in the Government service?—He was discharged after the seizure.

2229. And you do not know where he is?—No.

2230. Who was in charge at Reefton?—It was in charge of a stationmaster named Petre.

2231. Is he still there?—No; he is at Blenheim.

2232. The Commission desire to get the total passenger traffic due to construction: did any of the workmen have their families with them?—Some few of them.

2233. Did the families of others reside mostly in Greymouth district?—No; the contractors got men from Christchurch, and Reefton, and some from Ahaura. They took them as they could get them; they were generally young men.

2234. And do you seriously contend that these workmen only went once up the line to get to their work and travelled once back again in leaving it?—I should say that would be a fair estimate of the travelling of these men; some of them might have travelled more and others less. Some "swagged" it to their work and asked for a job.

2235. Would not they come in to the races, for example?—There were very few who would come in to the races; they had not the money.

2236. How was the traffic worked? Was it not worked on a local passenger service?—Yes, to the terminus; but the construction-works were ahead of the terminus.

2237. Who filled your trains in going backwards and forwards on the open line?—They were not filled. If the line had been constructed merely for the purpose of running passengers it would have been insane to keep the trains running.

2238. But this line paid more than its working-expenses?—Well, I never noticed that it did.

2239. We have it in evidence that it produced a profit of several thousands a year?—Yes, from the traffic generally; but the passenger traffic as a rule was very low. The trains running up and down on the Jackson Section carried very few passengers for years. When the mills opened the number of passengers increased.

2240. Are you sure whether any passenger trains were running on the Jackson Section?—They carried any traffic that was forthcoming.