

months. To do that they were not filled to the full capacity. They only occasionally carried full cargoes in previous years. The "Queen of the South" may come up to Foxton in those days with 80 or 90 tons on board, and she could keep the traffic going quite well; but now, of course, during the neap tides we cannot work at all for six or seven days, during which time the amount of cargo for Foxton is accumulating on the Wellington Wharf, being transhipments from other ports. To overcome the difficulty we put on an extra boat filled to the full capacity for overtaking the work.

2. And you rush boats in at the spring tides?—Yes, and carry very light loads on neap tides.

3. You do the quantity of the trade extending over a period, but you cannot do it at regular intervals?—Yes. For instance, the "Queen of the South" is in port now. She came in on the Sunday, drawing 7 ft. 9 in. That is quite a low draught for the time of the tides. She is now stuck in port. A fresh breeze came down last night, and on account of the shallowness of the bar it has created such a big sea that she could not sail last night, and very likely will be in port for five or six days; whereas if there was any depth of water on the bar she could have sailed last night. The "Kennedy" is also there. She came in with 145 tons of cement, drawing 7 ft. 6 in., and she was bumping on the bar for twenty minutes, and things were very serious for a while.

4. With regard to hemp and tow, is that a heavy cargo for its bulk?—No, it is a very light cargo. The "Queen of the South" can only take about 90 tons dead-weight of hemp. She is carrying a big load at that weight.

5. *Mr. Myers.*] You say there was a rough sea on the bar yesterday?—Last night, yes.

6. The ships could not work the bar?—The "Kennedy" worked it, but she was stuck there for twenty minutes owing to the shallowness of the bar.

7. Can you give us any idea of the full capacity of the "Queen of the South"?—On measurement the cargo would be anything up to 220 tons, and on dead-weight I suppose she would carry about 150 tons.

8. And what is the other vessel?—The "Awahou." Her full capacity in coal is 335 tons, and in measurement cargo about 450 tons. We have never filled her yet, because we dare not do so.

9. I think you explained to Mr. Weston that the carriage of the greater quantity of cargo by the vessels you are using was due to the fact that you loaded them to their full capacity at spring tides?—Up to the draught allowed. We do not load them to their full capacity of 9 ft. when there is only 7 ft. on the bar.

10. You do not make any more trips than you used to make?—No. Of course, in the olden days the "Queen of the South" might lie in Wellington for two or three days waiting for cargo.

11. And I suppose even now your company does not send its boats away from Wellington unless it can send them pretty full?—Yes, it does.

12. But they are nearly always full coming up from Wellington?—Pretty well. They are filled to the capacity which the draught allows on the bar. We could put much more in them if we could get the water. That is our own trouble—we want more water there.

13. Did you not say at Foxton the other day that there was some difference in the freight between Foxton and Palmerston to the extent of 3s. per ton?—No, I did not mention that.

14. Did you not speak of some difference in freight of 9s. 6d. and 12s. 6d.?—No, I did not.

15. Do you know Mr. Styles made some such statement?—Yes, I did hear that.

16. Is it correct?—Yes. The cargo delivered to Foxton for local use is carried at a higher rate than that which is railed to inland towns.

17. What is the rate on Foxton cargo?—12s. 6d.

18. Why did you not tell us that the other day? You were asked what was the freight and you said 9s. or 9s. 6d.?—9s. I should have said.

19. Why did you not tell us there was a 12s. 6d. freight?—Because the proportion of the cargo which is delivered in Foxton is so small, and we were speaking on general principles, the freight being 9s. Mr. McVilly said 95 per cent. of the trade coming from Foxton was forwarded by rail, and that is the cargo on which 9s. is paid.

20. You did not think it was of sufficient importance to mention?—No.

21. But it is a fact that there is a differentiation, and that the Palmerston people get their goods at 9s., and the Foxton people pay 12s. 6d. for the same service?—Yes.

22. That is on account of competition with the railways: I am not blaming you?—Even if you did I am not to blame.

23. You are competing with the railways?—Yes, I suppose we are to a certain extent.

24. And that is why you make the reduction?—To level up the charges. Even if we do make a reduction our difference in the freight is very marked.

25. *Mr. Williams.*] Am I right in drawing the conclusion that the number of visits of ships is about the same as it was before?—No; I suppose, under proper conditions—

26. What is the existing position?—When I first joined the Foxton staff the "Queen of the South" averaged about eight trips per month, and during 1915 and 1916 she averaged about seven trips and a half per month.

27. Now, the vessels really bring and take away in each trip more than they used to do?—Comparing it with eight or nine years ago there is more cargo offering.

28. I want to know whether the ships take away more in one load than they used to do, or less?—No; on neap tides we take less, and on spring tides we can fill up to the full capacity of the ship.

29. You carry more than you used to do?—Yes.

30. If the number of visits are less, then the ships must take away more now?—Yes. The ships are taking more when the bar is workable. If we could get proper facilities we would run two ships all the time.