

64. What do you charge them ?—At the present time we are charging the Board 10d. a ton, which is very much too low, and does not cover actual cost of service rendered.

65. That is in addition to the wharfage ?—No, it is included in the wharfage.

66. They charge a man 3s. a ton and give you 10d. ?—Yes.

67. *Mr. Myers.*] What work do you do there—pretty well the same as at Foxton ?—Yes, but the greater portion of Wanganui goods are for local delivery. At Foxton local-delivery goods are small.

68. So that you are not adhering to the regulation there ?—No. There is no port haulage there : it is just a labour charge.

69. *The Chairman.*] What is the haulage ?—If we convey goods from the ship's side at Wanganui to private sidings or stores we would charge 1s. per ton. If we also handle the goods in addition we would charge 1s. 6d. per ton.

70. This charge is for labour and wharf ?—Yes ; 3s. for wharfage includes labour, and is collected by the Harbour Board.

71. Do you charge extra for haulage ?—Yes. If you had a store in our yards or connected to our line by a private siding and got the trucks loaded with goods ex the ship, we would charge haulage of 1s. per ton for shunting the truck of goods from the ship to your store.

72. Supposing you land at Wanganui goods for Marton, what does the owner of the goods have to pay ?—3s. wharfage to the Harbour Board, who provide the labour for wheeling the goods into the shed : that is what we charge the Harbour Board 10d. per ton for.

73. What do you charge the owner ?—The ordinary mileage rate from Wanganui to Marton.

74. Then you do not charge the 1s. 6d. ?—No, not in that case, because we perform no special service.

75. *Mr. Myers.*] Supposing you deliver the goods out of your shed ?—Then we charge the special rate of 1s. per ton for handling in our shed.

76. *The Chairman.*] Supposing that you have landed goods at Foxton for Palmerston, what you charge is 2s. ?—Yes.

77. What else do you charge ?—We simply charge the ordinary freight, based on the mileage the goods are carried.

78. Now, do you not do the same thing in Wanganui—namely, if a man pays 3s. you do not charge him anything else but railway freight if you land the goods at Marton ?—The goods are wheeled into the shed on a hand-barrow from the Wanganui Wharf, and that is charged against the Wanganui Harbour Board at 10d. per ton.

79. You charge nothing to the owner but freight from Wanganui to Marton ?—No, there is no charge against him for conveyance from the wharf into the shed. That is paid by the Harbour Board out of their 3s. per ton wharfage.

80. But the haulage from the ship to the shed would cost less than the railway-truck from the ship ?—If you push a truck by hand or by engine it constitutes haulage.

81. I can understand that if you take goods from the steamer into the railway-truck and then take the truck into a shed and then unload from the truck into another truck, that is one thing ; but can you not take the goods from the ship's side and from the truck right on to Palmerston ?—No, because theoretically the man who brings the goods to the railway-shed is supposed to bring them sorted, ready to be loaded and sent to destination, whereas the ship brings them in bulk and puts them out anyhow in 200 or 300 ton lots irrespective of ownership or destination. This necessitates unloading, sorting, and reloading in the railway-sheds.

82. Where do the Wanganui people sort their goods ?—They are sorted on the wharf.

83. Where are they sorted ?—At the ship's side.

84. Why charge the Foxton people more than the Wanganui people ?—Because you have to take the truck from the wharf into the shed, unload it in the shed, and sort out and reload the goods.

85. Why not truck them into the shed the same as at Wanganui ?—We cannot do it in the time. The ships coming in there want the quickest despatch and have to catch the tide. Hand-trucking would be slower than loading into railway-trucks.

86. *Mr. Williams.*] The proper way, according to your evidence, is to truck the goods into the shed from the ship at a cost of 10d. per ton ?—Yes at the cost of the labour. As a matter of fact, that 10d. per ton charged at Wanganui was arranged when we were paying 8s. per day to our men ; now we are paying 10s., and shall have to increase the charge against the Wanganui Board.

87. *Mr. Myers.*] Can that be done at Foxton ?—Not satisfactorily ; it would be slow and delay ships.

88. Who is the owner of the goods-shed at Wanganui ?—The Railway Department. The bulk of ships' goods are local delivery. Conditions are different to Foxton. We could not have the Foxton Harbour Board loading our trucks from ships. All sorts of disputes would occur regarding condition and despatch of goods. The Railway Department must check, and the Foxton Harbour Board would have to deliver the goods from the ship at the railway goods-shed the same as any other consignor.

89. When was the Wanganui Wharf improved ?—It has been improved recently—in fact, the Board are always improving it.

90. In Wanganui there is a big traffic ?—Yes ; it has increased to about 70,000 tons a year.

91. You say that your regulations entitle you to charge 1s. 6d. per ton ?—Undoubtedly they do.

92. And I suppose you regard the matter altogether from a business point of view, and if you lose revenue from one source you have to make it up from another ?—From a business point of view, certainly we have. The Department should not perform costly services for nothing.

93. You do not consider the political aspect of the matter ?—No. I am dealing with the matter from a business point of view, and I say we have no right to give away for nothing anything which is revenue-producing and is returning the Department a certain amount of money every year.