

57. And would the bringing-back of these empties have any effect of delaying your own loads ?
—Yes. We are, of course, constantly having to either put on special trains or select our more urgent traffics for the quicker services ; and if we had to displace a truck with loaded traffic to bring back to the Sanson tram their empty wagons, obviously the public would suffer.

58. Is there anything else you desire to add to what Mr. McVilly has said, and to what you have said, by way of objection to either a junction or a dead-end or terminal siding ?—No. I think the Department's position has been made quite clear. We do not regard this proposal from the standpoint put forward—that is, merely a tramway for serving local purposes. We do not believe for a moment the competition will stop at that, and therefore we regard it as an attack upon our revenue. If it succeeded it would be a dangerous competitor, and if it does not succeed we would have to buy it.

59. And if it does not succeed, is it competing for traffic ?—Yes, certainly, it is competing with us.

60. I come now to another aspect of the matter. Supposing goods come from Wellington or from the South Island to Foxton destined for the Main Trunk line beyond Marton, those goods, of course, have to pass over the State line as far as Himatangi ?—Yes.

61. Who determines whether those goods pass over the Sanson Tram or the railway from Marton to Palmerston : is it the Railway Department or the consignor of the goods ?—The Railway Department, in the ordinary way—if it is not specially consigned.

62. That is what I want to come to—who determines it ?—The owner of the goods can determine it—the consignor or the consignee.

63. *The Chairman.*] I suppose what would happen would be this : the consignor or consignee may say, “I want you to carry our goods to Himatangi.” You could not refuse ?—No.

64. If they have a tramway close at hand they would have to remove the goods at Himatangi on to the tram ?—Yes.

65. *Mr. Myers.*] Then the question as to which routes the goods are to go by is not determined at Himatangi, but at the place where the goods are shipped ?—Yes ; it is not in our hands.

66. And they would be shipped, if this line were extended, either via Palmerston or via Sanson ?
—Yes.

67. There would be a choice of two lines from Himatangi ?—Yes, there would be a choice of routes. A suggestion has been made before the Commission that this new line from Levin to Marton would be useful in relieving the main line. That argument is quite fallacious. We do not contemplate any expenditure on the railway between Levin and Marton, as we are quite satisfied that this section of the railway can carry without delay the existing traffic and the traffic we estimate will be offering within the near future. In my report of 1914, which has been referred to, a sum of, I think, £40,000 has been included for improvements at Palmerston North Station, and it might be argued that some of that expenditure would be obviated by the deviation of trains by the new route, and so relieve the station. But it would have the reverse effect on Palmerston Station, as a matter of fact, because we would have to run trains from Palmerston to connect with the main-line trains via the new loop at both Marton and Levin in order to compensate for the trains which were diverted from the Palmerston-Feilding Section of railway. Instead of the present number of trains running through Palmerston North, which have not to be handled, we should have a pendulating service from Palmerston North to both Marton and Levin. This means two trains for one at present. Palmerston would become to a greater extent a terminal station instead of being a through station. Additional sidings would have to be put in, and provision would require to be made for shunting and standing these connecting trains. Therefore nothing would be saved at Palmerston North Station by diverting through trains to the new route via Sanson.

68. Supposing the present traffic on the main line between Paekakariki and Marton was doubled and trebled, what do you say as to the necessity for the new line between Levin and Marton ?—We shall be able to deal with the traffic adequately on this section. The only expense which might be necessary with increased traffic would be for an increase in the number of crossing-places. I indicated in the 1914 report the number of duplications necessary in the near future ; there was no suggestion of any duplication between Marton and Paekakariki.

69. Is there anything else you can usefully add to help the Commission ?—I think not.

70. *Mr. Weston.*] You said you were manager at the Hull Docks ?—Yes, the docks and railway.

71. Had you a station there ?—Yes, most certainly.

72. You were manager for the Hull Docks ?—I was manager for the whole of the Yorkshire portion of the North-eastern Railways, which included the Hull Docks.

73. You had docks in the river there : did the whole of these docks belong to the railway company ?—No ; there is one that did not belong to us. We had seven docks.

74. Who owned the other ?—The Hull and Barnsley Railway Company.

75. Were there any other wharves there except those ?—No.

76. And in order to work those docks you obtained authority by special Act ?—No ; we bought out a moribund dock company.

77. Which I presume had a special Act authorizing them to construct and manage docks and to charge ?—Yes, and we took over those powers.

78. Can you tell me whether in that Act there was any limit imposed by the Legislature upon the charges you could make for wharfages ?—Yes, they were all classified and defined.

79. They were all scheduled ?—Yes, there was a maximum rate fixed.

80. Are you acquainted with the principle on which those maximum rates were fixed ?—They were fixed, I presume, so as to give a paying return for the investment in dock property. There was no difference in the principle for charging or fixing the rates at the docks built by a railway and docks purchased by a railway from a Harbour Board. The other dock which I mentioned was built by the Hull and Barnsley Company, and their rates classification was the same as the North-eastern Railways.