

is opened for a short time, until the settlers have got up their fencing material and stores, which always follow fresh settlement.

174. Then, the number of passengers carried on the line makes a very small contribution to the general revenue?—Our passenger traffic forms about one-third of our revenue.

175. That is the general average?—Yes.

176. A special train runs from Christchurch to Dunedin, carrying passengers only?—Yes.

177. Do you know what are the financial or mercantile results of that traffic? Does the passenger traffic pay upon that line?—The passenger traffic by this train pays, as all passengers who are able to do so will travel by it, it being the fastest train we have. The average bookings from Christchurch to Dunedin by that train will amount to about £15 per diem. That is only from Christchurch, in addition to which we have bookings from other stations; a large through-parcel traffic, and we also have a wagon for urgent goods.

178. The inference is that a purely passenger line, carrying passengers only between Dunedin and Christchurch, would be a profitable line?—There is quite room for the one train that we run.

179. What is the whole length of the line from Christchurch to Dunedin?—230 miles.

180. Supposing that a line were extended from Christchurch North to Picton, or a point on Cook Strait, which would be purely a passenger line, what would be the probability of such a line as that paying its expenses—what would be the probable number of passengers travelling upon it?—In the present state of the country I should say that the traffic would be almost nominal. It would depend entirely upon the settlement that might spring up through increased railway facilities.

181. Have you any idea of the probable goods traffic upon such a line?—I do not know the country sufficiently well to give an opinion.

182. *Mr. Thomson.*] Have you taken into calculation the number of passengers per mile that would make a train pay?—It depends upon the distance the passengers are booked.

183. On 150 miles how many through passengers a day would pay for the train running?—Given 5s. as the cost per train mile, which is slightly above our average, the cost per train would be £37 10s. The fare, according to scale, would be £1 17s. 6d., first-class single. It would therefore take twenty through passengers per train, or more than three times the number booked daily from Christchurch to Dunedin.

184. Do you know how many passengers on an average go daily between Lyttelton and Wellington by sea at present?—The Collector of Customs has kindly given me the following return showing the number:—

Return showing the Total Number of Passengers to and from Wellington from 1st October, 1881, to 30th September, 1882, inclusive.

"Inwards" from Wellington.			"Outwards" to Wellington.		
Male adults	...	4,707	Male adults	...	2,985
Female adults	...	1,312	Female adults	...	746
Children	...	277	Children	...	217
Total	...	<u>6,296</u>	Total	...	<u>3,948</u>

There is considerable difficulty in arriving at a correct list of passengers coastwise. The discrepancy outwards is to be accounted for thus: Passengers with return tickets issued at Wellington and northern ports are often not reported on "outward" passenger list here, as the agents make out their lists from ticket-book blocks of tickets issued hence; further, the passengers arriving by last train from Christchurch rush on board and obtain tickets and pay fares on board the steamer, never going near the agent's office, and this after the vessel has cleared the Customs. There is also an excess of passengers who settle here from Australia, but, though through passengers from Australia, yet arrive coastwise as the steamers arrive here coastwise.

ALEX. ROSE,
Collector of Customs.

185. Can you tell us the tonnage of goods?—The tonnage of goods between Lyttelton and Wellington by steamer for last financial year was—Inwards, 2,609 tons; outwards, 2696.

186. Can you tell us the freight of coal between Westport or Greymouth and Lyttelton, or can you ascertain it?—Average rates, Westport to Lyttelton, 13s.; Greymouth to Lyttelton, 18s. per ton.

187. What would be the land freight by rail over the mountains from Westport or Greymouth for, say, 140 to 160 miles?—On coal per ton, 140 miles, 11s. 6d.; 150 miles, 11s. 10d.; 160 miles, 12s. 2d. I have here some figures showing the import of coal and timber at Lyttelton during the last financial year. The import of New Zealand timber was 18,900,586 superficial feet; Australian timber, 2,074,605 superficial feet; foreign timber, 62,300 superficial feet. The total import of timber into Lyttelton during the last year was 21,037,491 feet. The total quantity of timber received into Christchurch from Southland during the last six months was 76,800 feet. In a good many instances this timber is cut in sizes to special orders—I mean the Southland timber.

188. *Mr. Fulton.*] How far does it pay to carry timber along the railway line as against sea-borne? It depends so much upon cost of sea freight that I cannot say. There is one important factor that the Commission should not lose sight of in dealing with this question, and that is that one advantage in railway carriage against sea carriage is this: that the millowners load the trucks at their mill-sidings, and the timber is then taken straight to its destination. In shipping it from one port to another there would be double handling, besides the railage charges at the port of export and port of import, and wharfage dues.

189. Does any timber come by rail from other places than Southland?—Yes, we have had considerable trade with Waimate, in the south of Canterbury, and Oxford in the north; and there are other points at which we get small supplies.

190. Can you give us the quantities that come from other places?—Yes. During the past six months, Waimate, 325,200 feet, 668 trucks firewood, &c.; Oxford, 681,800 feet, 687 trucks firewood. The total quantity of coal imported into Lyttelton during the last financial year was—Foreign, 38,156 tons; native, 11,251 tons. The latter was mostly Westport coal.