

from the Wanganui people by Proclamation. As a *quid pro quo* they agreed to build the wharf and pass all revenue accruing from the wharf back to the Harbour Board, less the cost of handling. The same thing applied at Patea. It was for the convenience of the Railway Department that the Government built the wharf upon the railway-site. The wharf built by the Provincial Government was upon the Patea side of the river. There are two wharves there now. The Patea people collected all the revenue from their wharf, and the same conditions applied as at the Wanganui Wharf. Here in Foxton the Railway Department, for the convenience of getting coal, ran the railway on to the waterfront.

28. In the old days did they land much coal?—The greater portion was landed five or seven years ago, but the banks have been increasing lately, and the boats have refused to bring in coal cargoes.

29. That is due to the gradual silting-up of the river?—Yes, those banks in the river.

30. In 1880 how was it that the Government did not treat Foxton in the same way as they treated Wanganui, Patea, and Waitara?—I could not say, except that there was not fight enough in the people.

31. At the present time I think this Commission is the outcome of the work of five members that waited on the Minister?—Yes; all the representatives of the districts went from Taihape and Rangitikei right down to Paekakariki.

32. Do I understand that the local authorities in the district extending from Taihape to Marton, and back as far east as Dannevirke, and Paekakariki are united that you should have control of this wharf?—Yes.

33. You have been Chairman of the Board since 1908, when it was constituted?—No. I came in 1910.

34. With regard to the effect upon the railway traffic, you made a point before the parliamentary Committee that what they would lose in long-distance carriage they would gain in short-distance carriage between other places?—Yes. I tried to get out of the local Stationmasters the class of engines and haulage-power, taking the Wellington-Longburn run and the Foxton-Longburn run, and from what I could glean I think the Railway Department would be making a better profit, taking Class A, which is general goods, out of 16s. a ton between Foxton and Palmerston than they would out of 45s. between Wellington and Palmerston.

35. If properly worked out the net profit on this line would more than equal the net profit on eighty-eight miles of haulage from Wellington to Palmerston?—Yes.

36. Are there any material buildings on the line?—No.

37. Are there many employees on this line between here and Palmerston?—Only two.

38. And the engines and carriages used are not up to date?—No. There is one point I should like to mention, that a year or two ago I approached the owners of the Canterbury Steamship Company to know if they would send their boats here provided we could give them a certain draught of water. They said that provided we could give them a depth of 11 ft. they would do so, and the report we have from Mr. Howarth gives 14 ft. and 15 ft. if the improvmenets are carried out.

39. You wished to get boats of the same size as those going to Wanganui?—Yes.

40. Would that be an advantage to the port to have boats from southern ports?—Yes, it would save 7s. or 8s. a ton.

41. With regard to finance, you have been very keen to get sole control of this wharf. Can you see your way to deal on the terms suggested by the Railway Department?—No, we could not. I got an offer from the late Mr. Millar at one time, and he specified that we should form a rating-area. I went to the different districts interested—

42. *The Chairman.*] What was the rating-area for?—The rating-area was to get £20,000 for the wharf, but each local body turned it down. They thought it was the natural heritage of the district, and they did not see why they should pay the Government £20,000 for what cost the Government nothing. I would be prepared to see to the financial part if we were put upon the same level as the Patea and Wanganui people were.

43. *Mr. Weston.*] That would mean that the Government would still get the coal free of wharfage?—Yes. Another point I should like to mention is that the Government at the time treated the place very badly. They did not recognize this place at all. They took the foreshore by Proclamation, and never gave us a *quid pro quo* the same as they did in the case of Patea and Wanganui.

44. *The Chairman.*] You say you have not been treated in the same way as other districts?—Yes.

45. They have got concessions in regard to the wharves which you have not?—Yes.

46. *Mr. Myers.*] You will agree, I suppose, that there is no reason why the people in Foxton should not make their own railway pay from here to Palmerston?—The people in Foxton were not consulted about the railway when it was made. It was made as part and parcel of the general railways of the North Island irrespective of what portion may have benefited.

47. You are getting a benefit from the railway?—No more benefit than other people in any other part of the country.

48. You say if the Foxton-Palmerston Railway does not pay apart from the wharfage, you do not see why the Foxton people should make up the loss?—I certainly say not.

49. *The Chairman.*] You say it was not a branch line made for Foxton alone?—Yes, it was part of the main line.

50. *Mr. Myers.*] You say you have inquired into Patea and Wanganui wharf matters?—Yes.

51. Have you extended your inquiries to Nelson?—I tried to get some information from Nelson, but the only information I could get was that when the Nelson Harbour Board was brought into existence they omitted a clause in the Act to allow them finance. There were no powers to finance.