

88. That is a fee in addition to the wharfage?—Yes; and then if the cargo is left for two or three days after discharge they charge storage. They store all the stuff out in the railway-yard and we have to pay storage. If the Railway Department would give us proper facilities for working the port there would be no handling, because we would have a boat every day for the receiving of the goods.

89. You have a siding and also a shed there?—Yes.

90. If cargo is consigned to Foxton for you have you to pay any charge to bring the truck from the railway-station to your ship?—The Department is now charging us haulage. If the goods are consigned to Foxton the truck is left in the railway-yard. They hitch a horse on to it and charge us 1s. per ton for bringing it alongside the ship.

91. We have heard something about a terminal charge?—It is only a charge made against a certain class of goods coming to the port—Class E goods. Why there is a terminal charge I have not been able to find out.

92. You were in Foxton when they did the redecking of the wharf?—Yes.

93. And I suppose you saw the condition of the underwork when the old decking was taken off?—Yes.

94. What have you to say from what you yourself saw and from what you heard from the men doing the work?—I should say the under-structure required more attention than the decking. The piles are in such a condition that it is only a matter of a few years before they will require to be replaced.

95. During the last six years has any money been spent by the Department between here and the Heads?—Not a sixpence.

96. *Mr. Myers.*] I understand that one of your reasons why you think this wharf should be taken over by the Harbour Board is that the shed-accommodation facilities are lacking?—I did not say that.

97. You made a great deal of it: is that one of your reasons?—I said the Railway Department should increase the accommodation of the goods-shed in view of the amount of cargo coming to the port.

98. A good deal has been said in regard to the want of shed accommodation?—Yes.

99. And I ask you is that one of the reasons why you say the wharf would be better in the hands of the Harbour Board?—No, I did not say that.

100. You do not say that?—I would be quite satisfied if the Department would act as the Harbour Board and do the work, and for them to stop there.

101. That is not what I am asking you?—We do not want to push the Department out if they will do their duty.

102. *The Chairman.*] If they will make you a harbour and deep river you do not care whether it is the Railway Department that does it?—No.

103. *Mr. Myers.*] What has all this shed accommodation to do with the subject-matter of this Commission?—I am not discussing the subject-matter of the Commission. I am simply answering questions.

104. Supposing the Harbour Board did have the wharf, how could the Harbour Board improve the shed accommodation?—The Railway Department would have to improve the shed accommodation.

105. Then what you are asking is that the wharf should be taken over by the Harbour Board, and that the shed accommodation should still be a matter for the Railway Department?—Certainly.

106. And that the Railway Department should increase the shed accommodation?—Yes, because they would make money out of it by doing so.

107. I suppose you know that even in a place like Wellington the shed accommodation is sometimes insufficient?—Yes, practically all over the country. Still I do think thirty-five years is too long to wait for an improvement.

108. And I suppose the difficulty during the last year or so has been somewhat increased in consequence of the war and the shortage of tonnage?—You mean shortage of tonnage?

109. For instance, you yourselves have got to block your store up with hemp which under ordinary circumstances would have been sent away long ago?—That does not affect the inward cargo coming through the railway goods-shed.

110. You say the trouble is in regard to inward cargo—the want of accommodation?—Yes.

111. But you do not suggest even if the Harbour Board had this wharf that the Board should or would be required to afford any shed accommodation?—No, not unless the Department passed the shed over to them.

112. Is there anything else you would like?—I do not ask them. They should do that if they want the Board to increase it.

113. Will you tell me who are the persons or companies who own the ships that trade to this port?—There are the South Taranaki Shipping Company, the Anchor Company, Levin and Co., and Johnston and Co.

114. How many steamers trade to this port altogether at the present time?—The “Queen of the South,” “Kennedy,” and “Awahou.” The “Waverley” has been consistently running here until lately. She has gone to Patea. The “Putiki” and “Kaitoa” have been stopped by bad conditions, so that at the present time the trading is confined to three vessels, the “Queen of the South,” the “Kennedy,” and the “Awahou”; but the owners of the “Kennedy” are dodging the port as much as they can on account of the risk they run.

115. Notwithstanding all the difficulties you speak about, the work at the port has very greatly increased?—Yes.

116. Do you not know that before 1907 or 1908 the shipping of this port was kept back very much owing to competition from the Wellington-Manawatu Railway?—I was not here then.