

6. *The Chairman.*] I suppose the mass of the trade goes by rail?—The greater quantity of it goes by rail at the present time from those various stations. That is the total number of bales from those stations. Some may have gone via Foxton. I have taken those stations which could be easier served by Foxton.

7. *Mr. Weston.*] What is the great difficulty with the port at Foxton at the present time?—The unreliability of getting goods away.

8. For instance, in the case of wool you have to ship by a particular steamer?—Yes; it is sent to Wellington to catch a particular steamer, and if it is sent to Foxton it may be hung up there for a week or a fortnight.

9. You cannot really depend upon the boats getting down the river and over the bar?—Yes.

10. *Mr. Williams.*] Is that a new thing?—It has got gradually worse than it was.

11. *Mr. Myers.*] Do I understand that some of the goods in this statement of yours have gone by rail all the way to Wellington?—Yes.

12. And some have gone to Foxton and then by sea?—Yes.

13. *The Chairman.*] Would any goods, say, from Dannevirke, Woodville, Huntville, or Taihape go to Foxton?—Yes, I think some would, but a small quantity. By far the greater bulk of this wool has gone by rail to Wellington.

14. *Mr. Myers.*] You can say that when the Manawatu Railway Company was in existence the whole of it used to go by rail?—No, I should say not.

15. Do you know?—No, I do not.

16. Do you hold any official position here, such as Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce or anything of that sort?—No, not at the present time. I have held the position.

17. I understand what you people in Palmerston want eventually is a port at the mouth of the river, do you not?—Well, I am not prepared to enter into that. We want better facilities for shipping.

18. Is it not a fact that what the Palmerston people are aiming at is a port at the mouth of the river?—I say we want a port at Foxton. I am not prepared to say at which point.

19. Is it not a fact that this question of a port at the mouth of the river has been discussed at Palmerston over and over again?—People have talked about it, but it has not been officially discussed.

20. You have had no data to aid you in coming to a decision as to whether that is feasible or not?—No. As far as I am aware the matter has not been publicly discussed.

21. Has the question been discussed in Palmerston as to whether or not Palmerston should be placed within a Foxton Harbour rating district?—Yes, it has been.

22. And I think the Palmerston people have always been averse?—I think not. If there was a good port at Foxton I do not think the Palmerston people would be averse to being rated.

23. But you must have a rating district before you have your port if you are going to incur very much expense down there?—Certainly, they would require to know what expense was to be incurred before agreeing to be rated.

24. Is it not a fact that the Foxton people have asked you over and over again to join in a rating district and that the Palmerston people have always refused?—No.

25. Have you ever been asked by the Foxton people?—We have not been asked definitely to agree or not to agree—not asked officially.

26. Not by Mr. Hennessy?—I think not.

27. You are not a member of the Borough Council?—I am not.

28. So that you cannot tell us whether this question of a rating district has come before the Borough Council?—No.

FRANCIS STRACHAN GOLDINGHAM SWORN and examined. (No. 13.)

1. *Mr. Weston.*] You are a member of the firm of Goldingham and Beckett (Limited), Palmerston?—Yes.

2. I think you have been asked to give evidence on behalf of yourself and Barraud and Abraham with regard to general merchandise, groceries, benzine, kerosene, cigarettes, and wire?—Yes.

3. You are the only two wholesale firms carrying on business in those lines in Palmerston North?—Yes.

4. Though, there are some retailers who import the same class of goods direct themselves?—Yes.

5. What do you find generally with regard to those goods: is it cheaper for you to import through Foxton than to import by rail from Wellington?—For goods coming from Wellington it is cheaper to import via Foxton for classes A, B, C, D goods.

6. What is the difficulty in the way of obtaining all those classes of goods through Foxton?—The irregularity of the steamers.

7. For instance, if you have an order for goods of that class to be delivered, say, at Feilding, or other portions of the district, you cannot guarantee a punctual delivery through Foxton?—No, not now.

8. *Mr. Williams.*] Does that imply that you could at one time?—Yes, I think you could be much more punctual a few years ago.

9. Could you give any reason for that?—Yes, the boats are very much more frequently stuck up in the river than formerly.

10. *Mr. Weston.*] This is a comparative list of the freights and railages you have compiled with regard to certain classes of goods [produced—Exhibit P]?—Yes.

11. There are two other classes of goods—flour and sugar?—Yes.