

66. I suppose that is the only time it is possible to get coal cargoes in?—Yes, on the spring tides.

67. In your position as a Borough Councillor, can you say what the feeling in Palmerston is with regard to a harbour at Foxton and as to a rating-area?—I think I am justified in saying that 75 per cent. of the commercial men of Palmerston, and also the whole of the Borough Council, are in favour of Foxton controlling its own destinies, and we are quite prepared to take any risk in connection with it.

68. *Mr. Williams.*] You are prepared to join in a rating-area?—Yes, quite prepared.

THOMAS RAYNOR HODDER sworn and examined. (No. 15.)

1. *Mr. Weston.*] You are a member of the firm of Hodder and Tolley (Limited), and president of the Palmerston North Chamber of Commerce?—Yes.

2. Would you as president of the Chamber of Commerce state shortly the attitude the district is taking up towards the Foxton Harbour?—I would like to say that for many years past the matter of the Foxton Harbour has been before the Chamber, and we have had many resolutions passed by the Chamber with regard to it. I will read what was perhaps the last: "That this Chamber reaffirms its former decision that in the public interest the Foxton Wharf should belong to the Foxton Harbour Board, inasmuch as the present position is a decided obstacle to the progress of this town and district owing to the fact that the profits derived from it have not been expended in terms of the Act by the Railway Department to improve the Manawatu River as a port; that the executive of the Chamber be requested to prepare evidence in support of the above resolution and submit same to the Commission."

3. You consider that under the Harbours Act all the wharfages should be put back into the harbour?—Yes. I may say that this matter has been before the Chamber for many years, and we business people in Palmerston consider that the Port of Foxton is the natural heritage of this west coast. The business people have waited upon us from time to time to get us to bring pressure to bear upon the Foxton Harbour Board to try and acquire the wharf. We have done that from time to time, but have not met with a very great deal of success. We consider that the Government should virtually have handed over the Foxton Wharf for next to nothing, considering the amount of revenue that they have derived in times past from this particular port. Every one in this room must know, sir, that the Port of Foxton was the only port with this west coast many years ago. The first tram-line that was ever made on this coast was made there from Foxton to Palmerston. The first line of rails that was ever brought into this North Island was brought to Foxton and laid from Foxton to Palmerston North. Originally it was a tram-line. The first railway-engine ever brought into the North Island was brought via the Foxton Port. It was not very much of an engine, certainly. It was known as "The Skunk" and "The Coffee-pot," because it used to be two days on the road, but still it was the first engine and did good service. All the totara bush that surrounded this district of Palmerston North, Terrace End, and Hokowitu was sawn and delivered via Foxton to Wellington for the building, I have no doubt, of the wharf and public buildings there. It was the only means of communication by which the Government were able to place the immigrants, such as Scandinavians and Danes, that came to this coast. It has been the means of swelling the coffers of the Government Department for years and years past, and we as the business men and citizens of Palmerston North and district think that the Government, seeing that they have derived very much revenue from this particular port, should see their way to not only allow the Harbour Board to acquire the harbour and work it, but in addition to give them a good endowment as well.

4. *Mr. Myers.*] I suppose you know that the Railway Department has made a lot of money out of the traffic between Levin and Marton?—Of recent years, yes.

5. Do you not think that the Railway Department now, by the same process of reasoning you have given us, should make the Main Trunk line of railway from Levin to Marton?—I am not offering any opinion in regard to the railway.

6. But I am asking you?—I am speaking on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce with regard to the Foxton Harbour Board.

7. Has not the Chamber of Commerce also considered this question of the proposed line from Levin to Marton?—The Chamber of Commerce has considered it.

8. And does not the Chamber oppose it?—The Chamber of Commerce does oppose it.

9. Do you not see that the same process of reasoning may apply to the one as to the other?—No, not altogether.

10. Well, is it not a fact that if the Chamber of Commerce, which consists of a number of mercantile men, takes the view which it does, it is only the view of those mercantile men?—Not altogether. The business people of Palmerston North and the Chamber of Commerce consider the interests not only of the people of Palmerston, but the whole district.

11. And supposing the merchants do save 1s. or 2s. per ton in freight, who gets it—the merchants or the general public?—The general public benefit.

ALBERT JAMES KELLOW further examined. (No. 16.)

1. *Mr. Weston.*] The question was raised after you gave your evidence in Foxton as to how it was that, although you said the port was not so workable as it had been in the past, still the amount of stuff coming in and going out of the port was growing. Can you explain to the Commission how that paradox occurs?—It is not a paradox. In years gone by the vessels used to come into Foxton, and you can see by the figures that they carried 10,000 tons in twelve