

118. Now, the whole of the Manawatu country is well served with road, is it not?—I suppose it is. We get frequent complaints about the insufficiency of roads. As time goes on the country becomes opened up, and the settlers want more roads. The properties are being cut up, and consequently more roads are required.

119. I understand that in your opinion the position is that so far as the proposed deviation of the railway is concerned, you do not believe in it—you are against that?—No, just the other way. You speak of the deviation as distinct from the extension?

120. Yes?—No, I think that is absolutely certain to eventuate.

121. You think that is more necessary than the extension of the tramway?—Not for the Manawatu County. I am giving evidence now as Chairman of the Manawatu County, and therefore evidence on behalf of it.

122. As far as the extension is concerned, you suggest that the extension should take place to Marton or Greatford?—To such place as is thought advisable.

123. What place do you think best?—The best place is just half way between Marton and Greatford, but the connection for an extension of that kind must be at a railway-station, and it is obvious the Government would not allow us to run on to their line unless they had some person to watch the connection. That is a matter for consideration and arrangement.

124. And at the other end you would stay where you are—that is, you connect at Himatangi?—Yes, that remains as it is.

125. *Mr. Myers.*] What rolling-stock has the Manawatu County Council on its tramway?—We have two engines and six wagons of our own, and we interchange. The Government supply us with wagons and we pay rent for them.

126. The wagons you have of your own are very old wagons, are they not?—Five or six years old, perhaps.

127. Were they not old wagons when you purchased them?—I do not remember.

128. But your own wagons are used mainly for the carriage of gravel?—That was our reason for buying them, because the Government supply us with all the wagons we require for the goods, as a rule.

129. So that the Government has allowed you for a consideration the use of its wagons for the carriage of your goods, and it has also given you what amounts to a running-right over the line between Himatangi and Foxton?—Yes. You spoke of the Government charging us a fee, but as a matter of fact, although we are prepared to go on with the present arrangements, we think they get the cream and we get the milk.

130. I suppose you assume that the same condition of things would obtain if you secured the extension that you desire?—I presume so.

131. Your Council would consider that the Government should supply wagons for the carriage of all goods over your line both from Foxton and to and from the Main Trunk line?—I presume so. I do not see why they should not. If they did not we could buy trucks of our own.

132. You would require a good many trucks for the traffic you anticipate?—If there was an enormous traffic there we would provide trucks for it.

133. And even if you bought trucks of your own you would still expect running-right over the Main Trunk line, I suppose?—No, we could not expect that.

134. Then if you had to tranship from your trucks to the Government trucks at the point of junction, would you be any better off?—No; but I should imagine that the Government would not deal with a public body in that way. We do not assume that we would be allowed to go any farther than the deviation in that way.

135. *The Chairman.*] You do not mean that goods from your trucks would be emptied into the Government trucks?—No, we would expect them to take our trucks away over their line.

136. *Mr. Myers.*] And you would expect them to bring the trucks down on your line, unless, of course, you purchased your own trucks?—Why not? I cannot imagine any act of reciprocity in that way being refused. It would be for their benefit.

137. *The Chairman.*] I understand you do not want the mere connection with Greatford, but you want the trucks to go on the main line to the destination?—Yes, just the same as the Manawatu Railway Company did. They interchanged.

138. *Mr. Myers.*] Do you think your County Council could afford to buy trucks up to the Government standard?—Why not? You saw the valuation of our county, and it is only a question of the ratepayers desiring to do so. The difference between our trucks and the Government is that we cannot take them on the Government line because we have not the Westinghouse brake fitted. We bought the trucks for the carriage of gravel only, and do not send them on the Government line for that reason. The fitting of the Westinghouse brake does not mean a great deal of extra expenditure.

139. Am I to understand from the evidence you have given that this tramway extension is not required from the point of view of the dairy industry?—No, except the coal question, which is a very serious one. The goods inward is an important matter, but the question of goods outward is not so important.

140. Now, I notice from these statistics you have put in that the dairying industry has gone ahead in your district?—In that particular district.

141. In the district that would be served by the tramway?—The lower portions of it.

142. But is not that served by the existing railway-line?—Yes, partially, by the present railway-line to Foxton.

143. So that the tramway extension would not be required for that particular area?—Why not? You would go north.