

98. *Mr. Hannay.*] What would be the average rate for produce to the Sanson Railway-station for cartage?—I should think perhaps 3s. per ton.

99. That is within a radius of three or four miles?—Three miles, I think.

100. *Mr. Skerrett.*] I want you to compare the cost of taking chaff via the tram to Himatangi for an average destination of, say, 150 miles as the market for the chaff?—I should say the extra cost would be about 6s. per ton.

101. Would you give me the details of those figures? They would have to go along the tram?—Yes, about 3s. per ton the tram charge, or 15s. per truck.

102. That would put them on the truck at Himatangi?—Yes, assuming the carting would be the same at the starting-point.

103. That is the freight from Himatangi to the destination, 150 miles away?—Yes, that would be 150 miles plus 48—say 200 miles—about £3 5s. per truck. It would work out at about 6s. per ton in favour of the railway. Then the other charge is to Marton, 150 miles, £2 12s. 6d. per truck, making a difference in favour of the railway of 5s. per ton.

104. We have assumed that the cartage from Marton would be the same as the cartage from Sandon?—Yes.

105. Now, it may be suggested that the farmers might use their own teams for the cartage of their chaff?—It is not a payable proposition for farmers to use their own teams, because when the teams are on the road carting they should be on the farm working and preparing for the coming year's crop. Quite half the sowings would be in the autumn, and if the teams are on the road carting they could not be putting in the autumn crop. If they do so they are reducing the area they intended to sow.

106. It has been suggested by *Mr. Myers* that the motor-lorry might be less expensive for that purpose? They are not found practicable. One of the reasons is that they are not so convenient. They do not seem to carry the same load. A motor-lorry will carry from fifty-six to seventy sacks, whereas a wagon will carry anything up to 105 or 110; and there is the difficulty that the farmers do not have a metalled road up to the chaff-stack. The stack is built at the most convenient place on the farm, and we have found that the motor is unable to get round the farm and pick up the load. We had an instance of that quite recently. There was a shortage of chaff in Wanganui, and it was wanted urgently at 8 o'clock the following morning. The same carter who was carting our chaff had a motor-lorry. He carted the stuff from our place, and then put it on the lorry on the metalled road, when it went to Wanganui.

107. In farm production the production of chaff is the most profitable for the railway?—Yes, where the product goes by rail.

108. It is the whole product?—Yes.

109. And is not the same as butter or grass-seed, which goes in a concentrated form?—No.

110. Do you think it is within the sphere of practical farming that the Sandon farmer with this connection could expect to find a market for threshed hay and some substantial portion of his straw?—Yes, it would be practicable.

111. Will you tell me the comparison of the increased cartage in the form of an addition to rental of a man's land?—If it means 10s. per ton extra in the case of Sandon, I take it it would increase the price of that man's land £1 5s. an acre, taking 2½ tons as the basis of his crop, and that is the average basis.

112. What do you estimate would be the production of oaten chaff from this district in a season if there was railway connection at Marton?—I have that on the same basis as you might take a flag station at Bonny Glen. From there it was estimated that 200,000 sacks of chaff came away from that station in one year, and I think it is fair to assume the same would go away from the Sandon district.

113. You are well acquainted with the character of the traffic on this tram-line. I want your opinion as to the effect of the connection with the Government line diverting the traffic from Marton to Wellington and from Palmerston to Wellington through the Port of Foxton?—I think it would affect the present line as regards inward traffic, but I think it would have very little effect on the outward traffic. The main products of the farm would continue to go to Wellington, and not go by steamer. Chaff would never go by steamer, nor fat stock, nor grass-seed; but possibly the reverse would happen with the inward cargo up to a certain point, but in the matter of manures they would go by train.

114. Why does that go by train?—Mainly on account of the handling, and because it is carried at a cheaper rate.

115. Of course that inward trade is an existing fact so far as Pukenui is concerned to-day?—Yes.

116. This extension would only effect a slight increase of that inward trade so as to supply the new district of Rangitikei?—Yes.

117. Do you think the amount of freight that the Government Railways would lose in that way would be considerable or negligible?—Negligible.

118. You do not think it would effect an increase of the outward cargo passing through Foxton?—No, wool will go that way, but not always. It is largely a question of catching the sales in Wellington. I think that would remain about the same.

119. I think in a letter you prepared you gave a summary of the advantages?—Yes.

120. Would you mind reading that?—It is a summary dated the 25th July, 1913. “(1) Adjoining districts specially adapted for exchange of produce to mutual advantage; (2) fat stock required from lower to upper districts, including Auckland; (3) store stock required from lower to upper districts; (4) by-products, straw and hay, from lower to upper; (5) by-products, firewood and fencing-material, from upper to lower; (6) decrease in cost of road-maintenance by extension of railway; (7) promote traffic at present non-existent between districts; (8) permit Sandon districts to secure fair proportion of great market in the north for grain, chaff, and grass-seed; (9) estimated increase grain and chaff,