

216. *Mr. Hannay.*] You say you cannot cart a ton of chaff more than five miles?—What we say is that over five miles from railway stops the production of it.

217. Do you suggest that the Government should build a railway or that a railway should be built if farmers are more than five miles distant?—No, I do not suggest that. If you give them access they will be able to grow it. If you give them that connection you could take five miles on each side of that strip, and you would get a very large area.

218. *Mr. Skerrett.*] I understood that in your evidence in chief you compared the freight from Marton and from Sandon of two farmers who were in the same position relatively to the railway-line and to the tramway-line?—Yes, that is so.

219. And you showed by your figures that the Sandon farmer had to pay 5s. or 6s. per ton more in freight to deliver chaff at the assumed destination, 150 miles beyond Marton?—Yes.

220. I understand that chaff is always sold in this district delivered on the truck: that is the practice?—Yes.

221. So that the farmer takes the responsibility of cutting and bagging?—Yes.

222. Does he supply the bags?—He does in some cases. Assuming the price to be £3 10s., that would be the price to the farmer, not including sacks.

223. *Mr. Robert Wilson*, who is a director of *Wilson and Co.*, is a son of *Sir James Wilson*, but he is not in the country at present?—No, he is in training in England. The firm of *Wilson and Co.* are no relation or connection with the *Wilson Brothers* mentioned as having land for subdivision.

224. I understand that at one time cargoes of grain did come through Foxton?—Yes.

225. Do you know why they ceased?—Because of the difficulty of working the bar, and also because the steamers carrying that particular grain are bigger than they were then—a better class of boat.

226. I understand sheep-farmers during drought seasons prefer to drive their sheep, in order to procure grazing?—Yes. A few of them prefer it to-day for that reason.

227. *Mr. Myers.*] We have heard it costs 3s. to cart chaff from Sandon to Himatangi. I would like to know what it costs per ton from Himatangi to Greatford, whatever the distance is?—Practically 25s. per truck for 5 tons—that is, 5s. per ton.

ALFRED KINGSLEY DREW sworn and examined. (No. 26.)

1. *Mr. Skerrett.*] What are you?—County Clerk and tramway-manager for the Manawatu County Council.

2. You are manager for the county Himatangi-Sanson Tramway?—Yes.

3. How long have you occupied those positions?—Nine years.

4. Will you be kind enough to tell the Commission first of all the distances along the tramway?—From Himatangi to Sanson, approximately fourteen miles; from Sanson to Pukenui, the present terminus, approximately four miles.

5. And what is the estimated distance of the proposed extension from Pukenui to a point at or near Marton?—On the suggested route it would be about five miles. There has been no definite point settled.

6. What is the distance by road from Bull's to Greatford?—Four miles.

7. Your nearest point from the terminus of the tram-line at Pukenui to Marton is just over eight miles?—Yes.

8. Describe briefly the construction of the tramway?—Commencing at Himatangi we have approximately a mile of 40 lb. steel rails, put down about four years ago, when the new rails were imported from England. They were put on new totara sleepers when the line was relaid.

9. What is the spacing of the sleepers on this section?—The ordinary Government standard. I may state that this line is absolutely under Government inspection, and we have got to keep it up to a certain standard. It is inspected by the Railway Department's Inspector of Permanent-way every three months. For the next five miles and a quarter we have 28 lb. iron rails, and the sleepers are totara. They also are kept up to standard by being renewed with the best rails taken out when we relay a section with 40 lb. rails. The balance of the line is composed of 40 lb. steel rails, with a few 40 lb. iron rails (I think about a mile and a half of 40 lb. iron rails), the balance being 40 lb. steel rails.

10. How long have the steel rails been laid?—The last rails that we actually laid were imported from England, came to hand in March or April, 1915, and put down. At the present time the Council have 50 tons of 40 lb. steel rails which have been purchased from the May Morn Timber Estates—good second-hand rails.

11. And you say the whole spacing of the sleepers generally conforms to the Government standard?—Yes.

12. Could you give an indication of the cost of this tramway?—The total cost approximately stands in our books at £25,000.

13. And what is the total amount of the loans raised in connection with the construction of the tramway?—The original loan was one of £2,229; then there was a sum of £3,000 which was borrowed from the Government and paid back in instalments; then there was another loan of £7,139, and another of £930. In addition to those loans there have been sums approximately totalling £7,000, which have been advanced out of the rates and revenue of the county.

14. What do you make the total amount of loans?—£13,298.

15. Does that cost include the rolling-stock?—No. The cost of the rolling-stock has not been met out of those loans at all. The £25,000 includes all rolling-stock.

16. Does that include all purchases made out of profits?—It includes the cost of material.