

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

EVIDENCE TAKEN BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, 15TH AUGUST, 1867.

The Hon. Mr. Holmes called in and examined.

1. *Hon. Major Richmond, C.B.*] Is it the object of the mover of this Committee to bring forward information and evidence not before known to the General Government, for the purpose of inducing the Government to withdraw their sanction to the undertaking?—Such was the object for which the Committee was moved. *Hon. Mr. Holmes.*
15th August, 1867.

2. Has a contract been entered into for the undertaking referred to?—No contract has been entered into.

FRIDAY, 16TH AUGUST, 1867.

Mr. Patterson, C.E., called in and examined.

3. *Hon. Major Richardson.*] You are, I believe, a Member of the Institute of Civil Engineers, and have professionally examined the Oreti and the Mataura lines of railway?—I am a Member of the Institute of Civil Engineers, and have examined professionally the Oreti line, but not the Mataura line. *Mr. Patterson, C.E.*
16th August, 1867.

4. *Hon. Mr. Holmes.*] Can you give an approximate estimate of the cost in money of completing the Oreti Railway, uniform in gauge and quality with the Bluff and Invercargill line?—At the request of the Provincial Government of Southland, I made an examination of the Oreti Railway about fifteen months ago, and reported to the Government the probable expense of completing the line to Winton, about nineteen miles north from Invercargill. At that time I furnished a report and estimate of the probable cost of completing the line to Winton, upon the same gauge as the Bluff Harbour and Invercargill Railway, with iron rails, so that the same class of plant might be used upon both lines; but I did not propose to complete the Oreti Railway in exactly the same manner as the Bluff and Invercargill line. The estimate I then furnished to Government for completing the line to Winton was £50,000. I would now increase that estimate by about £5,000, as some of the materials then lying on the ground, which might have been used, would now be useless. I do not know precisely the cost of the permanent way of the Bluff and Invercargill Railway, but I should think that to finish the Winton Railway, with the same class of permanent way as on the Bluff Railway, would cost a further sum of about £20,000, or a total of £75,000.

5. Does your estimate include the renewal of the wood works of the completed part of the Oreti line, and also the timber in store for the completion of the remainder of the permanent way?—I would propose an entire reconstruction of the present permanent way, dispensing entirely with longitudinal timber baulks, and substituting iron rails, fastened to timber sleepers laid transversely; but I propose to use the cross sleepers at present laid on the road, so far as they would be available for that purpose, as well as those already provided but not hitherto laid.

6. *Hon. Mr. Menzies.*] Does your estimate of £55,000, for the completion of the Oreti Railway, contemplate the use of iron rail of 35lbs.?—No, of iron rails, weighing 56lbs. per yard, which would be sufficiently heavy to allow the same class of stock as on the Bluff Harbour Railway to be used.

7. What would the permanent way, with rails of 56lbs., cost, delivered at the Bluff?—The iron for the permanent way would cost about £1,000 per mile, delivered at the Bluff.

8. The permanent way costing £1,000 per mile—the whole cost being about £2,600 per mile—upon what works would the balance of about £1,600 per mile, be expended?—In addition to the iron for the permanent way, a large amount would be required for sleepers; and the line, with the exception of about one-fourth, would require ballasting. Altogether, I estimate the cost of the permanent way at £45,000; the remainder of the amount being the cost of completion of earthwork, renewal of culverts and bridges, completion of fencing, and sundry other works, including station accommodation and expense of supervision.

9. *Hon. Mr. Holmes.*] Does your estimate include rolling stock, stations, and sheds?—It includes stations and sheds, but not rolling-stock.

10. How much would the engines, carriages, and trucks for that line cost?—I think a sum of about £8,000 would be sufficient, if new stock was required; but when I reported on this subject to the Government, I was aware that the engine stock provided for the Bluff Railway would be sufficient to work the Oreti Railway as well, for some time to come at all events; and also that they had provided other rolling stock, which might also be made partially available for the same purpose.

11. Apart from the ordinary working expenses, what would be the annual cost per mile of keeping in repair the rolling stock and the permanent way?—I cannot give a definite answer, because the cost would depend on the amount of traffic. The cost of maintenance, exclusive of rolling-stock, would probably amount to about £100 per mile.