

*Dr. Knight.*  
Continued.

WEDNESDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER, 1867.

PRESENT :

Mr. Hankinson,  
Mr. Murison,  
Mr. McNeill,

Major Heaphy, V.C.  
Mr. Wood,

Mr. Stevens in the Chair.

Dr. Knight called in and examined.

57. *Mr. McNeill.*] Does it not appear, if the scheme of selection be adopted, that advantage is being taken of the position occupied by runholders of the Province to force them into becoming purchasers to the extent of nearly £200,000?—200,000 acres would probably be taken out of runs, and to this extent the runholders would be interfered with; but whether they would elect to purchase to that extent or not is a question on which I am unable to form an opinion.

58. *Mr. Stevens.*] Have you formed any opinion of the capacity of Southland for bearing local taxation to meet the annual cost of maintaining these two railways?—I am of opinion that £10,000 per annum could be raised for the purpose by local taxation; but this sum I should think is in excess of what would be required.

WEDNESDAY, 11TH SEPTEMBER, 1867.

PRESENT :

Mr. Murison,  
Mr. Cox,  
Mr. McNeill,

Mr. Hankinson,  
Major Heaphy, V.C.  
Mr. Wood,

Mr. Stevens in the Chair.

Mr. Wood, M.G.A., called in and examined.

*W. Wood, Esq.*

11th September, 1867.

59. *Mr. Hankinson.*] What grounds have you for believing that the cost of completing the Oreti Railway could be reduced below the minimum stated by Mr. Patterson at £55,000, with the same gauge as the Bluff and Invercargill Railway?—I do not state my own opinion, but evidence taken before a Select Committee of the Southland Provincial Council, of which I was a member, when a railway contractor stated that he was prepared to complete the Oreti line in accordance with existing specifications for £50,000 or 50,000 acres of land. The present railway engineer in Southland also informed the Executive Government of Southland, to which I belonged, that it could be completed for considerable less than £50,000 by a departure from those specifications—one item of reduction being the Winton passengers and goods shed on which he thought a reduction might be made of £2,500, the original item being £3,000.

60. *Mr. McNeill.*] When did the Committee you mention sit?—I think about last March.

61. When was the survey made which was the basis of the plans and specifications upon which the contractor based his estimate of £50,000?—I think a short time before.

62. Are you aware that the present Superintendent, in a letter dated 17th August, 1867, states that no survey has been made on which an accurate estimate can be based, but that mere preliminary surveys costing from £20 to £30 had been made?—I am aware that surveys have been made in the first instance for making the railway which ended in only making the earthworks, since which another survey has been made, but I do not know whether it is sufficiently accurate to be taken as a basis for making plans and specifications.