

With reference to the erection of railway telegraph along this line and others under contract by you, I also suggest that it will be better that this should be done in the same way. I quite recognize the fact that the telegraph is to be constructed and paid for as station accommodation under your several contracts; but, considering the nature of this work, and the liability of serious inconvenience to the public service of the colony which may be caused from a variety of circumstances contingent on the erection of these lines, I purpose, if you agree to the same, that the Telegraph Department should do the work, that accounts be kept, and that 10 per cent on the cost, as per your contract, should be paid to you.

I shall be glad to hear from you at an early date, and to have an interview with you on this subject, if you consider it necessary.

Messrs. John Brogden and Sons, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

EDWARD RICHARDSON.

Has that 10 per cent. been paid?—Only in the case of the Wellington and Hutt Railway. This letter is dated the 10th January, 1873.

Has the 10 per cent. not been paid in any of the other cases?—No. I will read you letters of the 10th and 12th February, 1873.

GENTLEMEN,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 10th February, 1873.

With reference to the Hon. Mr. Richardson's letter of the 10th January, and your reply of the day following, relative to the erection of the telegraph along the lines of railway under contract to your firm, I am directed to request the favour of your informing Mr. Richardson whether you concur in extending the arrangement made in respect to the line from Wellington to the Hutt to all the other lines above mentioned.

I have, &c.,

Messrs. John Brogden and Sons,
Wellington.

JOHN KNOWLES,
Under-Secretary.

SIR,—

Wellington, 12th February, 1873.

Referring to your letters (P.W.O., 10th January, 1873, P.W.O., 10th February, 1873), and to ours of the 11th ultimo, relative to the erection of the telegraph along the lines of railway under construction by our firm, we have the honor to inform you that we concur in the arrangement proposed in your letter of the 10th ultimo, viz., that this work should be executed by the Government through the Telegraph Department, and that we receive 10 per cent. on the cost.

We have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works,
Wellington.

JOHN BROGDEN AND SONS
(Per JOHN HENDERSON.)

The Chairman.] You say that no other line was allowed for except the Wellington and Hutt?—Yes.

Sir John Hall.] Were there any other cases in which you received 10 per cent. for omissions on account of telegraph lines?—None whatever.

Mr. Montgomery.] Was this work that you were paid commission on ever done?—No, not by us. Under the conditions of the contract the Minister for Public Works has the power to require the contractor to omit any portion of the works, and upon such omissions the contractors are allowed 10 per cent.

Mr. Cave.] Has any certificate been granted for these works?—No; the only record we have is that of a separate payment in connection with the Wellington and Hutt Railway.

Hon. Mr. Miller.] Who constructed the Wellington and Hutt Railway?—Messrs. Brogden did; but they did not make the telegraph line. The Government constructed the whole of the telegraph lines.

Mr. Cave.] You were acquainted with most of the Government Engineers on the line?—Yes.

It has been stated that a considerable number of these Engineers are not now available for the purpose of giving evidence—is that so?—I think nearly all of them are within call, with the exception of Mr. Carruthers, who is in England. I believe the majority of them are still in New Zealand.

Who were the Engineers on the Taieri contract?—Messrs. Blair and Cook. They are now in the employ of the Government.

Who was the Inspector of Works?—There were several of them. There was Mr. Matthews, Mr. Chisholm, and Mr. Fraser, all of whom are either in Government employ or living close by the railway on which they were engaged.

Who was the District Engineer in Oamaru?—Mr. Lowe, who is still in the service of the Government at Christchurch. Messrs. McLeod and Burnett were Mr. Lowe's assistants. I believe they are both in Christchurch.

Who was in charge at Waitara?—Mr. Darnell and Mr. Hursthouse. Mr. Hursthouse is still in the employ of the Government, and Mr. Darnell is in Wellington. Mr. Stewart was the District Engineer in Auckland, and Mr. E. C. Jones and Mr. Coleridge, who were also employed as his assistants, are, I believe, still in Wellington. Messrs. Garrett, Hunter, and Elliott also are still in the Government employ.

Are Messrs. Otway and Hunter still available?—Yes, Mr. Hunter is still in Government employ, and Mr. Otway is in the Public Works Office, Auckland.

Mr. Brunton, District Engineer, of Invercargill, is dead?—Yes; but Mr. W. E. Brunton, the Resident Engineer, is available, and Mr. Black is also available.

Then, as a matter of fact, the majority of the Government employés are available?—I think so.

I think you are the only one of Messrs. Brogden's engineers now left?—Yes; I am the only one who still remains in the employ of the firm. Mr. Henderson and the bookkeeper, who could give a good deal of information, are both dead.

Mr. Bell: You have told the Committee that Mr. W. E. Brunton is available if he is required to give evidence?—Yes.

Is it not a fact that Messrs. Brogden retained Mr. W. E. Brunton as soon as Mr. Alexander Brogden arrived in the colony?—We retained him in connection with our compensation claims; but since that time he has been in the service of the Government.

Why do you say that?—Because he has told me so himself.

Do you find him a man on whose word you can rely?—I do not wish to make accusations against any man.

You knew that of the two Government Engineers on the Invercargill line one was dead, and that shortly after Mr. Brogden's arrival you retained the other one?—We only retained him on account of our compensation claims.

Mr. Cave here tendered to Mr. Bell a letter from Messrs. Brogden and Sons to Mr. Brunton, and which was read by Mr. Bell as follows:—