

1923. At what rate per ton is that?—That is about ninety tons per mile, and about £8 5s. per ton. And the rolling-stock we have taken at £700 per mile.

1924. And stations?—Stations at £600, and £300 for contingencies, such as the carting of rails, materials, and so forth.

1925. You told us that you thought the estimate for Mr. Rochfort's line was a fair one?—Yes; I think it is. I would undertake to do the work for that if I had the chance.

1926. Would you undertake to do it for a good deal less?—No.

1927. Referring to Mr. Holmes's estimate: have you checked this at all?—I have just looked at the figures.

1928. I think you stated before that you had not been through the Stratford line?—I have only been through part of it. From Te Awamutu to Mokauti, that is open country; I have not been through the bush.

1929. I suppose you have had conversations with Mr. Holmes and other engineers who have been there?—Yes.

1930. And you would probably gather from them their idea of the nature of the country?—Yes.

1931. Mr. Holmes, who has been through that, has submitted this estimate; and, as you will see, he has estimated the cost of permanent-way and rolling-stock on that line at the same rate as he has on the other?—Yes.

1932. What the Committee wish to ascertain is this: seeing the description Mr. Rochfort and you yourself have given of part of the other line, are the prices in the two estimates now before us the same in regard to permanent-way and stations?—They appear to be the same. I have heard that the Stratford line passes through country where there is no ballast; and I think there ought to be something additional for ballast on that line; it would make a substantial difference. The country is reported to be mostly papa rock, and there is no stone or gravel to be found; so that it would have to be transported from either end. Then, it is possible that this being an inaccessible country there should be an allowance made for gaining access to it.

1933. In the estimate which Mr. Rochfort has sent in, and which we have here for comparison, it is estimated that roading will be required equal to the whole length of the line, to give access to the Marton line?—Yes.

1934. There is no such provision made in the estimates for the other line?—No; I believe not.

1935. And do you consider it ought to be made?—It would certainly affect the price of the work. If Mr. Rochfort has made a fair allowance (1s. 6d.) for the earthwork, and added to it the cost of the road, that would also lower the price of bringing the material for bridges and culverts and so on; but, if he has not added it to the other one, it should be done.

1936. Are you prepared to submit an estimate of the Stratford line for comparison with the Marton line, as to the total cost?—Yes.

1937. *Mr. Larnach.*] Can you say whether the Stratford line or the central line would require the greater number of viaducts and bridges?—No; I could not answer that question off-hand.

1938. But, if there should be an excess of viaducts and bridges on one line over the other, would that add greatly to the cost of that line?—It would depend very much on the kind of bridge, whether it is large or not, and whether the viaducts are high or not.

1939. *Mr. W. White.*] Do you take the price of timber for sleepers and bridges as the same on both lines?—I can only speak of the central line from knowledge.

1940. *The Chairman.*] The Committee want an estimate of the Stratford line, which they may be able to compare with that of the central line, as fairly as possible, with regard to the relative cost of the two lines. Will you have such an estimate prepared?—I will.

THURSDAY, 2ND OCTOBER, 1884.

Mr. HOLMES further examined.

1941. *The Chairman.*] The Committee want to get some further information from you in regard to this estimate of yours. It does not bear your name anywhere upon it. Is the Committee to understand that this is your own estimate of the cost of this line, or is it one that has been prepared in the department, availing themselves of the knowledge you have given them?—The formation is my own estimate, the permanent-way was prepared in the department, and the latter portion is Mr. Rochfort's estimate.

1942. Now, in regard to the permanent-way, it has been stated in evidence that the ballast on this line—the Stratford line—is very scarce; in fact, there is very little of it: have you informed the department—who, I presume, from what you say, are responsible for this estimate of the permanent-way—that the ballast is so difficult to be got at?—Yes; and they have doubled the price allowed for the ballast.

1943. I see, in one part of the estimate—the formation—you wind up, “including bridges, tunnels, culverts, and contractors' roads:” what have you allowed for contractors' roads?—I have not allowed any specific amount at all; but I consider that that estimate will provide the ordinary roads that contractors generally make to get to their works.

1944. But have you got an estimate of the length of roads that contractors would like?—A length equal to the section.

1945. You consider you have provided for a road the whole length of the line?—Yes; a rough contractors' road.

1946. What do you estimate the cost of that road per mile—a road sufficiently good to draw contractors' materials on?—About £400 per mile.

1947. And you added that £400 per mile to each of these estimates?—Yes.

1948. In working out the rate of “easy work” at £2,500 per mile, you have taken £400 off that for contractors' roads, leaving £2,100 per mile: what rate per cubic yard have you allowed for earthworks on that?—I did not go into details like that at all. I merely took the rate per mile on