

2061. Supposing there was no ballast along the central line, and it had to be conveyed from either end, what estimate would you then have to make for ballasting the line?—That is a very difficult question.

2062. My reason for asking it is to make a comparison with the Stratford line. Supposing you had ballast in the middle and ballast at both ends of the line, would that make a great difference in your estimate?—It would.

2063. Would it more than double it?—I should think it would; it would double the ballast and add an enormous amount to the cost of the work.

2064. Supposing the Stratford line, of which you know the length, has no ballast upon it, what would be a fair estimate for ballasting the line?—I think it would cost at least 10s. or 12s. per yard, supposing the only points at which ballast could be got were one hundred miles apart—that was, as I understood, the question.

2065. Is that an average all through?—Yes.

2066. *Mr. Montgomery.*] That is, if there was ballast to be got at each end, and none to be got anywhere else, the average would be 10s?—Yes; the greatest length of carriage would be fifty miles.

2067. The ballast would be taken along the line if the line were made?—Yes; the rails would be laid down first and then lifted through the ballast.

2068. Then the ballast would not be taken in carts?—That would be impossible.

2069. *The Chairman.*] You put it down at 10s. per cubic yard on the presumption that there is an average of twenty-five miles to carry?—Yes.

2070. *Mr. W. White.*] Would much stripping be required to get the ballast on the central line?—There would be in some places, of course, a great deal. On the Murimotu Plains you could get a great quantity very easily.

2071. Taking the line right through, do you think it would require much stripping on the average, taking into consideration also the river-beds, the Murimotu Plains, and so forth?—I should think there would probably be an average of 3ft.

2072. After you have taken the stripping off 3ft. what depth of ballast would there be remaining?—That I could hardly say. In some places it would be a good deal.

2073. Would there be an average of 10ft.?—I should think there would be, fully.

2074. In reckoning the 2s. per yard, I presume you are allowing the contractor to run over the line with his ballast?—Yes; that is the only way to do it, in a case of this sort.

MEMORANDUM by Mr. J. ROCHFORD.

SIR,—

Wellington, 2nd October, 1884.

I ask permission to make the following correction in my evidence to-day as to the price of ballast on which my estimate was founded. The actual price was 2s. 3d. and a small fraction. The £3,000 adopted for completion after grading was made up as follows:—

Permanent-way, 56lb. rails and fastenings	...	...	£750 per mile
Sleepers	...	...	350 "
Platelaying	...	...	100 "
Ballasting	...	...	200 "
Rolling-stock	...	...	700 "
Stations (assuming one to every five miles), including buildings and sidings, complete	...	...	600 "
Contingencies to provide for varying price of iron	...	...	300 "
Total	...	...	£3,000 "

Since I have examined a number of contract prices for ballasting actually done, I find the prices vary from 1s. 5d. to 3s. 6d. per yard, the latter being for a lead of eighteen miles.

I have, &c.,

JOHN ROCHFORD.

The Chairman, Main Trunk Railway Committee, North Island.

FRIDAY, 3RD OCTOBER, 1884.

Mr. R. J. GILL, Under-Secretary, Native Land Purchase Department, further examined.

2075. *The Chairman.*] Are the schedules contained in your former evidence correct schedules of all the blocks shown on this map?—Yes; but there is more land shown on the map as under purchase than in the schedule.

2076. *Mr. Larnach.*] The schedules are more defined?—Yes. The blocks are shown in a printed return laid before Parliament last session (C.—2, p. 18).

2077. Do any other lands appear in that return besides those that appear in the schedule?—Yes.

2078. It would be useful if the extent of land not mentioned in the schedule, and contiguous to each line, were given. Could you give the extent of such lands?—On the central line there are nearly two hundred thousand acres not mentioned in the schedule as under purchase. I may explain an instance which may make it simple. Originally the Government negotiated for three hundred thousand acres of the Murimotu Block. Now that the lands are surveyed, a portion of it has passed under a lease by deed into the hands of Government. This portion is about one hundred and twenty-nine thousand acres. Mr. Bryce, having completed this, it was his intention to abandon further dealings with the balance.

2079. Are these two hundred thousand acres Native land or Crown land?—Native land.