

9. Evidence of Mr. D. Fallon. 10. Evidence of Mr. T. Kissling. 11. Evidence of Mr. O. Nicholson. 12. Evidence of Mr. R. C. Barstow. 13. Information obtained and furnished to the Commission by Mr. C. Y. O'Connor: (1) Sources from which funds for construction of railway were derived to 4th January, 1890; (2) total expenditure from all sources up to 4th January, 1890, as deduced from company's annual statements; (3) total liabilities as existing on 4th January, 1890; (4) summary statement of expenditure and liabilities; (5) list of contracts for construction works; (6) total cost of construction works to 4th January, 1890; (7) results from working the railway for twelve months ending 4th January, 1890.

I have, &c.,

JAMES MCKERROW,

Chairman of Commission.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

FRIDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY, 1890.

Mr. JOSEPH AUGUSTUS RAYMOND, Mangawhare, examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] You are a bush contractor Mr. Raymond?—Yes.

2. We understand you have had considerable experience in the business?—I do not know about great experience, but I have had experience of some eight or nine years now; but I am entirely ignorant of the locality of the Kaihu.

3. Can you tell us what is the general cost or price of putting logs into the river—for instance, all up the Wairoa?—Well, of course the prices vary very much: if the timber lies easy for bullocks, so that it can be hauled straight into the water, the price is less; if a tramway has to be constructed, of course that construction has to be added to the cost of getting out the timber—it will then cost so much more.

4. In your case, do you undertake to deliver the logs at the mill, or do you simply undertake to put them into the creek?—Into the creek generally. It has been so in all cases that I have been engaged in. The logs are just put into the creek, and then the rafting is all done by the company—at least, it has been so far. I understand, however, that there are contracts to be let, and are let now, where the timber is to be delivered into the booms: for instance, at the Awakino I believe they are letting contracts in which they require the contractor to deliver into the booms.

5. Could you name the range of prices in regard to the delivery of logs into the creeks?—There have been contracts let—three or four to my own knowledge lately, though I have not had any—one was at 1s. 9d., another at 2s. 2d. In the one at 2s. 2d. the timber had to be trucked, I suppose, on an average, a mile.

6. That is including the construction of tram?—Yes. I may say that with regard to the contract at 2s. 2d. there was nothing in it. The man has finished and there is nothing in it.

7. Then, I suppose, after the logs are got into the stream it is the mill-owner who sees to the floating of them down himself?—Yes; but I believe in this case the parties had to maintain the booms and be responsible for any loss, which, under the circumstances, seemed to me to be very hard, because the booms were down at the river, and they lived a mile away in the bush.

8. Of course, in taking these contracts the quantity of stuff, no doubt, would be an element in the price?—Most decidedly.

9. What is generally the amount of timber included in a contract—say, at 1s. 9d.?—In this case I believe there were 1,500,000ft. at the 1s. 9d. I think there were 2,000,000ft. in the contract at 2s. 2d.—that is, as far as I have heard.

10. That is 1,500,000ft. at 1s. 9d.?—Yes.

11. That is by the process of drawing into the water with bullocks?—Yes.

12. I suppose the distance of tramway would average about a mile?—I do not know what distance it was there, and I could not tell what the average would be in this case, but I do not think it was much over half a mile. It was on the main river.*

13. *Mr. Macarthur.*] What price are they giving for timber in the round—buying it, I mean?—I think here 4s. For instance, if a private party had timber and delivered it into the water where the steamers can get it, it is as high as 4s. and 4s. 6d. for good sound timber.

14. That would be delivered on the main river?—Yes, or where the steamers could get it. I have heard of parties on the Mangonui, working private bushes, getting as high as 4s. for timber in the round.

15. What do you reckon is the average cost of driving timber? I mean in dams. Can you give any estimate at all?—There is no such thing on this side: it is all either taken out by bullocks or by tram, the bullocks hauling it to train. There has been one dam that I know of—it was up in Dun's bush; it was the only dam I know of used for drawing the timber into the main river.

16. Then you can give no idea?—Well, I believe his price was 2s. 9d.; but I think, perhaps, Mr. Monk could tell you the price of that timber.

17. Does that include getting the timber into the creek?—Yes, and letting it through his dam; and after it went through it was rafted at the company's expense. All the driving by dams is on the east coast; as far as I know, only tram and bullocks are used on this side.

* This answer refers to the contract at 1s. 9d., when the distance was half a mile. The average distance trammed was about a mile or a little over. The tram was one and a half miles long.