

181. Are you aware that the Mining Association, the Inspector of Mines, and the officers in charge stated that it was auriferous, and was required for mining purposes?—After?

182. Yes?—It may be so. I am not aware. I believe the Mining Association appeared before the Warden, and he decided against them when the application was made.

183. You have formed the opinion that, practically, the Government objected on the ground that the land might be wanted for mining purposes?—Butler Brothers' application, and I think some other applications for timber come under the same head.

184. You got Butlers' land?—It became part of our own land.

185. The Government reduced the area to allow you to take the timber?—I think so.

186. Leaving that phase of the question, you say the company bitterly complains that since they began the work they have been hindered and obstructed in many ways. Is that the summing up of the evidence previously as to the reserves and settlement? Will you state in what way you have been hindered and obstructed?—I think the evidence states pretty clearly where the obstruction came in, such as the deviation and the dealing with the lands and these mining reserves and various timber reserves—all obstructions constantly caused reports to go Home which, of course, became public, and they tend to throw discredit generally upon us in London.

187. Are the obstructions and hindrances referred to covered by the evidence here?—Of course I do not want to go into more detail. I could bring a lot more evidence. This evidence generally covers what I propose to bring forward at present. You can take it at that.

188. The next question we come to is the deviation at Lake Brunner. Were you not informed by the best legal authority obtainable that the contract did not provide for this?—It was merely a question of what was the meaning of this word "deviation," and lawyers equally good say that deviation means a change, and the deviation could be provided for without going to the House.

189. Could it not be arbitrated upon?—Yes.

190. Then why come to the House when you could submit it to arbitration?—Because it is cheaper for the company, and probably cheaper for the country.

191. You do not blame the Government for hindering you in this way, when you chose to come to the House?—I do. We did not come to the House; it was the Government who came to the House. We asked the Government to grant the deviation, and they went to the House, on the ground that they were doubtful whether they could grant it or not.

192. Were they not very positive?—No, they were not very positive.

193. You were told the Government were advised that they could not grant the deviation on the contract?—They took that view, and they went to the House.

194. Was it not the company that presented the Bill to the Government?—Did not the company submit a draft Bill to the Government asking this to be done?—At the request of the Government.

195. Did the company not give £2,700 for the works?—As a bribe?

196. Put it as you like?—I can tell you this: when I found there was a certain member of the House opposing the deviation Bill, I thought the only way was to get his constituents to make him withdraw his opposition. I agreed to pay £2,700 to widen a road in the district, and I succeeded.

197. If the deviation had not been outside the contract you would not have been required to pay £2,700?—The £2,700 was paid to withdraw opposition—the opposition of a certain obstructive member of the House.

198. It gave communication to certain people on the West Coast?—I do think that. I do not say the money has been absolutely wasted.

199. You stated that the deviation was a large saving of cost as compared with the original line?—I said it was a saving.

200. Has there been a saving, and what?—A very slight saving. It was a better line.

201. It is longer, and cost more money?—No, it has not cost more money. I think if you refer to my correspondence you will see it was stated to be longer. It has improved the line, and saves in cost of working.

202. Is it 61 chains longer than the original line?—No.

203. What is the length?—About 21 chains longer than the original line. Referring to correspondence, I find I am wrong. There is a difference of a mile between Springfield and Stillwater.

204. You admit that it would cost much less money?—I did not say much less money. I said that it cost less. The great point I made in the deviation was in the cost of working. It opened better country, and I got a better grade throughout. The new line has a ruling grade of 1 in 60, and the old one 1 in 40.

205. What is the difference in the cost, taking the estimate of the old line and what it cost in the new?—From memory I cannot give it. I think, roughly, about £5,000 or £6,000 cheaper.

206. The deviation was £5,000 or £6,000 cheaper than the old line?—It is a cheaper and much better line.

207. Owing to the nature of the country?—Yes; and there is better land.

208. Does that include the £2,700 paid for the road?—No, it does not.

209. If you took that from the other it makes a difference of £2,700 on your own showing, the line being a mile longer?—Probably.

210. Being a mile longer it took away the merit of it?—I could show that there was a saving of from £3,000 to £4,000 a year in working the line.

211. When you made your calculations they were based on the line being a mile shorter?—My calculations laid before the House were on the surveyed length. The other was simply a calculation on the maps.

212. You were told it would not shorten the distance by the Government at the time?—I cannot recollect.