

3. "The condition of the permanent-way and rolling-stock and buildings of the said lines of railway at the date when the Governor of our said colony took possession of the same on our behalf."

Stillwater to Reefton and Brunnerton to Jackson's.

Exhibit No. 11 gives full particulars of the condition of the permanent-way, rolling-stock, and buildings by the company's engineer, and Exhibits Nos. 10 and 12 similar reports by the Government Engineer. The Commissioners are of opinion that the permanent-way was in fair order, with the exception of ballast being bare in places, and birch sleepers and birch structures decaying. The latter were fast deteriorating, and it is manifestly false economy to lay permanent-way of this character. Very large renewals must be undertaken in the immediate future. The rolling-stock was, allowing for fair wear-and-tear, in good order. For depreciation see Exhibit No. 140.

We estimate that at this date buildings had depreciated by £2,630, fencing by £1,815, rolling-stock (Exhibit No. 140) by £7,359.

Belgrove to Norris's Gully.

At the time the company discontinued these works (December, 1893) the rails and sleepers had not been laid, and there was no rolling-stock provided. We estimate that at the date of seizure the buildings and fencing had depreciated by £227. Nothing was done to the line by the company between December, 1893, and the date of seizure. The line was handed over to the Railway Department in February, 1899, in good order and as at present, the banks and cuttings having been repaired and completed and the formation laid with rails and sleepers by the Public Works Department between the date of seizure (25th May, 1895) and February, 1899.

Springfield to Patterson's Creek.

As testified to by Mr. James Burnett, Inspecting Engineer for the New Zealand Government Railways, the line was in very fair order as far as Otarama, the extent to which the permanent-way was laid. The sleepers were of birch, and had then a life of about eight years. The line had previously been maintained for the company by the Government—viz., from 1892 to 1895. The buildings were in good condition. The company had no rolling-stock upon the line.

We estimate depreciation of buildings and fences at this date at £392.

4. "The condition of the said permanent-way, rolling-stock, and buildings at the date when the said lines of railway became legally vested in Us."

Stillwater to Reefton and Brunnerton to Jackson's.

The rails were in good order; birch sleepers and birch bridges were rapidly decaying; ballasting was in arrear. During the period of seizure, we are informed, instructions were issued to keep working-expenses down, and consequently the up-keep has not been on as liberal a basis as prevails on the Government lines. To resleeper and reballast the lines a large sum will be required, estimated at £9,344 (see Exhibit No. 19). The buildings were, allowing for fair wear-and-tear, in good order. The rolling-stock was in fair order (see Exhibit No. 18). For depreciation of rolling-stock value, see Exhibit No. 140. For rolling-stock built and placed on line subsequent to seizure, see Exhibit No. 14. The fencing and buildings at this date had, we estimate, depreciated from original cost by the sum of £8,492, and the rolling-stock by £10,160.

Belgrove to Norris's Gully.

The line was in fair order, but required more ballast. The buildings were in good order, and the rolling-stock (ten four-wheeled high-sides and two covered goods-wagons—Exhibit No. 14) was in fair working condition, being practically new, having been constructed since the date of seizure. The fencing and buildings at this date had depreciated from original value, we estimate, by a sum of £503 10s.

Springfield to Patterson's Creek.

This line was in very fair condition. The sleepers are birch, and as such are not of long life. The buildings were in good order. There is no rolling-stock on this line. We estimate the depreciation of buildings and fences at this date at £759 from original cost.

5. "The annual gross earnings of the lines of railway from Springfield to Patterson's Creek, from Stillwater to Reefton, and from Brunnerton to Jackson's during the period ending with the date when the same were taken possession of by the Governor of our said colony on our behalf."

Springfield to Patterson's Creek.

			£	s.	d.
(Exhibit No. 113.)	Year ending 30th June, 1893	...	13	0	11
"	" " " 1894	...	83	14	0
"	1st July to 27th April, 1895	...	48	8	11

The above represents 40 per cent. of the gross earnings, the balance of 60 per cent. being retained by the Government to cover transportation expenses, which service was performed by the Government Railways Department. The company was responsible for maintaining the line—i.e., the track—at its own cost.

Stillwater to Reefton and from Brunnerton to Jackson's.

			£	s.	d.
(Exhibit No. 111.)	1st August, 1889, to 30th June, 1890	...	4,069	10	0
"	1st July, 1890, to " " 1891	...	9,144	2	1
"	" " 1891, to " " 1892	...	12,948	18	1
"	" " 1892, to " " 1893	...	12,752	0	5
"	" " 1893, to " " 1894	...	15,051	12	9
"	" " 1894, to 25th May, 1895	...	13,475	11	2