

19. What I want to get at is this: After Mr. Bell retired in 1891, what was your office in connection with the railway?—Then I was chief assistant directly under Mr. Wilson, and I was in charge of the engineering department when Mr. Wilson was at Home.

20. Who was executive officer for the staff and works?—I was throughout. I was chief of staff throughout the whole time I was engaged.

21. That is, from 1886 to 1896?—Yes.

22. Well, now, in this capacity did you control or supervise all surveys?—Yes.

23. All surveys?—Some of them were supervised by Mr. Bell himself when he was otherwise disengaged.

24. But that would be but a very small proportion of the surveys, I suppose?—That would be a portion of them, but they took up some of my time.

25. You had immediate supervision over all the surveys except those supervised by Mr. Bell, and over the latter surveys you still had a general supervision?—I looked after the staff engaged on them, Mr. Bell's instructions usually going through me.

26. So that in every case you would have some kind of supervision over the surveys?—Yes.

27. Who acted as officer for buying land?—I did.

28. All the lands bought by the company for railway purposes?—All, excepting some for the Springfield Section. Those were dealt with from Christchurch.

29. But all on the West Coast and in Nelson you had to deal with?—Yes. This business was done directly under Mr. Wilson or Mr. Scott—whoever was general manager at the time.

30. Did you prepare all the plans, structural drawings, specifications, and estimates of the Reefton line?—Yes, subject to Mr. Bell's instructions.

31. Of the Kaimata to Jackson's Section?—Yes, in similar manner.

32. The Belgrove to Norris's Gully Section?—Yes; that was surveyed by contract, supervised by Mr. Bell or myself; but I had the general control of it during construction.

33. The issue of the plans?—The plans passed through my hands.

34. And the specifications too?—Yes, they were prepared by me. The field-work was done by Dartnell, and the plans were completed in the office here under my charge principally.

35. Of the Springfield to Patterson's Creek Section?—The survey of that was supervised by Mr. Bell himself. He had previously surveyed the line for the Government.

36. Who prepared the drawings, specifications, and estimates?—They were prepared in Greymouth by the staff, Mr. Bell himself being also engaged.

37. That is, of the Springfield to Patterson's Creek Section?—Yes.

38. Now, had you anything to do with the proposed Jackson's to Arthur's Pass to Patterson's Creek Section?—Yes; those surveys also were done from the Greymouth office.

39. Had you general charge of all the contracts and construction of the Brunnerton-Reefton Sections, the Stillwater-Jackson's Sections, and the Belgrove to Norris's Gully Sections, and of all station-yards, buildings, and incidental works?—Yes. The Springfield end was really administered from Christchurch, although the specifications were prepared here and the surveys came from this office. The inspection was looked after from Christchurch, as it was too far to go from here.

40. But the preparation of these documents went through the office here?—Yes.

41. Well, then, I may take it that you have probably a more intimate knowledge of the whole of the Midland Railway construction and purchases and surveys than anybody else in the colony?—Yes.

42. Now, through whose hands did the certificates of payment of moneys to contractors go?—They all passed through mine.

43. For examination?—Yes, and checking. Then they were passed on to be signed by Mr. Bell or Mr. Wilson, or by both, so that they generally had three signatures to them.

44. At any rate, speaking for yourself, you had to examine and check them all?—I was responsible.

45. That applies to certificates of payment to both the English contractors and the colonial contractors?—Yes.

46. Now, the Commission have asked for the actual cost of surveys of each of the sections of railway, with the names of surveyors and number of staff with each surveyor, the period of employment, and the amount paid to each surveyor and his staff. Well, taking the Nelson line—and what you have got to say now applies to all the lines—can you comply with this requisition?—It could be complied with. We should have to go through all the imprest accounts and through all the ledger accounts, and it will take some considerable time and labour to do it, because it means going through and analysing all the imprest and ledger accounts for a period of about eight years.

47. Was there any division of this kind of the cost of survey kept in the books from the first?—No, not that I am aware of. I have not seen the ledger account of it, or how the total is made up.

48. Of course, if it were in the ledger there would be less difficulty?—It would be no difficulty at all.

49. It would take some days, I suppose?—Yes, it would take some time, naturally.

50. That is, assuming the accounts are available?—Yes.

51. Well, now, that applies to the actual cost of the surveys for each section: as to the names of the surveyors and the number of staff with each surveyor, you could get that information from the imprest accounts, I suppose?—Yes, that could be got easily. The men were always paid the current rate of wages.

52. Could you get the period of employment from the books?—Yes, I could get that from the same source.

53. And the amount paid to each surveyor and his staff?—Yes, that I could get from the imprest accounts.