

119. You can produce the copy to the Commissioners?—Yes; and I will put in a copy of the contract schedules when I have prepared it.

120. Now, you have gone through these contracts and the schedule rates?—Yes.

121. What do you think of the price paid for some of the classes of work?—The prices generally were higher than those for the local contracts.

122. Do you think the prices were in excess of what the work might have been done here for if offered for public tender?—It was in excess.

123. Now, can you tell me, or, if you cannot now, will you be able hereafter to tell me, the amount of work done by the English contractors, as represented by the certificates passed by you: have you got the certificates here?—I have got the certificates here; but perhaps it would be simpler to give you the amounts from the ledger account, and I will produce the certificates later.

124. *The Chairman.*] Can you tell us the total length of No. 2 section?—1 mile 16 chains.

125. No. 3 contract?—6 miles 67 chains.

126. What amount have you got down for these two in your schedule, either separately or together?—In this schedule I have got for No. 1 contract £94,413 10s. This amount I will verify later.

127. What length have you got for that?—7 miles 41·25 chains.

128. You cannot tell me at present what was the total amount paid to the English contractors?—I can tell by looking up the certificates, but it might take a little time. I could give it better in writing.

129. *Dr. Findlay.*] Does the amount shown in the certificates of payment to the English contractors represent the actual cost of the section completed by them or the work done by them?—Yes; it represents the cost of the work done by them. Then, there are the administrative charges to add, and there may be some materials, &c. No. 1 contract included rolling-stock and rails, and some of the rails were used in No. 3 contract. In no case is the total actual cost shown in the certificates. There must be added charges, and in some cases permanent-way and bridge materials, which come under separate heads.

130. *The Chairman.*] Was the contract for the completed line, or was it to only partially complete it?—No. 1 contract was for the completion of the line and to find all the materials. The contractors found the rails, and they found the bridge materials.

131. *Dr. Findlay.*] And No. 2 contract?—Was in the same category. In No. 3 contract the company found the rails, or, rather, transferred them from No. 1 contract, but the contractors found the bridge materials. This is shown in the contract itself in each case. In all other cases the company found the rails and bridge-girders.

132. But the ledger account ought to show the total cost?—Yes.

133. Now, can you tell me by how much the amount paid to the English contractors is in excess of what the work could have been done for under public tender in this colony?—I cannot tell you accurately without comparing all the items and knowing the ground. Anything else is rather mere guesswork.

134. I will put the matter this way, and it is important for the Commission to know this: Can you, by an examination of the English contracts, and from your knowledge of the country and the work done, arrive at an estimate of that excess?—Yes, I could do so.

135. Then, we will leave it on the understanding that you will at some later date produce a statement showing the amount of that excess?—Yes.

136. Well, now, I understand the sum of £12,500 was paid to the English contractors to determine their contracts: you know about that?—Yes.

137. Do you know whether that sum included a sum for plant and material which the English contractors passed over to the company?—I cannot say.

138. What is your recollection of it?—There were some buildings, plant, and materials in the colony, belonging to these contractors, passed over to the company, and I understand that it was thus dealt with at a valuation of about £2,000.

139. *Mr. Graham.*] And that was included in the £12,500?—I cannot say. This was done at Home, and I never knew the particulars. The item might be traced in the books by Mr. Dalston.

140. *Dr. Findlay.*] You do not know of any additional £2,000 paid over and above the £12,500?—I cannot say. It would be shown in the books.

141. There were some materials, plant, buildings, and so on passed over by the contractors to the company?—Yes.

142. You might make that another point to inquire into, whether that £12,500 included the material, and so on?—Yes. The cancellations refer only to the No. 1 contract. That contract really extended for about 25½ miles.

143. Now, I want you to show the Commission, if you have got the plan here, where the English contractors began to work and where they left off: I want you to point out and describe the work really done by the English contractors?—Taking the No. 2 contract section as it extends from Brunnerton, it commences at a point 15½ chains west from the present initial peg—that is to say, the initial peg was afterwards shifted 15½ chains easterly by mutual consent. The contract length was 1 mile 16 chains, extending to a peg marked “12 miles 45·25 chains.” No. 3 contract commenced at a peg marked “1 mile 41 chains,” and extended to a point marked “8 miles 28 chains,” near Nelson Creek, a distance of 6 miles 67 chains. No. 1 contract began at the terminal point of No. 2, at the peg then marked “12 miles 45·25 chains,” and extended for a length of 25 miles 34·55 chains, towards Teremakau.

144. *The Chairman.*] How much of that was finished by the English contractors?—Section No. 1 was finished to the Kaimata Tunnel, the length being about 7 miles 39 chains. I shall have to verify this afterwards.