

353. Can you tell us the length of rails laid with yellow-pine or silver-pine sleepers?—There was no difference in price. There were no silver-pine sleepers used beyond Nelson Creek or beyond Kaimata.

354. And none on the Nelson Section or Christchurch Section?—No.

355. Supposing the Reefton line stops where it is at present, do you think the traffic is likely to increase?—Yes, by general increase of present traffic; and if a light-line extension were made new traffic would result.

356. Do you think the coal trade is likely to increase?—Not unless they have some means of communication better than by road.

357. Would the same remark apply to any timber, say, beyond a few miles past Reefton?—This would depend on the demand for the particular timber available and on the price obtainable.

358. Can you give us a return of the net revenue of the line from the time the first section was opened until the time of the seizure? When the line was finished to Ngahere did you open it that far?—Not immediately.

359. Can you tell us whether you charged the contractors freight for the material carried along that section for the construction of other sections?—Yes; when once a section of the line was in traffic the traffic department treated the contractors the same as the public generally.

360. Could you tell the Commission the amount of revenue you received for material carried for the construction of the line further on?—This can best be obtained from the traffic records.

361. How many men would there be employed on the line, say, all the way to Reefton?—There must have been five or six hundred men on those sections.

362. And then you afterwards opened the section from Nelson Creek to this side of the Ahaura River?—Yes.

363. Would those men enhance the revenue of the line from that period materially?—There would be a certain amount of traffic from them, but not very great.

364. Could you give us any idea of what the probable traffic would be?—No.

365. Those men would be the average class of New Zealand working-men following that kind of work?—Yes; but they did not travel much on the railway.

366. *Mr. McKerrow.*] You stated that the cost of the survey of the line from Brunnerton to Reefton was about £64 per mile?—Yes.

367. That included the cross-sections, maps, and everything ready for calling for tenders?—Yes.

368. Can you give an approximation of the cost of survey from Springfield—a much more difficult part of the line?—I dare say I could give you that if I had the books to refer to and time to do it.

369. I am aware you had a very great difficulty in getting over Arthur's Pass; you contemplated a tunnel, and also a third line, and there was necessarily a very large amount of preliminary survey there before the permanent line was settled?—Yes; it was very difficult country to get about. There was an entire alternative survey of line at Rolleston which had to be staked out and fully quantified.

370. And that is all included under the one designation of survey?—Yes.

371. *Mr. Blow.*] Did the £64 per mile include the land-plans surveys?—No; they are generally made after the line is completed or when approaching completion.

372. *Mr. Hudson.*] Could you give us a list of the sub-contracts, and the amounts at which they were let, in connection with these English contracts?—No; I did not know anything about that officially. I did not necessarily know whether a man was a sub-contractor, or simply a ganger working for wages. I did not usually know what their rates were.

373. We cannot get that information from the company?—No; the company was not concerned in it.

374. *Mr. Graham.*] With reference to Nos. 2 and 3, you gave us the contract price of those combined: I think you stated £34,731. With reference to contract No. 1, you gave us the price as £94,000 odd: was that the price for the whole 25 miles 34 chains?—No; it was for the section from Stillwater to Kaimata Tunnel. The amount included large quantities of rails and rolling-stock.

375. *The Chairman.*] You put in the contract as it stood?—Yes, and I can give you the final certificates.

376. *Mr. Graham.*] I understand you to say that No. 1 contract was 25 miles 4 chains, and the contract price £163,000?—Yes.

377. Do you know what proportion of the contract price was paid to the contractors for the 7 miles 41 chains which they did complete?—About £85,000.

378. Will you furnish the particulars?—Yes.

379. And also with 2 and 3 you will state what the prices were in excess, and what the work could have been done for if let by public competition?—Yes, for Nos. 1, 2, and 3.

THOMAS WHILLIANS BRUCE examined on oath.

380. *The Chairman.*] What is your occupation, Mr. Bruce?—Sheep-farmer.

381. Where do you reside?—At Inchbonnie, near Lake Brunner.

382. *Dr. Findlay.*] How long have you been in this district?—A little upwards of thirty years.

383. You have been a sheep-farmer in the Upper Waimakariri for over thirty years?—Yes, and at Inchbonnie for about the same time.

384. You were a sheep-farmer, I think, before you went to the Upper Waimakariri?—Yes, I was managing the Motunau Run, in North Canterbury.

385. You have been a Justice of the Peace for some years past?—Yes, over twenty years.

386. Do you know how many mills are working on the line from Brunner to Jackson's at present?—Five.