

991. How do you think the Jackson's line stood?—From Stillwater to Kaimata the sleepers were principally birch, and they had depreciated on the average about 25 per cent.

992. Do you think the rails had depreciated at all?—No, nothing to observe. I did not observe any defects, or wear or tear, or rust. Of course, you must take into consideration the fact that all rails must rust more or less.

993. How long, on the average, had they been laid down?—I commenced with the Midland Company in 1889, and the Kaimata Section was laid two years before that. It is thirteen years next July since the rails were put down.

994. What was your opinion of them in 1895? Did you think there was any depreciation in the value of the rails at that time?—Some of the rails are there yet.

995. Were they as good as new in 1895?—Yes, just as good.

996. You had nothing to do with the rolling-stock, had you?—No.

997. Taking the bridges from Stillwater to Reefton, what condition were they in?—Commencing at Brunnerton, there is a bridge 38 chains from Brunner. I forget the length of the bridge, and my letter of instructions said nothing about them. It only mentioned permanent-way.

998. Had you to look after the bridges when you were with the Midland Railway Company?—Yes. This bridge is on the Reefton side of the Brunner Tunnel.

999. Do you know the old formation that was made?—Yes; it was one of the bridges on the old Government formation.

1000. What was the condition of that bridge?—It was very bad, and it was secured temporarily until they fixed it up. It was renewed.

1001. By whom?—By the Midland Railway Company. The next bridge to that would be about 60 chains.

1002. On the same old formation?—I cannot say whether it was; I do not think it was. That bridge was in very bad order, and it has been renewed since by the Midland Railway Company.

1003. *Mr. Fraser.*] When was it in bad order?—Previous to 1895, and it was renewed previous to 1895. The next bridge to that was an overhead bridge, and that was renewed by the Government after the seizure. The next bridge is at Stillwater, and that has been renewed by the Government also since the seizure.

1004. Were there concrete foundations to that bridge?—Yes.

1005. And they are still there?—Yes, and the girders are still there.

1006. How many iron girders are there in that bridge?—I cannot say from memory, but I think there are three spans of 44 ft. each. The next bridge you come to is the Arnold cylinder bridge. It was in good order. The sleepers have been renewed since 1895. The next bridge is a span of 44 ft. iron girders between Spring Creek and the Arnold, and separated by a few chains is another span of 44 ft., with concrete abutments, and both of these are the same as when they were made. The next one is at Spring Creek, and it is being renewed at the present time. That was a birch superstructure in pretty bad condition in 1895. The next one is No Town Creek, and the next at the Twelve-mile. The superstructure is birch, with iron girders. It requires renewing now, and nothing has been done to it yet. There is another bridge also at No Town which has birch superstructure and iron girders, and it wants renewing. Then you come to the curved bridge at Deadman's overflow. It has birch superstructure and iron girders, and the birch wanted renewing in 1895. Then there is Deadman's No. 2 bridge, birch superstructure and iron girders, and the birch wanted renewing in 1895. Then there is No. 1 bridge at Red Jack's, birch superstructure and iron girders, and the birch wanted renewing in 1895. Then there is Red Jack's Creek bridge and Red Jack's No. 2 overflow bridge, birch superstructure and iron girders, and the birch wanted renewing in 1895. The next one we come to is the Nelson Creek cylinder bridge, with iron girders, and it was in good order in 1895. There are two approaches to that bridge—one with three or four spans at the north end, and one with a span at this end. The stringers are of birch, and wanted renewing in 1895. Then we go on to just alongside the north side of the Nelson Creek bridge, and there is a bridge with two concrete abutments and two 22 ft. girder spans, with birch piles, which wanted renewing in 1895. Then we come to the Ahaura Section, and the first bridge is over German Gully, and it has three 22 ft. iron girders on concrete abutments, and it was in good order in 1895.

1007. Can you tell me from your observations whether any bridges between there and Reefton wanted repairing or renewing in 1895, or whether they were all in good order in 1895?—Yes, they were in good order, generally speaking. It was all new work.

1008. Do you know whether the piles and piers of all the bridges between Nelson Creek overflow and Reefton were of ironbark?—I cannot vouch for one this side of Mawheraiti—I am not sure whether it is birch or ironbark. It is a cattle-crossing in the embankment.

1009. I mean taking the railway-bridges generally?—Generally speaking, the piles and caps and corbels of the bridges are of ironbark and the sheathing of birch.

1010. How did the sheathing stand in 1895?—It stood very well, with the exception of an odd plank washed out in flood-time.

1011. No extensive repairs were required?—No; they were in fair good order.

1012. Coming back to the line connecting at Nelson Creek and going to Reefton, what condition were the cattle-stops in?—All the rail-beams in the cattle-stops were birch, and the framing was either red-pine or birch.

1013. Did they require any renewing in 1895?—The rail-beams of all the cattle-stops required renewing in 1895.

1014. What about the bars?—They were of silver-pine mostly, and were good.

1015. What about the framing?—On the Reefton Section it was in fair good order.

1016. What condition was the fencing in between Nelson Creek and Reefton in 1895?—There was not much fencing. It was in fair good order with the exception of the black wire, which was very bad.