

1017. Is it a seven-wire fence?—Yes, Government standard.

1018. How many of the wires are black wires?—Three out of seven were black, and they wanted renewing.

1019. Were the posts in good order?—Yes, and they are there yet.

1020. Is there any top-rail fencing?—Yes, at McLaughlin's. It was in fair good order.

1021. What was the condition of the telephone-line?—It was in fair good order in 1895.

1022. Are there any other timber-works, such as mile-posts and grading-boards, which you could tell us about?—They were all in good order in 1895.

1023. Now, what was the condition of the timber structure at the Reefton side of the Reefton Tunnel?—It was in good order with the exception of three braces, and they showed signs of shifting. That was the only fault in the whole superstructure.

1024. Well, can you give us your opinion generally on all the timber structures five years afterwards—that is, in July last?—Commencing with the fencing, it was all in good order with the exception of the black wire I have already mentioned, and where renewals had been made the black wire had been replaced with galvanised wire. The telephone-posts, which are of silver-pine, were in good order. Some of the rail-beams of the cattle-stops have been replaced with ironbark, and where the birch is still there they want renewing.

1025. Can you tell me the condition of the sleepers between Nelson Creek and Reefton in 1900?—A considerable number have been renewed since 1895 with silver-pine.

1026. What was the state of the birch sleepers remaining in the line in 1900?—Some are fairly good.

1027. How long do you think they will last?—It is hard to say; some will last longer than others.

1028. What percentage of the sleepers do you think has been renewed between 1895 and 1900?—I should say about 40 per cent. during the five years.

1029. What condition was the ballast in in 1900—I mean on any portion not rebalasted between 1895 and 1900?—Ballast was required, more or less, all over the section.

1030. What quantity do you think would be required?—It generally runs yard to yard, and at the present time I suppose it would require, all over the section, about 33 per cent. of ballast to renewing the ballasting.

1031. What condition were the rails in in 1900?—Fair condition.

1032. Do you reckon there was any depreciation in their money-value?—No, I do not.

1033. Do you know how long the rails have been laid between Nelson Creek and Reefton?—Since 1891—ten years.

1034. Now, taking the section of line between Nelson Creek and Kaimata—known as the English contract—what was the condition of the bridges on the Jackson's portion between Stillwater and Kaimata?—There are no bridges. There are only two 22 ft. spans at Kokiri.

1035. What was the condition in 1895, and also in July, 1900, of the sleepers on that section from Nelson Creek back to Stillwater, and from Stillwater to Kaimata Tunnel?—The birch sleepers had depreciated considerably up to 1895; the silver-pine sleepers had not depreciated, and were in good order.

1036. Give us your opinion on the same sleepers in 1900?—A considerable number of the birch sleepers had been renewed with silver-pine.

1037. What percentage of sleepers do you think required renewing in 1895?—About 60 per cent.

1038. Now, as to the condition of the ballast on that section?—From Stillwater to Kaimata ballasting was required yard for yard. The ballast was very bad and required to be completely renewed.

1039. And from Nelson Creek to Brunnerton?—Ballasting was required more or less. I suppose 40 per cent. of ballast was required.

1040. Was there any depreciation in the rails?—The rails were in good order; there was no depreciation to speak of in 1895.

1041. And in 1900?—There was little visible sign of depreciation. The fish-plates and fish-bolts were oxidizing in some cases.

1042. What percentage, if any, of the fastenings do you think required renewing?—About 25 per cent. of the fish-bolts required renewing.

1043. What is your opinion of the line from Kaimata to Jackson's in regard to the condition of the sleepers in 1895?—Fairly good.

1044. What about ballast in 1895 on that section?—It was good, and the rails and fastenings were in good order.

1045. What is your opinion on the same points in 1900?—Several of the birch sleepers have been renewed. The rails and fastenings were in good order to all appearances.

1046. What percentage of sleepers required renewing in July, 1900?—Very few.

1047. You know this line generally: I want to know is it your opinion that any repairs and protective works done since 1895 up to the present time were absolutely necessary for the safety of the line?—I think all works were necessary for the safety of the line.

1048. You do not know of any work that was done that was not required when it was done?—No.

1049. *Mr. Hudson.*] Does your answer to the Chairman's question include protective works that have been done?—Yes, most decidedly.

1050. *Mr. Graham.*] You were Inspector of Permanent-ways in 1895?—Yes.

1051. Is the statement you have given us this morning as to the condition of the line in 1895 from recollection, or did you take the information from any official record in 1895?—It was from recollection and going over the line, so far as the buildings were concerned.