

1801. Is he bound to return them?—Some of them he cannot return; they are to be consumed. There are three lists attached to the contract of the property furnished to the contractor, and of what he may use in carrying out the contract.

1802. What is the value of them?—I cannot tell you.

1803. Is it £3,000 or £4,000?—No; nothing like that.

1804. Take the explosives alone, what is their value?—I do not know what is the value of the dynamite, but I do not think the explosives generally average more than about 1s. a pound; it is gelatine dynamite.

1805. What do you say is the value of the explosives?—I cannot say, without consulting prices.

1806. Are they all in that list?—There are three lists.

1807. *Mr. Guinness.*] You have been reading the Westport instead of the Greymouth soundings: will you tell me the greatest depth at Greymouth?—23ft.; the lowest is 17½ft., and the mean is 20ft.*

1808. *Mr. O'Connor.*] Will you tell us something more about these lists?—List A relates to material that may be consumed, such as blasting-powder; List B contains property to be furnished to the contractor for use in the works, and those things that are not used up are to be returned, fair wear-and-tear being allowed for.

1809. What is the valuation upon these two lists?—List A, £1,620; list B, £813.

1810. Then, you schedule the property handed over to the contractor?—It is all included.

1811. What is the value of the property handed over?—I do not know.

1812. Would you be able to supply the Committee with the value of these three lists you speak of?—Yes. List A, £1,620; list B, £813; and list C, £22,000.

1813. *Mr. Feldwick.*] That was not made a present to the contractor?—No; it was offered to all tenderers alike; it was, in fact, part of the payment for the work to be done.

1814. Was it valued before being handed over?—The tenderers took it into consideration when making out their tenders; they allowed so much for it. There was no valuation that appeared, but it was allowed for in the tendering. We did not put a value on it; we simply asked them to tender, and they took into account the facilities which these things would afford them in carrying out their contract for which they would otherwise have had to pay.

1815. What was the value of the plant?—It would take some time to get it up. There are, as I said, three lists, one of things to be consumed in the contract, which the contractor could not return; the next, of stuff that might be used and the residue returned; the next, property to be furnished for the purpose of carrying on the contract.

1816. Has the contractor given any security for their return?—£1,500.

1817. Then, the two things are mixed up together?—Yes.

1818. That is the only security for completion of the contract and the return of this valuable plant?—Yes; and the usual percentage to be deducted.

1819. There is an additional security held in hand?—Ten per cent. We pay 90 per cent. on the value of the work done, and 50 per cent. on the value of the materials.

1820. *Mr. O'Connor.*] When this contractor entered on his work, what balance of the £1,500 remained as security for wear-and-tear and fulfilment of the contract?—It matters nothing; we had the plant; he could not remove it without permission.

1821. Suppose we say, for argument sake, there were seventy thousand pounds worth?—There was not anything near that.

1822. The railway, was not that handed over?—Yes; but he could not run away with it; he cannot run away with anything.

1823. But, as a matter of fact, the railway has been handed over to the contractor?—Yes.

1824. What is the length of the railway?—Six or seven miles.

1825. How many cranes were handed over?—The whole of these details are given here in my report. There were three cranes of 5 tons, two of 17 tons, two of 20 tons, and three of 25 tons.

1826. All the engine-sheds and trucks: he got the use of them?—Yes; everything required.

1827. You say that all this is not worth £70,000?—I do not know what it is worth.

1828. Was he bound to keep it in order?—Yes.

1829. Has he done it?—Yes; he has been kept up to the work in every way.

1830. How do you know?—I have every faith in the officers of the Government there.

1831. You are really the superior officer in charge of this work: have you visited the place? if so, how often?—I have not been there since they took it over.

1832. How often has Mr. Martin been there?—I cannot say.

1833. You are responsible for the work, and you visited it once in twelve months, and you cannot say how often your subordinate visits it?—I cannot say how often Mr. Martin visits it, but the other officer (the Assistant Engineer) lives on the ground.

1834. Are there any instructions from the head of the department as to the number of times they should visit the work?—There are no instructions of that sort given to the District Engineer.

1835. Are you aware that the railway has gone much out of repair since it has been in the contractor's hands?—No; I would be very much surprised if it were so.

1836. As to the output of stone, is there a penalty for non-fulfilment?—Yes.

1837. What is the amount that he has put out in each term of three months?—20,000 tons from October to March; 14,000 from April to September.

1838. Has that been fulfilled?—No.

1839. How much is he short?—He was a little short the first quarter. I cannot tell you without referring to the books.

1840. Would you call it 10,000 tons?—I do not know the amount he is short, but I will get the information for you.

* Correct answer also given to question 1784.