

25. You swear to their correctness?—Yes.

26. In preparing these returns you have taken the figures from the books of the New Zealand railways?—Yes; from the books and returns of the New Zealand railways.

27. And you swear they are true copies?—Yes. I would like to remark, in connection with the passenger returns, that all return tickets, according to railway usage, are doubled. It is assumed that each passenger with a return ticket makes two separate trips, and therefore it has always been the custom to double return tickets. That has been done in this instance.

28. *Mr. Hudson.*] With reference to the earnings of the railway due to construction going on, I believe you are taking steps to produce evidence before us on our journey to show what portion of these revenues is due to the constructive works going on: is that not so?—That is so—at Greymouth and at Christchurch.

29. We asked for that, but it is not included in these returns?—That is so.

30. Of course, it is a good deal of opinion, which will be largely influenced by the knowledge of the officers of the districts, as to what traffic is due to construction and what is not?—That is so.

PERCY SAWTELL WALDIE examined on oath.

31. *The Chairman.*] What is your position in the public service?—I am Book-keeper in the Public Works Department.

32. You hand in these returns?—Yes [Exhibits 4, 5, and 6].

33. You swear these returns are true extracts from the books of the Public Works Department?—I do.

34. You vouch for their absolute correctness?—I do.

35. *Mr. Hudson.*] I would like to ask you the position of the Belgrove-Norris's Gully Railway in respect to the expenditure by the Government and by the company?—The only expenditure I can give is the expenditure by the Government, and that is shown in the returns I have just handed in.

36. Why did the Government do part of the construction and the company part of the construction?—The company had already formed up to a certain mileage—I am not sure of the exact figures: about twenty-seven miles—and then the Government took the line from the Midland Railway Company, and completed the portion of such railway into Norris's Gully.

37. The expenditure by the Government is subsequent to the expenditure by the company?—Yes; and it is shown in each return—one at the Springfield end, where the company formed the line for a certain distance and the Government completed it, and similarly in respect to the Belgrove Section.

## NELSON.

THURSDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY, 1901.

THOMAS ROBERTS examined on oath.

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you, Mr. Roberts?—Civil engineer, residing in Nelson.

2. And you have been engaged in connection with the Belgrove Section of the Midland Railway?—Yes.

3. *Mr. Bell.*] You were at first in the employ of the Midland Railway Company?—Yes.

4. When did you join their service?—January, 1889.

5. And on what section were you first employed?—The Springfield Section.

6. Had you much to do with the Springfield Section?—I assisted to peg that out up to beyond Paterson's Creek. It was through the bush.

7. When did you come to Nelson?—November, 1890.

8. For what purpose?—To take charge of the Belgrove Section.

9. Had the contract been let when you arrived?—Yes.

10. To Mr. Maguire?—Yes.

11. That is, the first contract?—Yes.

12. Had Maguire started when you arrived?—Two or three days before. He practically started when I arrived.

13. How long did you remain in sole charge?—Until June, 1893.

14. Then Mr. Walter Clifford took charge?—Yes.

15. And you went into the employ of the City Council?—Yes.

16. Remaining in Nelson?—Yes.

17. In December, 1895, what did you do?—I was employed by the Government, to be under Mr. J. A. Wilson, who had charge of the Belgrove Section then.

18. *The Chairman.*] That is, after the Government took possession?—Yes.

19. *Mr. Bell.*] Do you remember at what time the Government commenced work on the Belgrove Section?—Mr. Holmes had been here previously—I think three or four months previously to my being employed. Mr. Holmes repegged the line. There was a little work done in the way of clearing the weatherings and cuttings, and so on, before I went on. It was December when I commenced duty.

20. And you continued in that position under Mr. Wilson till December, 1897?—Yes.

21. And what happened then?—I had full charge then.

22. When did you leave the Government employ?—31st December, 1900.

23. During your time of sole charge was the line handed over to the Railway Department?—I should have said that I ceased to be an officer in the Public Works Department in December, 1900. I have been employed since by the Government.

24. While you were in sole charge was the line completed by the Public Works Department and handed over to the Railway Department?—Yes.