

25. Do you remember when that was?—February, 1899.
26. Do you know of your own knowledge whether Maguire's contract was let by public tender?—I have always understood that it was let by public tender.
27. When you were employed in December, 1895, you saw the condition of the line?—Yes.
28. Now, first, as to the earthwork—what was the condition of the formation?—It was in fair condition considering the time that had elapsed since it was made. A good deal of weathering had come down from the cuttings. Of course, there had been two or three winters, and some of the side-cuttings were blocked very much, and the edges of the formation had been worn away a good deal by cattle and sheep. There was no bad settlement anywhere. At most, something about 6 in. or 9 in. was made up in the banks.
29. The tunnel—what condition was that in?—That was in good condition.
30. Do you remember if any of the banks had to be widened?—Oh, yes; edges had been worn off. It had been trodden by stock—considerably in some places. The tunnel was in good order.
31. The fencing?—That was not in good order.
32. In what condition was it?—Parts were broken down by trees being blown across it. There had been no one to attend to the upkeep. Sheep getting through had broken it down very much. A good many posts were wanted.
33. There were no rails?—No rails.
34. Was there any ballasting?—No.
35. Any sleepers?—No.
36. Any cattle-stops?—No.
37. Any road-crossings?—No. There were gates to the crossings.
38. Were there any bridges?—No, not complete.
39. *The Chairman.*] What about the bridge above the Belgrove Hotel?—That was not complete.
40. *Mr. Bell.*] The concrete of the abutments at the bridge above the Belgrove Hotel was standing, but with that exception there were no bridge-works?—No bridge-works.
41. *Dr. Findlay.*] Does the witness suggest that that was the only bridge-work done on the line of any kind?—Yes.
42. *Mr. Bell.*] As to station-buildings: what buildings were made to begin with?—A weather-boarded office and a platelayer's iron cottage.
43. Is that all?—Yes.
44. Where is the office now?—At Motupiko.
45. It was moved to Motupiko?—Yes.
46. And where is the platelayer's cottage?—At the west end of the tunnel.
47. What is the office at Motupiko used for?—It has been let lately to one of the platelayers of the Railway Department.
48. Is it in the station-yard at Motupiko?—Yes.
49. While you were on the works the formation was completed, the bridges were made, and the permanent-way was laid?—Yes.
50. All done under your supervision?—Yes.
51. Was all the work done by the Government necessary?—Yes.
52. How was the work done—by contract or co-operative labour?—Co-operative labour chiefly.
53. Who fixed the price?—Mr. Wilson while he was there, but practically I did all through.
54. Was the work done economically, in your opinion, or was it extravagantly done?—It was done economically.
55. And, as you say, was necessary?—Yes.
56. Now, there was one deviation, was there not, from the company's line—in Norris's Gully?—Yes.
57. What was that deviation to effect? Why was the deviation made?—To get a better location of the line. It was between the two bridges.
58. The effect of the deviation was to cross the river once instead of twice, as designed by the company?—Yes, and it saved a river-deviation.
59. That is to say, it meant one bridge instead of two, and avoided a creek-diversion?—Yes.
60. What was the value of the company's work, roughly, which was thus rendered useless?—I think, £180 or £200; but you must take that as an approximate estimate.
61. Was the deviation advisable?—I think so.
62. And in the interests of economy as well as in the working of the line?—Yes.
63. It was more economical as laid out by the Government, as well as better for the working of the line?—Yes; for the working of the line, certainly.
64. The line was handed over to the Railway Department in February, 1899?—Yes.
65. Was it handed over in good order?—Yes.
66. Is there any difference now from the condition of the line in 1899?—After it was handed over to the Railway Department two relief sidings were put in by the Public Works Department—one on each side of the tunnel.
67. That, you say, was necessary for the work?—Yes, it was proved to be necessary.
68. With that exception, was the line, as handed over, practically in the condition it is now?—Yes. I forgot to mention that a platelayer's cottage has been built since by the Public Works Department in the Belgrove yard.
69. The Government station has been moved across to the present yard?—Yes.
70. *Mr. Fraser.*] When did you say the relief sidings were put in?—Between February and July, 1899.
71. *Dr. Findlay.*] Did your knowledge of the line commence earlier than December, 1895?—I had been through, and seen the line in passing, between the time I left in 1893 and 1895.