

72. Do you know that the company ceased active work on the line: the last work they did on the line was in December, 1893?—Yes, I believe so.

73. They were working on the line when you left?—Yes.

74. When did you leave?—June, 1893.

75. Do you know they were doing work on the line until the end of 1893?—They were working some time after I left.

76. Then, the Government took possession in May, 1895, so that for something like seventeen or eighteen months nothing had been done by any one to the line?—Yes.

77. Then, your further close association with the line was in the end of 1895?—Yes.

78. The line had then been six months in the hands of the Government?—Yes.

79. As far as your knowledge goes, nothing was done by the Government save a little work in the month of October by Mr. Holmes?—Yes, I think so.

80. So that, out of the two years the line lay in an unadvanced state, eighteen months was under the *régime* of the company and six months under the *régime* of the Crown?—Yes; it seems to be like that.

81. You told Mr. Bell that the formation done by the company appeared to be good work?—Yes.

82. But that the wear of weather had interfered with the banks here and there?—Yes.

83. Could you give me a rough estimate? Assuming that weather damage occurred during the time the company had possession, from the end of 1893 till May, 1895, how much, roughly, would be required to repair fences, remove slight slips, and put the formation in proper condition for progress?—I could not even give an approximate estimate.

84. Looking at the total work, it would be a comparatively small sum. You gave us a mental estimate some time ago: could you give us an estimate of this; was it about three-fourths of what it cost to repair it?—You might fairly put it at that.

85. What was that?—I have not the accounts.

86. You could not give us even a rough estimate?—No, because it was let in small contracts.

87. You know, as a matter of reliable knowledge, that the construction was by public tender; you know Mr. Maguire was the successful tenderer?—Yes.

88. Do you remember ever seeing advertisements freely appearing in the newspapers?—No.

89. I have here an advertisement calling for tenders for the construction of the tunnel and other works on the line. Do you know that Maguire's tender for this work was over £10,000 lower than the next highest tender?—I do not know it as a fact.

90. Do you know the amount of Maguire's tender?—£44,000, perhaps.

91. £46,676 8s. 8d., was it?—Yes, probably so.

92. Are you in a position to say whether that price was a low price for the work done?—It turned out to be a fair price, I think.

93. Do you know that Maguire, in doing the work, had singular good fortune?—Yes; that is what I mean by saying that it turned out to be a fair price.

94. In what respect was he lucky?—In the tunnel-work.

95. And that was far the most expensive work he had to do?—Yes.

96. In what way was he fortunate in the tunnel-work?—There was no water met with and no rock.

97. Do you know that there was another contract called the Norris's Gully extension?—Yes, that was after.

*Mr. Bell*: It is called 22a in Return 11, page 123.

99. *Dr. Findlay*.] Do you know the amount of the smaller contract—£3,007?—I do not know.

100. Have you entered into any estimate as to the cost of the construction-works taken over by the Government in May, 1895?—No.

101. After you took charge—or, at least, during the time you had charge—the Government pushed on with the construction, and that work was done chiefly by co-operative labour?—Yes.

102. Had you had experience of co-operative labour before?—No.

103. Had you experience of contract-work before?—Yes.

104. First, speaking independently of this particular work or of any other particular work, can you carry out work as economically by means of co-operative labour as by contract—putting it up to public tender?—I have not had an opportunity of comparing other works with co-operative labour.

105. What is your view of this instance?—This has been done certainly as economically by co-operative labour as by public tender. Everything was favourable to it being carried out under the co-operative system.

106. The work lent itself to the co-operative system?—Yes, very much.

107. Then, with the exception of £180 or £200—taking it as your mental estimate—the whole of the other work of the company has been used by the Crown?—Yes.

108. Then, looking at it from the point of view of wasted work, would it have been reasonably possible to have foreseen when the line was surveyed that the deviation you made was preferable to the other line?—It was a matter of judgment at the time. There was no survey made on the side of the gully where the railway has been made for the purpose of ascertaining which was the best route.

109. I take it that it would be accounted as incidental of railway-construction that a little portion of the survey-work may become useless?—Yes.

110. With the exception of £180 or £200, the whole of the work done by the company has been availed of by the Crown?—Yes.

111. And you have nothing to say against it—that it has been extravagantly done or improperly done?—No.