

181. *Mr. Fraser.*] Mr. Roberts said he came in December, 1895?—Yes.

182. The line was seized by the Crown in May, 1895?—Yes.

183. Who was in charge from May, 1895, or was anybody in charge from May, 1895, till December?—No one was in charge from May till about October; but in October Mr. R. W. Holmes came over and took charge, and made a survey with the view of the work being completed.

184. *The Chairman.*] Now, coming to the rolling-stock on the Belgrove-Motupiko Section, can you give us a schedule of the rolling-stock that was on this line when it finally came into the possession of the Government?—Yes. No rolling-stock was ever put on this line by the company; but when the Government came to work it they put on some extra wagons I believe, which were charged to working-expenses in the six-monthly accounts rendered to the company.

185. But between the time you took possession and the time it was finally vested in the Governor can you supply us with the number of engines, carriages, and wagons of various classes?—We did not put any extra engines on, nor any carriages. The engines and carriages that were there before—that is, on the line between Belgrove and Nelson—were sufficient for all the traffic.

186. That means you had no rolling-stock at all which the company had any claim to between the time the Government took possession of the line and when the line came finally into possession of the Government?—Except a few trucks, and those are charged for in the six-monthly accounts of working.

187. Can you give us the value of those trucks?—I have here a return showing that the cost of the Nelson wagons was £1,287 8s. There were ten wagons, Class L, and two covered goods-vans, Class K.

188. And the rolling-stock was on the line when it became the property of the Crown, on the 23rd July, 1900, so far as you know?—Yes.

189. *Mr. Graham.*] And it was paid for by the company?—It was charged to the company; I am not aware whether it was paid for.

190. Was it included within the time they were paying regularly the amounts demanded of them?—My impression is it was not; but if you want me to answer for certain it will take me a little time to look the matter up.

191. *Mr. Fraser.*] I see that the cost of these trucks and rolling-stock is in the revenue and expenditure account: was it paid for out of revenue derived from the traffic over the line, or from the payments made by the company?—It was paid for out of revenue, so far as the revenue went; but it happened that in one or two of these accounts there was a debit balance, because the revenue was more than exhausted.

192. *Mr. Hudson.*] Can you tell me if any land-grants were made on account of this section we are dealing with—the Belgrove-Norris's Gully section?—There was a special provision in the contract as regards the Belgrove and the Springfield Sections to the effect that the company were to get land-grants in advance, and the company did get the land-grants in advance.

193. We should like to know what land was granted to them, and the value of it?—I am afraid I cannot tell you the particular blocks they got, but they got land to the B1 value of £30,000.

194. You can testify to the fact that they got land at the B1 value in respect to this section?—Yes. The ordinary provision of the contract was that they were not to get land-grants until sections of the railway were completed; but the provisions of the contract with regard to these two sections were that they were to get the land-grants when they had let contracts to the amount of £60,000.

195. *The Chairman.*] And you say they got a land-grant of £30,000 for the Belgrove-Norris's Gully Section?—Yes. They never completed that section, but they got a land-grant of £30,000 in respect of it.

196. *Mr. Hudson.*] Can you tell me if the Government gave any land upon which this section of the railway is constructed?—Yes, they did.

197. Can you tell us to what extent?—Yes; it is not a very large area—about 36 acres. The contract provided that any Crown land on which the line had to be constructed was to be given free.

198. Of course, you are not in a position to give the value of that land?—No; the Commissioner of Crown Lands can be called for that purpose.

199. I understand that the company's expenditure and your expenditure, in accordance with that return, completes the total sum spent on the line, but there are some claims to be still settled—in other words, that the land is not entirely paid for. I am talking of the section from Belgrove to Norris's Gully: can you give us any idea of the sums that are still to be disbursed before this railway is completely paid for—I want to know what sums we should add to the sums we have now recorded as the cost of the railway?—As regards land-compensation, I only know of two unsettled claims, so far.

200. Are you aware that all the land has been paid for except those two?—No, I am not aware of that.

201. There may be a number of claims to come forward of which you are not aware?—There may be, but I do not anticipate them.

202. What is the amount of these two claims of which you are really aware?—One is £1,500; the other claim is not stated, so far.

203. Then, the amount that is to be paid for this railway is an unknown quantity?—Yes.

204. Are there any other items that will have to be met besides land-claims?—I do not call anything else to mind, except, of course, if traffic develops we shall need further appliances.

205. I mean demands in respect to the original construction and completion of the line?—We only know of such demands when some one claims.