

62. You were, of course, aware that the company had no intention of constructing the Belgrove Section. Were you present at the parliamentary inquiry?—Most of it.

63. At the inquiry of 1892?—Yes.

64. Do you remember the question being raised in 1892 as to whether or not the company ever seriously intended at any time to construct that north and south line?—I do not at this very moment remember Mr. Wilson ever being asked whether the company ever intended to make it.

65. Do you remember Mr. Wilson saying, in answer to a certain question, that if the company had gone into the question of construction closely it would never have entered into the original contract with regard to that north and south line?—I remember seeing that in the evidence. I had no consultation with him on the subject.

66. Hon. E. BLAKE.] Mr. Stringer's question is if you heard that question put to Mr. Wilson in the Committee?—I do not remember it.

67. Mr. Stringer.] I suppose there are communications from the office in Christchurch to the office in London with regard to the prospects of the north and south line?—I have no doubt there are.

68. And as to the possibility of its construction under the contract?—None so far as my memory serves me. Any that passed would be when Mr. Wilson was in charge of the correspondence.

69. Were you cognisant of those communications?—I have no recollections except this: that at one time he and I went around a portion of the line with others.

70. When was that?—I really forget.

71. Was that before 1890?—I should think it was in 1890 or 1891, because it was when Mr. Wilson had come out again. I believe in 1889.

72. Did you form a conclusion then?—My conclusion was only formed as to the land-grant which would be obtainable.

73. Did you form a conclusion as to whether the company could do that work on the basis of the contract?—I simply did not touch the engineering point of view. I was there solely for the land-grant, and was making notes on the subject.

74. I want now to deal with one or two specific grievances. Of course, you are familiar with the working of clause 33?—Yes, or the non-working.

75. I think in 1891 an arrangement was arrived at between the company and the Government as to dealing with the applications under that section, an arrangement that was satisfactory to you?—It may seem so; but if you knew some of the things I do, it was in 1892 an arrangement was nearly come to, I think—I have got no clue as to the date.

76. Your own evidence was given in the Committee in 1892, and this is what you said, as printed; I suppose it is correct. You were asked how many of the 753 applications that had been made you had been able to deal with, and you said, "About a dozen or fourteen were dealt with some three years ago in the Hokitika district; subsequently none have been actually completed and the money paid, although in some thirty-six other cases the company have agreed with the applicants as to price and terms, and they have all expressed their willingness to buy. I believe the difficulties under this clause may now be considered at an end. But this was only so recently before this inquiry that I believe instructions have not yet been given for the Receivers of Land Revenue to receive the deposits from these people. I think that is arranged for now, and that authority will be given, if not already given within the last week or two; so I understand there is to be no further difficulty." That was the conclusion you arrived at as the result of the arrangements you made with the Government. Is that not so?—At that time no such instructions were given to my knowledge, and since then the difficulties were never set aside.

77. Do you say that the instructions to the Receiver of Land Revenue were not given in terms of the agreement?—As far as—

78. Do you know that they were not given?—I know we were never able to carry out any sales after that.

79. We will deal with that presently. Do you swear you were not able to carry out sales, or do you say that you did not or would not carry them out?—I know we had been trying to all the time up to this, and that we thought we had arrived at a basis.

80. Then, there did arrive a time?—That is rather difficult to speak of.

81. I quite appreciate your difficulty, and I propose to help you out of it in a moment. Let me put it to you in this shape: Will you tell me why, after that arrangement was made, you did not complete any applications under clause 33?—I should be very glad to tell you if I had time to look up some notes; but you evidently have before you something that I have forgotten at the moment.

82. Was it not for reasons of the company's own that they did not proceed with that clause 33?—I should say not.

83. Do you say that, if that arrangement were made, the Government prevented you in any way carrying out the purchases under that clause?—I say at this moment that I have not a recollection of that arrangement you speak of being carried out.

84. You were the land-manager of this company in 1892. You made the arrangements with the Government for carrying out the purchases under clause 33. I want to know why that arrangement was not carried out. Was it because the company did not care to carry it out, or because the Government put any obstructions in the way?—It is according to what you read.

85. Never mind what you read. I ask you, as land-manager of the company, what you know?—I say I have no recollection. It is according to what you read.

86. I do not want you to refer to what you read. I want you, as land-manager, to tell me why these applications were not proceeded with?—A number of applications were not proceeded with because it took so long to get an answer from the Government, either refusing or agreeing,