

1555. You think that that was the preferable mode of constructing the Railway?—  
I think so.

1556. Was there any discussion between yourself and the Chief Engineer with regard to this?—Yes; at the time. They will be found in the Parliamentary Reports, containing letters from Commissioners and from Chief Engineer to Government on the subject.

1557. Was it the Chief Engineer or Commissioners that determined to whom the contract should be given?—Tenders were ultimately addressed to the Commissioners, and after being examined by them were reported to Government, and recommendations made, but no contract could be given out until sanctioned by Government.

1558. Were the views expressed in those reports always acted upon? Were they not in many cases departed from?—They were.

1559. Have you the tenders you received in reference to letting of this section?—  
I have copies of all the tenders. There were thirty-nine for this section.

1560. What were the prices on which they went?—The lowest tender appears to be from Messrs. King & Gough, being \$206,000. The highest was \$426,000.

1561. In that case was Messrs. King & Gough's tender the lowest one recommended for acceptance to the Government?—It was, ultimately; not in the first instance. The first report Commissioners made to Government recommended that tender of Messrs. Brooks & Ryan should be accepted.

1562. Do you remember why it was you preferred that tender to Messrs. King & Gough's?—Messrs. Brooks & Ryan were men of great experience in carrying on works of this kind, and I did not consider King & Gough had such experience.

1563. Can you inform the Committee what subsequent considerations over-ruled the conclusion to which you then came and induced you to alter your report?—There is a note in our Minute Book to this effect:—Section 16. "The Commissioners cannot report favorably in reference to the progress of the work upon this section. The difficulties of construction from the inaccessibility of its position have been serious, and it is believed that by the time the sections on either side of it are completed, it will be ready for the track-layers." The Commissioners being satisfied of Messrs. King & Gough, recommended their experience, although this recommendation was merely in compliance with terms of the Act.

1564. Was it rather to comply with the Act than because of your own convictions?—My preference was for Brooks & Ryan. If the matter was left to me I should have given the contract to them.

*By Mr. Mitchell:—*

1565. Did that report you refer to only apply to one section?—No; section No. 3, as well as section 16, was changed at the wish of the Government.

1566. On reconsideration?—Yes; section No. 3 was, in our report, recommended to be given to Patrick Purcell, for \$496,800; but was subsequently given to Messrs. Berlinquet & Co.

1567. Were they the lowest tender also?—Not the lowest. Mr. Purcell's was the one we recommended, at \$496,800. Berlinquet's was \$462,000.

*By Mr. Mills:—*

1568. There were very large reductions made upon this section, in quantities, according to the Report of the Engineer?—There were reductions made in a great many of the sections.

1569. Mr. Buck stated that it was the practice to return quantities mentioned in the original plans not executed. Were you aware of this?—I was not aware that anything was returned but actual work done. Such a practice was not sanctioned or authorized by the Commissioners.

1570. Were payments to the contractors on this section made always upon the quantities, or were advances made?—Advances were made.

1571. Did the Commissioners approve of that policy?—They did. It was the policy adopted after consulting with the Government.