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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

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FORMBY AND ULVERSTONE RAILWAY :

CONTRACTORS' EXPLANATION OF ALLEGED COMPLAINTS.

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Laid upon the Table by the Minister of Lands, and ordered by the House of  
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Formby, 6th August, 1890.

## FORMBY AND ULVERSTONE RAILWAY.

### CONTRACTORS' EXPLANATION OF ALLEGED COMPLAINTS.

1. *Earthworks*.—Complaint—Bank not trimmed at the Don Bridge where bank had subsided; few trucks of material required would be paid for. Reason—A considerable amount of vegetation, and it was advisable not to disturb it, as it is a great protection against rain guttering sides.

2. *Cattle-guards*.—(A.) Complaint—That instead of packing below wall-plate the packing should be between rail and beam.—Purely a matter of opinion as to which is preferable, the former necessitating a considerable expense. It was left till the last in order to allow banks to subside as much as possible, and the three or four that had to be done were not completed on day of final inspection. (B.) Not sufficient number of dog-spikes.—Meaning an outlay of not more than £1 8s. on the whole number, and allowing that each pit had to be spiked *in toto*.

3. *Crossings*.—(A.) Best-street, guard-rails not down.—Reason was the temporary road leading to sleeper heap had its lead right on the crossing, and when pulled up just before final inspection it was overlooked; actual cost 16s., which is not paid for.

Esplanade—Timber guard-rails had been overlooked not in; the iron rails had been in place some months; cost £2.

Complaint—Guard-rails all too short.—Put in according to instructions, and the same width as the metal, and about the same length as put in in other colonies.

2½ in. metal too large at several of the crossings, ones pointed out being William-street and Lillico's two crossings. Allowing 20 per cent. to be broken, 100 cubic yards, equal 20 at 2s., £2.

4. *Ballast*.—Claimed that we should allow 240 cubic yards, at 2s. 6d., out of total 20,000.

5. *Lifting Roads*.—Several curves had either too much or too little curve, and one spot (showing the minute inspection), the cattle-guard at Eugene-street, had the cant on the wrong side, which was caused by the men who were lifting and packing the cattle-guard before referred to. The whole of this work, Mr. Back acknowledges, could be lifted and put straight in a fortnight with 16 men at, say, £5 per diem—£60. The whole of these incorrect cants come directly upon maintenance, with the one exception above referred to. The whole of the road was lifted by a most experienced man, with spirit level and straight edge, to the cant authorised by your officer as per list attached, and under the supervision of your inspector, Mr. James Bradley. We would respectfully point out that on green banks and in wet cuttings it matters not how carefully the road is lifted it very soon loses its running top, and at first it is all repairers can do or can be expected to do to pick up the worst of the bad places.

6. *Rails*.—Complaint that several were crippled; but at final inspection these were not pointed out.

The total of these alleged defects amounts to £96 4s.

We have had very vast dealings in connection with railway construction works, our joint experience covering no less than 1500 miles, and extending over 40 years, but we have never seen any line faulted for the paltry sum of less than £100. This amount, however, Mr. Back refused to take, although, in our opinion, it was more than a fair estimate to do all he required, and it was also the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief; but Mr. Back stuck out for £250 (how he arrived at that amount he did not say). It was agreed to pay him that amount, which was to cover every claim made by Mr. Back for our bad (?) construction.

Now, Sir, we leave it to you, in all fairness, to say whether that was anything to delay opening the line for or worthy of consideration; being an amount equal to one-third of a per cent. on amount of contract is, in itself, an unanswerable fact.

As to the inspection, we consider it a piece of the most unbusiness-like and ungentlemanly conduct ever displayed on public works. Mr. Dowling, his inspector, and gang of men, were told off to go and give the line a private overhaul without any notification to us or to the Resident Engineer. He (Mr. Dowling) commenced his inspection on Sunday and continued then up to Monday night.

We have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

SMITH, JONES, & FINLAYSON.

*The Hon. A. T. PILLINGER, Minister of Public Works, Hobart.*