

to establish, by reference to the depositions themselves, how marked and substantial these differences are in particular and numerous cases. They must be carefully considered not only as affecting the credibility of witnesses, but also in connection with the disadvantages under which the claimants have labored in making their proof. For, added to the difficulties set forth in the Memorial, arising from the long lapse of time, from depredations upon the property, from natural decay, and from the death of the most important witnesses, is the hostile feeling alluded to, which pervades and influences the whole population where alone witnesses were to be sought. This feeling, in many instances, results from the fact that the witness is himself in the possession of lands belonging to the claimants, in others, from personal disagreement with the Company or some one of its officers, and in all cases is either originated or intensified by a national dislike to a foreign corporation of great power, holding large possessions and exercising extensive influence in their midst. It is not too much to say that this sentiment, amounting to bitter hatred, is all but universal, and that while many of the witnesses for the defence are unwilling to avow it, others, of a bolder character, frankly admit the fact. The monstrous hardihood of the Company in making its claim, is the popular theme of politicians, and furnishes an inexhaustible topic of declamation and invective to the local press, which during the whole time of taking evidence in Oregon, spared no effort to encourage witnesses on the one side, and to denounce and deter them on the other. Every man who could say anything true or conjectural, was eager to testify against the unpopular body which appears as claimant. Public men, or those intending to become such, made political capital out of it. Others went with the current; many of them gratifying either their vindictiveness, or their interest, or both; while, on the other hand, those in possession of knowledge which would sustain the claim, were naturally unwilling to make themselves obnoxious to all around them, and to incur the imputation of want of patriotism, and not unlikely, of baseness and corruption. All this was the more mischievous as witnesses could not be brought up by compulsory process. A reference to the file of local newspapers produced, (Doc. Ev. F 22, p. 480), which might have been increased to a very great number, and to some of the depositions which will be here-