

Q. I find this in Mr. Smith's evidence: he was asked "Should there not have been platforms or corduroy put in on those soft places?" His reply was: "In discussing that question with Mr. Rowan, I said 'When you saw that these embankments were swallowing up much more earth than was originally estimated, why did you not think of suggesting some means by which the subsidence could be arrested?' He said he was carrying out the original plan, and that the deepening of the off-take ditches would be sufficient under the circumstances. I replied that I would have corduroyed it with timber."

Do you think you should have corduroyed it with timber?—No; I do not. It might have been done that way had we known at the time it was going to save such a serious work in some places as it did.

Q. You think it would have been better corduroyed with timber?—No; it will make a better job this way.

*By the Honorable Mr. Cornall :—*

Q. Mr. Smith was asked what was the object of lowering the grades, and his answer was "It was to reduce the cost of crossing the ravines and deep depressions as much as possible, and to get material, and more nearly balance the quantities of excavation and embankment."—Mr. Smith's statement is not inaccurate because it does not tally with mine, for there are points in the work in which that effect is produced by the lowering of the grades; but as I understand the question as put to me by the Honorable gentleman here it was done with that object, but it was not done with reference to the substitution of full banks for trestle-work. There were some places where the bank was put into the lake, and trestle-work would have taken nearly the same quantity of rock as it would for a narrow high rock bank nearly all the way across, sufficient to carry the trains. By lowering the grade at that point we got the quantity of rock just sufficient to give the amount required to effect that purpose.

Q. It is in consequence of the lowering of the grade that the total cost has been increased so much?—That is one of the reasons that has increased the quantity of rock work to be done; but it has largely decreased an entirely disproportionate amount of work that will have to be done before the road is completed with solid banks; that is to say, we have added on a yard of rock, and have taken off ten, fifteen, or twenty yards of bank that would at some other time have to be made up.

*By the Honorable Mr. Macpherson :—*

Q. On whose authority were those changes of grade made?—They were furnished to me from the head office.

Q. Was the head office then under the charge of Mr. Fleming or Mr. Smith?—Under the charge of Mr. Fleming. The contract and specification, I think, state that the right of making a change in the grades at any time during the progress of the work is in the hands of the Engineer-in-Chief, and he may order it to be done without any extra claim on the part of the contractor. It is a schedule contract, and he has got to be paid for whatever he does.

Q. Mr. Smith says there was a total change in the character of the work?—I have not read his evidence.

*By the Honorable Mr. Haythorne :—*

Q. Were the quantities in the schedule consistent, or could the contractor gain by the change?—I think it is probable that he could. I called attention in the report to the fact that while the country was going to be saved money if the change I suggested were made, there was no doubt in the world it would be a benefit to the contractor, because it was continuing work that he was getting a high price for, and doing away with work that he was getting a low price for; therefore, if it advantaged the country it also advantaged the contractor. That was a matter I had nothing to do with; but I called attention to the fact, and I expressed it as my opinion, that the contractor should be called upon—if the Government approved of the suggestion of mine, by which certain works in connection with the contract would have to be done—to do these works at prices proportionate to the rates he had for the same class