

On the return of the writer to his duties in the autumn of 1878, his attention was directed to the difference between the original quantities and the work returned as executed on Sections Nos. 14, 15 and 25.

Whatever the cause, it was plain that the original quantities had been greatly increased. No report of any such contingency had been made to him. The fact fell upon him as startling, from being unexpected, as it was alarming and unaccountable.

He had never supposed that a result of this character was possible. Had he been in the country his duty would have led him to take means to keep down the expenditure, to amend the line where change was advantageous and possible, and if through any cause the quantities of work executed showed a tendency to over-run the estimate, his attention would have been at once directed to the subject, as progress sections and the monthly returns conveyed the unwelcome information. No time would have been lost in endeavoring to ascertain the cause of the difficulty, and steps would have been taken to rectify it.

The original bills of quantities were made up without the exact data necessary for forming estimates with accuracy. They were prepared, from the best information, by engineers who had charge of each particular survey. As there was great pressure to have the work placed under contract, and definite quantities were indispensable, the results were, to a certain extent, assumed.

Much of the line passes through muskegs and marshes. The surveys were mostly made in winter when the ground was frozen. This circumstance doubtless, in some cases, deceived the surveyors as to its character, and led them to mistake marsh and muskeg for firm earth. One thing is certain, the quantities published before tenders were invited made no claim to exactness. Their *prima facie* character establishes this fact beyond dispute. The amounts are almost invariably in round figures, such as 100,000 lineal feet or 1,000,000 cubic yards. At the same time, although estimated, or rather assumed, specially to admit of a comparison of tenders by having the different prices applied to them and the total amounts thus worked out, it was also supposed that if not approximately correct, they would at least not be greatly at variance with the actual results.