

Railway Construction—Contracts 14 & 15.

545. Did Mr. Whitehead undertake to do any work on the eastern end of section 14?—Yes; he undertook to do a portion of Sifton & Ward's contract, immediately adjoining section 15.

Whitehead undertook the portion of Con. 14 adjoining 15.

546. From whom did he take that contract?—I think the contract was transferred by the Government from Sifton & Ward to Whitehead.

Contract transferred by Govt. from Sifton & Ward to Whitehead.

547. Are you aware that the quantities estimated by the Government engineers, were unexpectedly raised by changing the grade of the eastern end of section 14, so that it might coincide with the western end of section 15?—I am not aware that that could be done.

Witness does not think the grade of 14 was raised to correspond with 15.

548. Are you not aware that it was done?—I am not. The country is of the same character at the junction of the contracts.

549. Then you say that it was known from the beginning where the grades would meet?—I cannot say that, but I do not see why there should be any reason why the grades should not meet.

550. You are not aware that any such opinion was entertained?—No.

551. You never heard of it?—No.

552. Did it happen, either on the eastern portion of section 14 which Mr. Whitehead undertook, or on section 15, that muskegs were drained and the bottoms subsided?—You mean that the surface of the muskeg subsided?

553. No; I mean that after drainage the earth would sink at the bottom so as to make a lower surface of earth?—Yes; the section of the railway shown after the drainage of the muskeg was very much lower than was shown before the drainage.

After muskegs were drained locality covered by them very much lower than before.

554. The earth at the bottom of the muskeg?—Yes.

555. Were there some muskegs drained which had that effect?—Yes.

556. In many places?—On the eastern half of section 14 there were several large muskegs that subsided in that way.

Several large muskegs on eastern end of 14 subsided.

557. Would it be possible to follow that altered surface by the railway line, or was it necessary to fill it up to the original line grade?—If it was intended to make the embankment a certain height in the first place, the absolute height of that embankment might be reduced to correspond with the lowered muskeg.

558. Without interfering with the line?—Yes; because the muskeg was more solid after drainage and would support an embankment better than a wet muskeg would.

559. Do you mean that the formation line might have been lowered, where muskegs were drained, beyond what was originally intended without affecting the efficiency of the line?—Yes; they might have been lowered and an embankment made of the height originally intended.

Formation line of railway might have been lowered where muskegs were drained without reducing its efficiency.

560. Was that done in those muskegs that were drained?—I am not aware that it was. I think not.

561. Do you think that an unnecessary height of embankment was made through those muskegs?—It is the opinion of some engineers that the embankments are unnecessarily high.

Opinion of Engineers that embankments through drained muskegs were made unnecessarily high.