

The first sections were hurriedly, possibly too hurriedly, placed under contract, but it will be remembered there was a great deal of pressure from members of Parliament to have a commencement made. Outside of Parliament the press and the public clamored for the prosecution of the work.

It became a political necessity that the work should be started, and however anxious I was to have the fullest information before commencing construction, it was imperative that the wishes of the Government should be met. Accordingly, I did what I could with this view and accepted all the information furnished by my assistants as the data for letting contracts.

At pages 78 and 79 the Commission describe a difficulty which presented itself some time after the contracts were let. It was discovered that a peculiar material, known as muskeg, was used, and to some extent its use was unavoidable in forming embankments; but there was no specific provision in the contracts for employing muskeg in work and paying for it as such. The existence of muskeg and the necessity for using this material in such large quantities in the formation of the railway, was not anticipated when the contracts were entered into.

In my evidence, questions 19,498 to 19,549, and questions 21,915 to 22,029 Appendix No. 10, I have fully explained my views on the muskeg question. It will be perfectly plain to the reader of the evidence, that I am in no way responsible for the difficulty which has arisen, or for any payment to the contractors on account of the use of this material. The difficulty arose during my absence from Canada.

I knew nothing of it until my return, and when the matter was brought under my notice, I at once instituted an enquiry and directed that certificates should be stopped, and, as a matter of fact, no farther certificates for muskeg were issued up to the day I ceased to be connected with the works.

I point out in my evidence, the course I would have followed, had I been acting as Chief Engineer, and at pages 1654 to 1658, I describe the action I did take when I returned to Canada in the fall of 1878, and resumed my duties.

A perusal of the evidence referred to will clearly establish that no blame is due to me, and that the censures of the Commission are entirely misdirected.

CHARGE No. 3.

(Bridging Red River.)

In the performance of my duty, I recommended Selkirk as the point of crossing Red River, with the view of avoiding all contingency of interruption to traffic by inundation; and the possible cost of reconstruction of works swept away by floods and for other reasons set forth in my Report (1880).

Before advising the Government on this question, I had made myself acquainted with the facts of the case. My reasons are given at length in my Report, pages 264 to 265, and nothing has come to my knowledge since to lead me to change them.

The Commission do not endorse my opinion; they stigmatize the choice of Selkirk as an unfortunate one.

Current events are throwing some light on the subject since the Commissioners' Report was issued, two bridges across the Red River have been swept away: one at Winnipeg, another at Emerson.

The full force of the reasons I gave in favor of Selkirk, as a crossing point, may not be appreciated this year, but they will be understood in due time. I do not yield my opinion to that of the Commission. I venture to say that the public will have no difficulty in judging between us at no distant future.

CHARGE No. 4.

(Gardner Inlet Survey.)

The Commissioners, in their Report, have accused me of directing an instrumental survey to be made from Gardner Inlet to Lake Franois, a distance of twenty-two miles, without any object.