

Q. They were anxious, were they not, to get you to make a contract; what was it, a kind of Dutch auction?—A. What took place was simply this: they said they had done considerable ice-breaking already, and that there were three boats to arrive.

Q. When? Was it that year they had done ice-breaking?—A. Yes, that they had gone on and done considerable ice-breaking on the assumption that the department would renew the previous contract or make another, and that there were three boats to arrive, and that it was necessary to keep the harbour open until the boats arrived. It had been cold weather previous to that day, but that afternoon it turned mild, and in the evening it started to rain. I made up my mind that in view of the weather conditions there I did not see the necessity of entering into a contract.

Q. So that had you taken their word for it you might have made a contract with them?—A. I am not accustomed to taking statements of that kind without making inquiry.

Q. When you got there it was cold but it turned mild?—A. It was just breaking; the day I went up there it was very very cold, but the next day there was a break in the weather about noon and that evening it was raining.

Q. I suppose you got some other information that there were no other boats coming, did you?—A. I met you and you told me that to your knowledge there were no other boats coming in.

Q. Will you read that (handing document to witness)?—A. (Reads): "Midland Towing and Wrecking Company, to keeping channel open for steamers tug ten days, at \$4, \$40."

Q. What year was that in?—A. 1905.

Q. But it would be for 1904?—A. Yes, it would be in the fall of 1904.

Q. Well, I am glad they didn't get you to make a contract, that is all.

By the Chairman:

Q. What time did you see Mr. Playfair the next morning?—A. I called Mr. Playfair up on the telephone on the afternoon of the day I arrived, and he was in Hamilton attending a directors' meeting, but they said he would be in the office the next morning. So the next morning I called, about ten o'clock, and asked Mr. Playfair whether there were any boats coming in, and he said he had three of his vessels still out on the lake but they were chartered for ports other than Midland, though it was possible the charter parties might want to bring those boats into Midland. I asked him if he had any reason to believe they would want to bring them into that port and he replied, 'You can never tell.' In other words it was very indefinite that there would be any more boats coming in, and I made up my mind there was no necessity of entering into a contract, so I got on the train and came back to Ottawa.

By Mr. German:

Q. Do you know that Mr. Playfair is connected with the shipping industry, owning some of the biggest boats on the upper lakes plying between Port Arthur and Midland and Port Arthur and Port Colborne?—A. Yes, I do.

Q. Owning some of the largest boats, the *Midland Prince* among others?—A. I do not know the names of his boats, but I understand he is one of the largest boat owners up there.

Mr. BENNETT.—There is no doubt as to his being one of the largest steamboat owners up there.

By Mr. Bennett (Simcoe):

Q. Mr. Doutre, you told me that Mr. Pratt wanted to make a bargain with you for the tug named after himself?—A. No, I do not think so. I always understood from the conversations I had with them that they were all associated together, and that if there was any ice-breaking to be done then Mr. Pratt's tug would be used; she was a very powerful tug, a beautiful tug.