

Thirty-Eight Years Manager of N. B. Railway Company's Lands

Long and Honorable Business Career of Mr. W. T. Whitehead, One of Fredericton's Foremost Citizens--A Record of Achievement--Made the Survey of Over 1,600,000 Acres--And was Afterwards Appointed Manager--Represented York in the Legislature Nine Years and Has Been Mayor of Fredericton.

To manage a tract of over sixteen hundred thousand acres of timber land to see that it is protected from the fire scourge, to arrange leases and collect stumpage from numerous operators on millions of feet of lumber each year, is no easy task, yet it is part of the work which our respected townsman, Mr. W. T. Whitehead, ex M. P. P., faithfully performed for the long period of thirty-eight years in his capacity as manager for the New Brunswick Railway Company. Mr. Whitehead entered the employ of the company in 1872, and ill health brought about his retirement in February of this year. He is still a director of the company, however, and was recently honored by election to the office of vice president. This week he was called to Montreal to attend the annual meeting of the directors.

THE ORIGINAL COMPANY.

Mr. Alexander Gibson, Sr., of Marysville, was the president of the original New Brunswick Railway Co., which concern in the early seventies constructed a narrow gauge railway from Gibson to Edmundston. The railway was one hundred and sixty-seven miles long and the company received from the New Brunswick government as a subsidy, ten thousand acres of land per mile, a total of 1,670,000 acres. They were given their choice of all the ungranted crown lands in the counties of York, Carleton, Victoria and Madawaska. This act of the government has been often criticized and one does not have to travel far to find people who will declare that it was an exceedingly bad bargain for the province. Yet it must be borne in mind that land was cheap and plentiful in those days while money was correspondingly scarce, and the government no doubt felt that they could spare the land more easily than they could the cash.

MET MR. GIBSON.

Shortly after the company came into possession of the land, Mr. Whitehead, tiring of the simple life he was living in the Parish of Dumfries, his birthplace, concluded to start out into the world to seek his fortune. He had previously toiled on the farm and in the lumber woods, and best of all had acquired a good practical knowledge of land surveying from his father, the late Mr. Alfred Whitehead, who was an expert in that line. He journeyed to Fredericton and was fortunate enough soon after he arrived here to make the acquaintance of Mr. Gibson, then the biggest and most forceful man in the commercial life of the province. At that time Mr. Gibson was looking for a suitable man to go up river and survey and block out the lands which had been granted to the New Brunswick Railway Company. He was favorably impressed by Mr. Whitehead and submitted a proposition to him which was readily accepted. A week later Mr. Whitehead was on his way to the Tobique with a crew of twenty men. He was not long in becoming cognizant of the fact that he had tackled a pretty stiff proposition, but he took hold with determination and did not let up in his efforts until he had selected and completed a survey of the entire 1,670,000 acres. The fact that the company's lands today are considered to be the finest in the province, furnished proof of the professional knowledge and wise judgment displayed by Mr. Whitehead.



MR. W. T. WHITEHEAD

Who For Many Years Successfully Managed the Lands of the New Brunswick Railway Company.

PROPERTY CHANGED HANDS.

Mr. Whitehead continued to act as forest inspector and surveyor for the company till 1880, in which year Mr. Gibson sold out his railway and land furnished proof of the professional to a syndicate composed of Lord Elphinstone of Scotland, Sir Donald A. Smith (now Lord Strathcona) Sir George Stephen (now Lord Mount Stephen) John S. Kennedy, Samuel Thorne, D. Willis James and others, who have since acquired fame as railway builders and financiers. They secured incorporation as the New Brunswick Land and Lumber Company with Lord Elphinstone as president. Mr. Whitehead was appointed manager and assumed control of the company's lands and continued to administer them down to February of this year. He was the organizer of the present system of collecting stumpage in the early seventies and soon afterwards saw it adopted by the provincial government. Under his management the company's revenue from stumpage steadily increased and it is now said to be almost equal to that collected by the province from its vast domain. The company has always been able to collect a higher rate of stumpage than the government, and at present their charge is \$2.50 per thousand for spruce and cedar and \$2 for hemlock.

A VALUABLE PROPERTY

Under a wise policy of conversation of lands of the company steadily increased in value, and those in a position to know declare that

if they were put on the market today they could be sold for a sum sufficient to wipe out the entire debt of the province. It is a well known fact that several tempting offers for all or part of their holdings have been made to the company but they have rigidly refused to sell. Years ago some free grants were made for settlement to a party of colonists from the Shetland Islands who had worked on the railway, and in the year 1907, the provincial government purchased, under the terms of an old agreement a tract of fifty thousand acres in Victoria County and opened the same for settlement. This is practically the only sale ever made by the company, and the only one likely to be made in the life time of the present generation.

WELL PROTECTED

The lands of the company today offer a striking example of what can be accomplished under judicious management and a wise policy of conservation. A restraining hand has been kept on the man with the axe, the energetic officials saw to it that he went so far and no farther. Every precaution was taken against the fire scourge, and only on two occasions has the company suffered serious loss from that cause. Last year a fire, supposed to have started on the Transcontinental right-of-way, did damage to the extent of \$200,000, and some years ago there was a severe conflagration at Burnt Hill, on the Miramichi, supposed to have been set by fishermen.

Mr. Whitehead has long been a recognized authority on timber lands and his advice has been much sought after by lumbermen and limit holders. On several occasions he has

been commissioned to go to the United States and prepare an estimate on the value of timber lands and report on the facilities for getting out the lumber. Only recently he was obliged to decline a generous offer to go to the State of Wisconsin and act in an advisory capacity to be a big lumbering syndicate.

In 1885 the railway owned and operated by the New Brunswick Railway Company was leased to the Canadian Pacific, the Company retaining control of the lands and dropping the corporate name of the New Brunswick Land and Lumber Company. Mr. Robert Meighen of Montreal has been the president for twenty years.

The other directors are Lord Strathcona, Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, John Turnbull, W. T. Whitehead, Frank S. Meighen, Col. H. H. McLean, M. P., R. W. Redford and George S. Cantlie.

A FOREMOST CITIZEN

Mr. Whitehead's life as a citizen of Fredericton has been one of great usefulness and it is generally regretted that the state of his health prevents him from taking as active an interest in the affairs of the community as he formerly did. A man of public spirit, and a sympathetic and generous disposition he has done his share to promote the material and moral welfare of the city of his adoption, and no appeal for aid for a deserving cause, whether it was to establish an industry or to endow a hospital, was ever allowed by him to go unheeded. No man in the County of York is more highly esteemed by his fellow citizens.

HIS POLITICAL CAREER

For a long period of years Mr. Whitehead enjoyed the close personal friendship of the late Hon. A. G. Blair, and it is a well known fact that it was at the earnest solicitation of that gentleman that he consented in the year 1895 to stand as a candidate for the legislature. In his first election he was defeated, but on next appealing to the people he was elected by one of the largest majorities ever given to a candidate for political honors in the County of York. He sat in the House for two terms, and although he did not actively participate in the debates, he proved himself a most useful and influential member. Evidence of a man of the ability, industry and urbanity of W. T. Whitehead as a representative of York is sadly lacking at the present time. In 1908 Mr. Whitehead was nominated as a candidate for the Dominion parliament, but a serious attack of illness compelled him to retire from the field. He was elected Mayor of Fredericton in 1898, and served for one term, rendering the city good service.

SOME REMINISCENCES

In a brief interview which the Mail had with Mr. Whitehead, prior to his departure for Montreal this week he chatted very entertainingly in regard to his early experiences. As a boy he said he learned what hard work meant. He served an apprenticeship at wielding the axe in the lumber woods; he had also worked at stream driving and had frequently assisted in running rafts of logs to Springfield. "When I set out to seek my fortune," he went on, "I concluded to first give Fredericton a trial. I met quite a number of people when I arrived in town and was struck by the fact that the majority of them wore better clothes than I did. I have a distinct recollection of my first meeting with Mr. Gibson. It was on the ferry-boat which plied between Fredericton and Gibson. He was then as he is now a man of distinguished appearance, who would attract attention anywhere. Tall and straight as an arrow and, as I soon found out, chalk full of business. I will never forget as long as I live the warmth and cordiality of his greeting, and the encouraging words he spoke to me. He told me he was interested in a large tract of land in the upper section of the province and was looking about for a man to survey it. He looked at me rather sharply when I told him that I thought I could fill the bill. "All right, young man, we will give you a chance," was his quick rejoinder, "Come over and see me tomorrow." I did go and see him and a few days later I was on my way to the Tobique in charge of a crew of men. I always regarded my meeting with Alexander Gibson as one of the most important incidents of my life. Our relations were always most cordial and today I number him among my warmest personal friends."

"I remember well my first venture in the way of an investment in Fredericton, and I suppose I always will. I happened to be up town one day when an auction sale was going on. Noticing a crowd assembled I went over to investigate. I soon learned that some shares of a local leather company were being offered for sale and those gathered around seemed to be a trifle shy about bidding. Remembering the old adage

that "there is nothing like leather," I made a bid. In less than a minute afterwards I found myself the owner of ten shares of leather stock. All I need say here is that the investment was not a very remunerative one, but it was a very good object lesson for me, and I exercised a little more care afterwards."

A movement is afoot to raise a fund for the purpose of placing a memorial of Dante Gabriel Rossetti in St. Clement's Church, Hastings. It was in that building that the celebrated poet artist was married in 1860. The idea at present is to erect a stained glass window embodying in the dedication.

PROBATE COURT

COUNTY OF SUNBURY

Wednesday, the Sixth Day of July, A. D. 1910.

In the matter of the Estate of Henry Nevins, late of the Parish of Lincoln, in the County of Sunbury, Farmer, Deceased.

Let the heirs, next of kin, creditors, and all others interested in the Estate of the said late Henry Nevins, deceased, be cited to appear before me at the Court of Probate to be held at my office in Oromocto, in the County of Sunbury, within and for the said County of Sunbury, on Wednesday, the fourteenth day of September next, at eleven o'clock, in the forenoon, to show cause, if any they have, why license should not be granted to Martha True, Administratrix of the Estate of the said late Henry Nevins, deceased, to sell such of the real estate of the said deceased as may be necessary for the payment of the debts of the said Estate.

Given under my hand and seal of the said Probate Court, this sixth day of July, A. D. 1910.

(Sd.) JOHN W. GILMOR, Judge of Probates County of Sunbury.

(Sd.) EMMA E. ESTABROOKS, Registrar of Probates in and for the County of Sunbury.

GREGORY & WINSLOW, Proctors for Petitioner.

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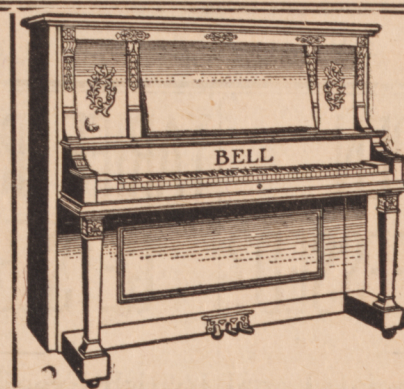
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FOR SALE--Building lots on St. John and Regent Streets. Also good heavy standing hay, about four acres. Apply to Mrs. T. Lynch.

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House, barn and lot in the Village of Stanley, next below Dr. Moore's residence; also one building lot in Stanley, and one house and two barns and lot in the Village of Gibson, known as the Ruel property, of four acres of land fronting the main river. This property is a good mill site as there is plenty of land and good shore for rafts of logs in the dry time in summer. Full information by calling on the owner on the premises, Gibson, B. McMennamin.

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