

VALUATION SECTION MONTANA 9

Valuation Section Montana 9 extends from a connection with the Lewistown-Great Falls Line in West Great Falls to a terminus at Agawam, a distance of 65 miles.

The surveys were begun about August 1st, 1912, under the supervision of E. O. Reeder, Assistant Chief Engineer, and under the general direction of A. G. Baker, Division Engineer, with Charles F. Healey as Locating Engineer. The route was along the north side of the Sun River Valley for a distance of about 20 miles out of Great Falls; it then ascended to the higher bench, or prairie, on which it was located, to the crossing of the Teton River; thence crossing the Teton River and along the easterly or northerly side of the valley thru the town of Choteau; thence along the higher bench or prairie to the terminus at Agawam.

Other than in the vicinity of Priest Lake, south of Choteau, the preliminary surveys practically coincide with the final location. Near Priest Lake several lines were surveyed over a distance of from five to ten miles. The located and constructed line provided for ruling grades of 1.2% north bound and 1.0% south bound and maximum curvature of 6 degrees.

The line was constructed along the general route as above described. Construction work in the Sun River Valley was generally of ordinary character of work in flat bottom lands, except that a landslide near Manchester threw the location into heavier work than would have been otherwise necessary and the necessity of an overhead crossing of the Great Northern at Vaughn involved some heavy grading and a long high trestle bridge in that vicinity. The bench land traversed was, and is, under the Sun River Irrigation Project, which involved more expensive construction than would have otherwise been required, involving the construction of a number of culverts, syphons and bridges for irrigation ditches and canals.

Gravelly and hard pan material was encountered in grading on the bench land, but no extraordinary difficult conditions were encountered except in the vicinity of Priest Lake, in the Teton River Valley near Choteau, and on the bench in the vicinity of Farmington.

At Priest Lake the embankment was on wet partially submerged land and after the roadbed had been completed a flood which caused a rise in the level of the lake made it necessary to reconstruct the roadbed on a higher grade line.

In the Teton Valley and in the vicinity of Choteau, floods--after the roadbed had been completed--caused extensive washouts and expensive work in restoring and repairing the embankments and bridges and culverts. This flood occurred during an interval while the work was temporarily suspended and some construction material which had been delivered and left at sites of proposed structures was carried away, involving considerable expense in recovering such of it as was not lost.

On the Farmington Bench and near Agawam some difficulties were encountered due to the nature of the ground which contained many boulders and because of seepage from irrigation ditches which added to the difficulties and cost of work. Sliding gravel on the slope below an irrigation ditch a few miles north of Choteau made some revision of line and reconstruction of roadbed necessary.

The contract for clearing, grading, and the erection of bridges and culverts necessary for the construction of the line was made with Twohy Brothers Company, dated November 1, 1912. The greater part of the grading and culvert work, and a part of the bridging was done under this contract, but about December 1, 1913, construction work was suspended and Twohy Brothers Company released from further work and a final estimate of the work done by them was made. Suspension of the work and delay in completing this line was due to the delay in the development of the country, caused by the non-completion of the Sun River Irrigation Project. Subsequently when construction work was resumed in April 1915, contracts for the completion of bridges, and for completing grading, repairing roadbed at washouts, and for raising the grade at Priest Lake, was made with D. J. Burke. Some of the bridge work was done directly by Railway Company forces, this including the trusses at the Great Northern Crossing at Vaughn and the bridge over the Teton River.

Track laying was completed to the terminus at Agawam in December 1916, 85# relay rail was used for approximately the first 20 miles out of Great Falls and the remainder being 65# rail.

This now is operated as part of the Northern Montana Division with headquarters at Lewistown.