

Unanimously and Respectfully Submitted.

You will search that report in vain for any reference to wrong doing on the part of the government, or any member thereof, with respect to the cost of permanent bridges. These two paragraphs from the report of last year's committee will be found interesting:—

"That wherever practicable the contracts for the construction of the superstructures of permanent bridges should be put up to tender, with preference in favor of provincial manufacturers."

"In conclusion your committee desire to place on record their appreciation of the highly satisfactory manner in which the honorable chief commissioner of public works and the honorable provincial secretary furnished all information in their possession asked for by the committee with respect to the expenditures in their several departments."

How unlike the sensational articles of the Sun are these reports of the public accounts committee, made up, as I have stated, by representatives from both sides of the house.

I have never hesitated to say on the floors of the legislature and elsewhere that I honestly believed that in very many cases the government could get better work at a less figure by having the service done by days work. Money was saved in that way with respect to the matter of inspection, and the department was not confronted with a large bill of extras, as is unfortunately too often the case when the work had been done by contract. I have endeavored to point out particularly with respect to the work of repairing, that it was often very difficult to have plans and specifications prepared that would meet the case. The flooring of a bridge might have to be repaired, and when part of it was taken up it would be found that very much greater repairs were needed than at first supposed, and while I know that there is always a desire on the part of opponents to create the impression that work done by the day is more costly than if put up to tender, I have no hesitation in saying that in nine cases out of ten better work at a less figure can be obtained when the day's work system prevails. While I say this I do not mean to say that occasions will not arise when it would be in the best interests of the province to have important works let by competition.

I do not purpose making any reflections upon the integrity of the gentleman who has fathered these "startling exposures." I refer particularly now, not to the purist of the Nacawic, but to

Our Young Friend, Mr. J. Douglas Hazen.

I can very well understand that a gentleman so closely connected with "the Harris land job" in St. John might be expected to tremble and turn pale at the very thought of the provincial government being in any way connected with jobs, and when we recall his connection with the work on the custom house in St. John a few years ago, when he was a member of the Dominion parliament, we are able to get an idea of how he must have suffered in mind and conscience when he made the discovery that we were building some permanent bridges by day's work, such bridges being constructed by New Brunswick firms at a less price than we had paid upper Canadian province firms for a very inferior class of bridges, comparing the latter with the superior bridges that

have been built by New Brunswick concerns. An examination of the reports of the auditor general of the Dominion of Canada for 1893 and 1894 should afford Mr Hazen and the St John Sun evidence of their great consistency. The reports mentioned show that the work of rebuilding the custom house was done entirely by day's work. In 1893 there was paid out for labor and material on the St John custom house the sum of \$74,983 38, and in 1894 for labor and material there was paid on account of the St John custom house \$113,011 65.

#### Interesting Custom House Items.

Wages were paid the men all the way from \$1 50 to \$4 per day. I am not finding fault with the rate of wages paid, but in connection with the accounts there are some few items of very special interest. Mr. John E. Wilson is a very respectable gentleman, and is engaged in the galvanized iron work in St. John. When the work of repairing the custom house in St. John was commenced tenders were asked for placing copper roofs on the building. Tenders were sent in from all parts of the dominion, and when they were opened it was found that of Mr Wilson of St John was the lowest. The public works department telegraphed Mr. Wilson asking him if he was prepared to enter upon the performance of the contract at the figures named by him. He replied that he was, whereupon his contract was accepted and he gave an order to Messrs. W. H. Thorne & Co. for the large quantity of copper that would be required in the performance of his contract. Some time after his acceptance of the contract Mr. Wilson concluded that he was not likely to make as much out of the work as he had expected. He thought he discovered some roofs on the building that had not shown in the plans, but he thought he might reasonably count on large extras, or extras sufficiently large to make the contract a profitable one, but on reading over a copy of the agreement he concluded that there was very little chance for extras unless he had the matter arranged in advance.

#### Arranged with Hazen for Extras.

He had not any great difficulty in inducing Mr J Douglas Hazen to accompany him to Ottawa to see if it was not possible to have the contract price changed. I have it on the most unquestionable authority that Mr Hazen tried all his persuasive powers upon the then minister of public works, Hon Mr Oulmet, to induce him to permit a change in the contract price, so that Mr Wilson might have a few thousand dollars more than the amount of his tender. The minister pointed out that that was at variance with all precedents, and refused to comply with the request of Mr Hazen in favor of his friend Mr Wilson. The minister, I am assured, pointed out that if Mr Wilson was unwilling to go on with the contract at the figure named in his tender, the work would be given to the next highest tender, which, I believe, came from a Montreal concern. Upon hearing this Mr Hazen threatened the minister and said that the constituency of St John would not consent to have the work done by an upper province concern, and he then and there proposed that the job should be done by the day's work, and it was accordingly decided that the work should be done by the day. What was the result?

#### A Fat Thing for Wilson.

The government took off the hands of Messrs. W. H. Thorne & Co. the copper which they had purchased for Mr. Wilson, paying them a very large price for the same, and then they employed Mr. Wilson to superintend the job, paying him at the rate of \$4 per day as foreman, and paying him also \$1.50 a day for the hire of roofing and cornice tools, and also purchasing from Mr. Wilson a large quantity of supplies. Mr. Wilson had profits from three sources—his wages as foreman, the hiring of his roofing and cornice tools, and the profits on the materials supplied. A very large item in the materials supplied by Mr. Wilson was that of solder, for which he charged at the rate of 30 cents a pound, a figure so high that before paying the bill the auditor general wrote some spicy correspondence on the subject. I am told that there was a pretence at asking tenders for the supplying of the solder, but the genuineness of the tenderers will be doubted when I mention the fact that the auditor general pointed out that the price paid Mr Wilson, for supplying over 2,000 pounds, was the same rate that the solder could be bought at retail.

#### In 1893 Mr. Wilson Received \$728

as foreman of the custom house, and the same year he received \$1,855 52, the greater part of which was for supplies. In 1894 there was paid to Mr Wilson \$633, about one-half of which was for material and the other half for wages. The total sum paid for wages to roofers alone for work on the custom house was upwards of \$30,000 during those two years. Messrs Thorne & Co received nearly \$14,000 for custom house supplies. Mr Thorne is one of the leading directors of the St John Sun newspaper, the leading opposition paper in the province. Neither the Sun nor Mr Hazen seems to have been strongly opposed to the principle of having public work done by the day when the repairs were being made to the custom house in St. John. These repairs, as I have shown, cost nearly \$200,000; at least the auditor general's reports for 1893 and 1894 show those amounts. I have not at hand the auditor general's report of the dominion for 1895 and cannot say positively whether any sums due on the custom house in St. John were paid that year or not, but I think it will be admitted that the sum of nearly \$200,000 was a very large price to pay for the repairing of one building in the city of St. John. Now, mark you, I am not pretending to say that there was anything wrong in the matter so far as Mr Wilson, or, for that matter, so far as Messrs Thorne & Co, were concerned. I merely mention this matter to show the consistency of the men who are quite willing to approve of all that had been done in connection with the work on the St John custom house, and who find fault with our government for having any work done by the day. It is quite impossible to figure out of the auditor general's report the exact cost of the roof on the custom house building, but the greater part of Messrs Thorne's bill of nearly \$14,000 appears to have been for materials for the roof. If you will add to that sum the amount paid to Mr Wilson for materials and wages, as well as the wages of the different roofers, the grand total will have assumed tremendous proportions. If I wanted to

#### Impute Charges of Boodling to Mr. Hazen

I might not have to draw very largely on my imagination to paint a picture that would at least be attractive to the eye of that gentleman's political opponents. Just fancy a member of the dominion parliament starting off in the company of a gentleman who had received a contract covering many thousands of dollars, seeking an interview with the minister of public works, first beseeching him to change the contract—to consent to a higher price—and then threatening him with dire consequence if the contract went to a concern outside of New Brunswick. And it might be possible—in fact it might be no very difficult matter—to leave the impression that Mr. Hazen in taking the stand that he had taken was not moved entirely by motives of patriotism; however, it is not my purpose to fling mud, and the only reason why I have referred to this matter at all is to show the hypocrisy of the gentlemen who now seek to have the government of New Brunswick hurled from power for having permanent bridge work done by the day by New Brunswick concerns, when he was so willing a few years ago to apply the day work system to the repairs upon the custom house in the city of St John.

I thank you most heartily for your kind attention. Possibly I have occupied your time more fully than I should have done, but I was desirous of making a full and complete statement with respect to these charges, and I am quite willing and quite prepared to accept the people's verdict with respect to these and all other matters connected with the affairs of government.

Mr Emmerson was in magnificent voice and shattered the two-price bridge charges to pieces. It is needless to say that in York the opposition will not dare voice these charges again.

Attorney General White congratulated the four candidates who had been selected by the county of York, and he congratulated the county of York on its very excellent choice. The county had not been for some years past represented as it was once by such men as Messrs Fisher, Allen and Blair, but I believe now the change has come and York will again take its proper place.

He then discussed the Moncton convention, said that it was not representative of the Conservative party. It was there declared that the people were not henceforth to be allowed to govern themselves but they must be governed by party.

He scourged Stockton for his change base and said that the learned doctor at one time in a speech said that he would be ashamed to belong to the Conservative party. Yet now we find him hand in glove with them.

Owing to the lateness of the hour the attorney general cut short a very interesting and eloquent speech.

At the close of the meeting Premier Emmerson was warmly congratulated upon what was considered on all hands to be the ablest speech of his life. It was a masterly answer to the red fire of the opposition and that it carried conviction to the minds of the great majority of the large audience was evidenced from the frequent outburst of hearty applause.

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