

to New Brunswick concerns; but let us examine the most important part of that letter and what do we find? "The exact price we can quote you for any particular structure will depend on the design of span and on its length and capacity and resulting weight, the shorter and lighter span being the more expensive, the longer and heavier spans the cheaper, but our price is not likely in any case to be below or over the figures named above. If you will send us full particulars of any work that may be offering we will make a careful estimate of the same and will name you a definite price for the metal work." Here you will see that the Dominion Bridge Company did not commit themselves to any price.

Dominion Company Gives No Price.

When they would have a definite plan before them they would be prepared to name a definite price for the metal work; but we have had an experience with the Dominion Company, which concern, as I have stated, built the Sussex and Salisbury bridges, charging the government of this province at the rate of 6 cents per pound in one case, and at the rate of 7 cents per pound in the other case, or an average of 6½ cents per pound, which rate the opposition papers now condemn the government for paying to keep the work within our own province. As I stated on another occasion, there are bridges and bridges, as there are shop made goods and custom made goods. The same law that applies to the clothing business, the furniture business, the boot and shoe trade, the printing business, or any one of a hundred other businesses, applies equally to the building of steel and iron bridges. If you want a cheap made bridge, made from the plans of the company and not from plans furnished by the government, you can get it, as I have already stated, at a lower price than we have been paying, but I defy the opposition to produce two competent engineers, either belonging to this province or to any other province, to say that our home made bridges are not worth more than 50 per cent—yes, more than 100 per cent—more than the Hampton, Salisbury or Sussex bridges, which were built by the Upper Canadian concerns at prices a little higher than the bridges produced by the New Brunswick firms.

Justified by the Moncton Times.

Although the Moncton Times, like the St John Sun, is a bitter opponent of our government, it is fair enough to say that "Mr Sumner was not slow to see and was fair enough to acknowledge that the question before the legislature and the people was not the amount of Record stock held by the premier's wife or any of his relatives or supporters. The remarks of the opposition member for Westmorland in regard to the Record Company's stock held by members of the premier's family are creditable to him, and it is a pity that Mr. Emmerson's supporters are not equally fair in their references to Conservatives holding stock in the same concern." I may say that if any paper supporting the government made unfair references to Senator Wood or any other leading stockholder of the Record Foundry and Machine Co. who are opposed to the government, they did so without any suggestion from me. I do not know that they made any such references, and I think that any allusions made by papers friendly to the government to Senator Wood, or other opponents of the government who are stockholders in the Record foundry, were made more with a view of showing that from a political standpoint the government could have no object in patronizing the Record foundry, rather than with a view of making any unfriendly references to these gentlemen.

In the construction of the Hampton, Sussex and Salisbury bridges by the upper province concerns, the companies furnishing their own plans, they were enabled to supply bridges from such material as was most convenient for them to use, even if it fell far short of the required strength. There being no inspector, it was impossible to ascertain whether the bridge was being built up to its required strength. When the Woodstock bridge was being constructed

for the government a competent engineer in the person of Mr. Wetmore prepared the plans.

The Woodstock Bridge.

The bridge was erected under tender by the Canadian Bridge and Iron Company, managed by Mr F E Came, who had built the Hampton bridge. The contract price of the Woodstock bridge, I am willing to admit, was a little less per pound than the price paid for bridges constructed since by New Brunswick concerns, but, fortunately, we are in possession of information which leaves no doubt that the company expected that there would not be a close inspection of the work, and that the company would not be required to furnish the excellent job that they were required to perform. Soon after the publication in the opposition papers of these "startling exposures" Mr. C. W. Robinson, one of the representatives from Westmorland county, wrote to the secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Iron & Bridge company, with respect to the cost of the Woodstock bridge.

Lost on the Contract.

Here is a copy of the reply received by Mr. Robinson:—

C. W. Robinson, Esq.,
Moncton, New Brunswick.

Dear Sir,—I am in receipt of your favor of the 16th instant and in reply would say that the Canadian Bridge and Iron Company made a loss of some \$4,000 or \$5,000 upon the Woodstock bridge contract, whereas at our contract price we should have made about \$4,000. The cause of our loss was the determination of the government engineer to make us carry out the specification to the letter. By this I do not mean that we figured on turning out bad work, but we certainly did figure on some leeway. You may not be aware that the bridge builders were for a time entirely at the mercy of the European manufacturers. No deliveries were guaranteed, and the bridge builder had to take whatever sections of iron and steel the mills were turning out. Bridge engineers understood this, and consequently allowed the builders to make changes in plans, providing, of course, for sections of equal strength to those specified. Mr. Wetmore, however, would not allow us to make any changes and we had to buy in the United States at a very high price much of the material for the Woodstock bridge because we could not get in Europe the exact sections required by him. Sometime ago I wrote to the late superintendent of the Bridge Company on this very subject, and his reply, which I enclose, will give you some idea of the cost of manufacture in the shop. I remember the shop cost of the bridge in question exceeded the estimated cost by 30 per cent, and this was due to our being at the mercy of the inspector, who we understood had strict orders from the engineer as to his method of inspection. Our erection foreman also complained about the expense the inspector put him to. We built a great many bridges for the Nova Scotia government, and I should say the statement of Mr. Ross is correct. The Nova Scotia government engineer made a very careful examination of all our work before giving us estimates, and got good bridges, but he did not insist on inspection of all material, accepting the names of the rolling mills and the owner's test as guarantees of the quality of the material; nor did he worry our shop superintendent by having his bridges handled several times over for inspection, and consequently got good bridges at a much lower price than any bridge built for Mr. Wetmore would cost.

Yours truly,
(Sgd.) R. FITZGIBBON.
P O Box 426, Montreal, Nov 19, 1898.

The enclosure referred to above by Mr Fitzgibbon is as follows:—

Robert Fitzgibbon, Esq. City:—

Dear Sir—In reference to your letter concerning the Woodstock bridge, I would say the shop cost, owing to inspection and intricate detail, was at least twice as great as that for such bridges as we had built for the Nova Scotia government. I do not know anything about cost of material and erection expenses, but the erection expenses must certainly be very largely increased owing to these same details. The inspector was a nuisance, making us constantly rehandle material for his inspection, besides insisting on all sorts of extra work. The details themselves were the most expensive of anything I ever handled in bridge work, although I have been working for the Dominion Bridge Company and others for the last twenty years.

Yours truly,
(Sgd.) WILLIAM ROSS.
1566 Ontario street, Montreal, October 28, 1898.

In these two letters we have the key note to how at least one of the upper province concerns, expected to make money by taking work at a lower rate than New Brunswick concerns could honestly do the work for.

Looked for "a Little Leeway."

The company expected to make money by getting a little "leeway." In other words, by being permitted to slight the work. That is the whole story

in a nutshell, and I think it is highly creditable to the officers in our department that the company was not permitted to get the "leeway" expected.

I have been furnished with a list of bridge companies that have gone out of business during the last few years, and the statement is made that they were forced to suspend operations because of not being able to compete with the Dominion Bridge Company. This list is as follows: The Canadian Bridge and Iron Co., Montreal; A. Roseau, Montreal; A. Donaldson, Montreal; Royal Bridge and Iron Co., Montreal; Central Bridge Works, Peterboro.

This government will see to it that no firms, whether they belong within or without the province, shall be permitted to charge an excessive rate for the erection of permanent bridges, but I am prepared to say here tonight that it is not the government's desire or intention that New Brunswick concerns that are willing to furnish a good article at a reasonable rate shall suffer by too close competition with upper province concerns, whose methods in the past have not given satisfaction.

This then is our defence against the so called "startling exposures" of the opposition in connection with the erection of permanent bridges. We believe that our conduct will stand the light of day; that the people of New Brunswick will approve of our course in erecting permanent bridges that are permanent in reality rather than a pretence, and that we will be always upheld in a determination to expend as much of our money within the limits of our own province as is consistent with fair prices and excellence of workmanship.

Every bridge to which a double price has been alleged by our opponents was constructed before last year. The bills, therefore, whether right or excessive, were placed before the public accounts committee, on which both the opposition and the government were represented; yet, with the exception of the insinuations of Mr Pinder, no voice had been raised in the legislature in condemnation of what it is now hysterically alleged are double-priced bridges. If the government paid this double price in 1891 the fact must have come, in the regular course of things, to the knowledge of the legislature that met in the following year, and so on with each and every bridge built year after year. The act was this double-priced

Bridge Charge Was a Campaign Document

intended to suddenly lead the electorate to believe that a great wrong had been committed by the chief commissioner and his department. As I have stated, charges have been insinuated during the past several years by the hon. member for York (Pinder) against my department, yet the public accounts committee on which, as I have said, there are members of the opposition as well as government supporters, have never been able to discover any wrong doing on the part of the department, or any one connected with the same. The public accounts committee have not always been able to approve of every action of the government, but they have never hesitated to make favorable reports with respect to the public accounts of the province. The public accounts committee of 1897 was composed of Messrs. Killam, Dibblee, Mott, Osman, Tweedie, Pinder and Sumner. Their report, submitted to the legislature just before the close of the session of 1897, was as follows and the report was accepted and adopted by the house:—

"Committee Room, House of Assembly,
13th March, 1897.

"The committee to whom are referred the public accounts, together with the auditor general's report thereon for the fiscal year ending 31st October, 1896, beg to report that your committee, pursuant to the reference made by the house to them by order of 6th of February last past, have carefully investigated the various items as set forth in the auditor general's report and the accounts referred to therein. That your committee proceeded from page to page of the said report to the end thereof, and after a searching investigation to the best of your committee's ability found all the items as set forth in the said report correct.

The chief commissioner and Mr. Winslow, chief clerk in the board of works department, being called from time to time to explain various items of expenditure in that department, did so to our full satisfaction, as did also the provincial secretary and surveyor general, as to items within the scope of their respective departments.

"Your committee beg also to report that on the 5th of March, instant, some items of expenditure so presented in the public accounts referred to were questioned, though fully explained by the chief commissioner, re Young's bridge, St. George bridge, and Dipideguash bridge, in the county of Charlotte, and the Nepesic bridge, in the county of King's. Resolution moved by Mr. Sumner, a member of the committee, asking for authority to send for persons and papers and examine witnesses under oath, was passed and concurred in by the house, and Messrs. Sumner and Pinder were repeatedly requested to furnish the names of witnesses, but they neglected to do so until this morning at 2 o'clock, when your committee, being then in session, they were again requested to furnish the said names. Mr. Sumner did then hand in the names of two witnesses, Colin Stewart and Angus Fisher, of St. George, Charlotte county, when subpoenas were at once made out and duly signed and delivered to Mr. Sumner by the chairman. Within a few minutes after Mr. Sumner returned and withdrew the names of the witnesses, stating that he would not proceed with the inquiry.

"Farther, your committee report that on the 9th day of March, instant, like authority and concurrence of the house was sought and obtained on motion of Mr Pinder, a member of the said committee, to send for persons and papers and examine witnesses under oath relative to an expenditure by the department of public works appearing in the public accounts of 1896 on Cocagne bridge, in the county of Kent. The names of James Barnes, M P P; Inspector McGrath, Alfred Haines, John B. Gogain, Richard Bourgeois and Charles Lucas, were submitted by him as witnesses, along with the said resolutions.

"The said witnesses were duly summoned, and the said investigation commenced on same day, namely March 9th, when Mr Barree and Mr Haines, who had charge of the Cocagne Bridge repairs, were examined on oath, and the committee adjourned for further evidence.

"The other witnesses being produced your committee met again on the 11th and 12th inst, continuing the latter session until early this morning, when all persons tendered for examination were fully examined upon oath in regard thereto, as was also the chief commissioner and Mr Winslow, the clerk of the board of works office, on all matters in question.

"A stenographer being in attendance throughout taking the evidence, a copy of said evidence is herewith submitted, marked "A."

"With reference to the investigation of the expenditure on said Cocagne bridge your committee, after affording ample time for all persons to be heard, and on consideration of the evidence, find that no wrongful act on the part of any person connected therewith has been shown, and the accounts of the said expenditure, as produced from the department of public works, are correct.

"Your committee further find that the course pursued by the Department in providing materials and doing the work in connection with rebuilding and repairing the Cocagne bridge, considering the nature of the work and the extent thereof, was correct."

Now then, if anything wrong with respect to the prices paid for permanent bridges had been discovered after the session of 1897 would it not be reasonable to suppose that the public accounts committee of last year would likely have made some reference to the matter in their report? That committee was composed of Messrs. Fowler, Dibblee, Robinson, Osman, Tweedie, Pinder and Sumner. Their report was submitted the day before the prorogation of the house and, as the report printed in the Journal of the house of assembly will show, was, in the words of the report itself