

The limit for the reception of tenders was the 1st February 1882.

This rather lengthy interval was granted, because it gave tenderers the opportunity of visiting the locality, and becoming acquainted with all the requirements of the work.

Almost at the same time, Messrs Charlebois and McDonald sent, at their own expense, an engineer to British Columbia, in order to explore the section under tender.

It was understood that the tenders were to be for the work in bulk and not in detail. Besides this, and according to the custom, the department did not give its own estimates, but left these to the contractors at their own risk and responsibility.

Furthermore, the Government did not reserve the right, as it generally does in its entries for tenders, of awarding the contract to the tenderers who produced the best guarantee for the fulfilment of the work.

In the month of January, of this year, the maps and official plans relating to the work were open for consultation in the Engineer's Office at Ottawa.

Mr. Fowler, engineer for Messrs. Charlebois and McDonald, remained from that date till the 1st February, busy making out his quantities and estimates.

It is a singular fact that, whereas the Government had previously left the estimates to the tenderers themselves, about the 28th January, it suddenly made public its own estimates. Better late than never!

Another point worthy of mention is that on the board where these figures were set forth, there was this notice in good-sized letters: "these estimates have been drawn up for the use of the department, but it declines to be responsible for them." This meant a great deal in one sense, and nothing in the other.

On the 24th January, Messrs Charlebois and McDonald went to Ottawa to examine and verify the estimates, carrying with them, and attached to their tender, that famous cheque,

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