

TWO-PRICE BRIDGES.

Mr. Hazen's Charges Will be Investigated at Last.

Hon. Mr. Emmerson Asserts That He Courts the Fullest and Most Complete Enquiry.

While Hon. Mr. White Tries to Discount in Advance the Effect the Investigation Will Have on the Country.

The Evidence of Engineer Wetmore Lets in Some Light on the Peculiar Methods of the Department in Estimating the Price of Steel Bridges.

FREDERICTON, March 10.—This afternoon, Mr. Hazen, seconded by Mr. Shaw, moved in the Sun with a resolution to the effect that the committee on the steel bridges should be empowered to inquire into the cost of the bridges and to report thereon to the house.

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similar character. That is the question which ought to go before the committee, and if the hon. gentleman had desired fairly to get at the justice and right of the matter, that is the form in which he would have submitted the question. The committee are bound by the terms of the reference. They cannot go beyond that and volunteer statements of opinion as to what they are not asked for. The reference has been so framed that after the committee have found upon it they will have found something which is not what this country desires to know. What the country desires to know is, whether the bridges which have been constructed by the province are good value for the money that has been paid for them. He was sorry the terms of the reference were framed as they were, because if an amendment were moved which should add to the reference, it would be charged in the opposition press, and probably by the hon. leader of the opposition on the benches, that they had not given him the inquiry he asked, and therefore he could have proved lots of things if the government had not done thus and so. Rather than that, the government has seen fit to let the reference go as it is, but before doing so he had felt called upon to point out that the hon. gentleman had omitted from the reference the question in which the people are most interested, and that is, whether these bridges are worth the money they have cost?

MR. HAZEN said he was not at all surprised at the position taken by the hon. attorney general, the hon. provincial secretary and the hon. chief commissioner. From the experience he had had in this house he was not surprised at any position which these hon. gentlemen might take. The hon. gentleman had taken a most unusual and improper course. They have endeavored by this discussion to prejudice and prejudice the result of this investigation in the minds of the people of this province.

MR. WHITE—Do you say I have? MR. HAZEN—I say most distinctly that the hon. gentleman has taken that course, though perhaps to a less degree than the others, in trying to make it appear that I am not submitting the question fairly to the country. If the hon. gentleman believed that he (White) would have moved an amendment to make the submission a proper one, he (Hazen) claimed it was a proper one, and all he asked was a fair inquiry and fair play, and he did not fear the result in the estimate of the people of the country, no matter what it might be in the estimate of the committee or of this house. The hon. gentleman had tried to make it appear that he had been guilty of a great offence in not bringing the matter before the house earlier. He could tell the hon. members of the government that they had been guilty of an offence in not having their legislation ready to lay before the house. He was, however, not driven to such an argument. The session usually lasts five weeks, and if it had not been for the delay on Monday the matter would have been brought before the house then, and that is what he wanted to see what the hon. gentleman would do, and he waited, and then a matter occurred, of which he would probably be in a position to inform the house later, which prevented him from bringing the matter up before Monday last. On Monday the hon. provincial secretary asked him (Hazen) when he was going to move in the matter, and he had replied that he intended to move that day. The hon. gentleman then stated that

HE WAS GOING AWAY on Monday, to be gone until Tuesday, and would like to have the matter put off. He (Hazen) had replied that he had already been criticized by the hon. member for Victoria (Lawson) for delaying the matter, and that he would be subject to further criticism.

HON. MR. WHITE respected that Mr. Hazen had not made his charges earlier. He wished to point out one fact, and that was this: After the charges were made last session, and after the element of personal corruption had been withdrawn, it left what was after all the essential thing to consider, whether the province was getting good value for the money which it was paying for these bridges, taking into consideration their character. Now let us look at what Mr. Hazen has asked the committee to find out. "And wherein the said J. Douglas Hazen has further alleged and charged that the prices paid for bridges were double, and in some cases more than double." What? The prices paid for bridges similar to those here building? For all, hon. member? The prices paid by railways for steel bridge superstructures equal in every respect in material and workmanship? Then the reference to the committee is framed in exactly the same words. It reads: "The committee to inquire whether the prices were double and in some cases more than double the prices per lb. paid by railway companies in Canada, the Intercolonial railway and other governments in Canada during the same period for steel bridge superstructures equal in every respect in material and workmanship to the steel and iron superstructures erected in this province." That is what the committee are to inquire into. What does it prove if they find that the prices were double? Take a bar of iron for a railway bridge, weighing 400 lbs., and a similar bar for a highway bridge weighing 100 lbs.; the same labor has been expended on the bar weighing 100 lbs. as on the 400 lb. bar, and therefore the cost of workmanship is the same. One would be four times what it would be on the other. The work necessary on a highway bridge would be as great as the work necessary on a railway bridge of the same size, weight, and yet the hon. gentleman asks that the cost of these two classes of bridges be compared. He hopes to be able to say to the people of the country and to the people of the province that he has proved that the highway bridges erected by the province cost more than the bridges erected by railway companies, but he will not say that they cost more than bridges of a

very men with whom he had been associated for the past four years. "The hon. provincial secretary has told me what a fair investigation the government proposed to give, and then, in his bulldozing manner, he says there must be no delay whatever; the investigation must go forward. It is evidently his intention not to give us a fair show before that committee, but to crowd us on, day by day, without a moment to spare to get our witnesses, in order that the impression may go out that we are not ready to proceed. We will be ready to proceed with all reasonable and proper despatch. This house will not be delayed in consequence of our not having our witnesses here, and let me say that I firmly believe I can prove to the satisfaction of the people of this province the charges which I have made. (Applause.)

Mr. Hazen gave a history of the bridges charges. He had made, those charges before the election of 1899 in the best of good faith, and after a full and careful investigation into the whole matter, he had not waited until the election was on, when it might be said it was merely an election dodge and that he should have given the government a chance to answer the charges. He made the charges fairly and openly and gave his evidence and his authorities. If the government felt those charges to be so outrageous, why did they not call the house together and have them investigated at once? They had refused to do that, they went to the elections and declared there was nothing in the charges. The hon. chief commissioner admitted that he was paying more per lb. for his bridges than they were in Nova Scotia, the cheapest province in the world, from 50 to 75 years longer than the bridges built under the supervision of that eminent engineer, John Murphy, and by such firms as McNeill and Stewart. The elections were held, the government was sustained, and the house met in the 2nd of March. The day following he (Hazen) GAVE NOTICE FOR A COMMITTEE, and March 29th moved, seconded by Shaw, that a committee of five members be appointed to whom should be referred all matters connected with the construction of certain permanent bridges. Did the government facilitate the investigation in any way, by the hon. gentleman? No, sir.

Hazen—The government took the point of order that because he (Hazen) had named the committee his motion was out of order, although that is the case followed at Ottawa, and in the imperial parliament. On the very same day that he was ruled out of order he (Hazen) gave notice for the appointment of a committee without naming them, a resolution similar in every respect to the other, except that it was not ruled out of order. That came up on the 5th of April, and the provincial secretary raised the point of order that all the accounts named in the notice had been adjudicated upon by the public accountants, and that the papers should be moved for. That course was taken because the government did not want an investigation of the charges. At a later date in the session he (Hazen) had preferred certain charges, and on those charges a committee was moved for. It was not true, as stated, that he had refused to move for a committee. A reference to Hansard would show that when the members of the government benches asked him when he proposed to do, he replied that he wanted to see what they would do, and he further stated that if steps were not taken for an investigation he would make a further motion, following that the hon. chief commissioner moved a resolution which contained the terms of the motion (Hazen) had refused to move for a committee.

Tweddie—You did not move against that resolution yourself. Hazen—No, I did not, because if I had, it would have been held to be over the country that was afraid of an investigation, but I did get up in my place and protest against the resolution being passed with that statement in it. The committee was appointed; I went before that committee, submitted the charges to the witnesses and was prepared to go on. White—You had no witnesses. Hazen—You are making that statement absolutely without authority. I produced a list of 21 witnesses, whom I asked to come on Monday. Mr. White—I know that when you were first asked for the names of witnesses you could not give them. Mr. Hazen said he was not prepared to give the names the day the committee organized, but on the next day he gave the names of the witnesses.

HAD SUBMITTED THE NAMES of 21 witnesses. Several of those witnesses had arrived, and he was prepared to go on with the investigation, when he was approached by the hon. member for the city of St. John (Robertson), who until that time had been in a few days for England, that navigation was about opening and the members were anxious to get away, and asking if some arrangement could not be made to have the matter stand over. I told the hon. gentleman that I did not see how it could well go over. Later he came to me with two other members, and further urged the matter, and I told him I was willing to have the matter stand if an arrangement honorable to the premier and myself could be arrived at. The premier and I met. The premier stated that while he would like to meet the views of the members of the house there were those personal charges, and in fairness to his family and his friends, that he should not be allowed to hang over him for another year. I recognized the force of that, and we came to an agreement which I thought honorable to the premier and to myself. The result was that on the 22nd of April the premier rose in his place and made the following statement: "Before proceeding further with the business of the house, I desire to make reference to the investigation now before a special committee of the house. On the 14th day of the session the investigation might well stand over until the next session. There is one feature of the charges which affects myself personally. I understand the hon. leader of the opposition has with personal dishonesty in the discharge of my duty as chief commissioner and I feel that such imputation should not rest upon me longer than the earliest possible moment when they can be investigated. Beyond that I fully appreciate the desire of the hon. members to get released from their legislative duties and would be willing to meet their views if it were possible to do so. In case the matter stands over the committee would, under the rules of the house, have to be discharged. I then rose in my place in the house and made the statement withdrawing the charges, especially against the hon. chief commissioner, and I said in conclusion: "I think the arrangement came to is one honorable to the words and expressions that have just fallen from my hon. friend, and then he went on to say, 'My hon. friend certainly takes a really clever and ingenious expression to his withdrawal of an imputation against myself as chief commissioner of this province. I have pleasure in making the acknowledgment personally, I have pleasure in making the acknowledgment that my hon. friend has made, and in view of the charges which are reported on the journals of the members of this house, that the press that the statement which he has made and statement which I have made should appear in the journals of the members of this house, in which the original charges appear.'"

The premier then expressed the wish that his friends should not desire any further expression to his withdrawal of an imputation against myself as chief commissioner of this province. The premier then rose in his place and said: "In view of the agreement entered into I feel I am not assuming too much when I say, that I do not desire to see the term, the thanks of the legislature for the statements made to us today, and I hope that the members of this legislature will be given to the agreement which has been entered into between the two hon. gentlemen." Mr. Glaser, another member of the committee, stated that he was willing to stay here a week, but in view of the wish of the house that the investigation should stand over, he would not oppose it. Continuing, Mr. Hazen said that the whole intention and understanding in the agreement was that the personal charges should be withdrawn in as full a manner as possible, but that the investigation should be resumed when the house met again, and that in accordance with the agreement, and in view of the fact that he was now bringing the matter before the house, in the statement which he had made to the legislature last session, these words would be found: "If this statement is satisfactory to my hon. friend, then in view of his statement and what seems to be a general desire on both sides of the house that the session may not be prolonged, I would, with the consent of the house, withdraw the whole of the charges, reserving, however, the right to bring the matter before the legislature in respect to the construction of steel bridges as I may be advised to think necessary in the public interest."

He was therefore violating no compact in bringing his charges before the legislature. The hon. attorney general had complained of the action of the Moncton Times, but he (Hazen) was in no way responsible for that. He might with equal propriety complain of the action of the press supporting the government, which on the day after the charges were withdrawn, from one end of the province to the other, raised the cry that he (Hazen) had backed down. He was therefore violating no compact in bringing his charges before the legislature. The hon. attorney general had complained of the action of the Moncton Times, but he (Hazen) was in no way responsible for that. He might with equal propriety complain of the action of the press supporting the government, which on the day after the charges were withdrawn, from one end of the province to the other, raised the cry that he (Hazen) had backed down. He was therefore violating no compact in bringing his charges before the legislature. 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