

will answer his question by asking another. Has he any expert authority for putting the cost at \$40,000?

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Yes, I have.

Mr. FIELDING. The hon. gentleman has not given it to us.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Neither has my hon. friend given us his authority.

Mr. FIELDING. I will give my hon. friend my authority, but he is not willing to give us his authority. Ten or twelve years ago a road was surveyed from Edmundston to Moncton by a reputable engineer, Mr. Adams Davy. Mr. Davy reported to his company that the country was not a difficult one, and that a satisfactory road suitable for through traffic and of reasonable grades and curvatures could be built at a moderate cost. In that report the figures do not appear to be mentioned, but the company for whom Mr. Davy made the report afterwards made an application to parliament and they estimated the cost of the road at \$25,000 per mile. When companies are making applications for railway subsidies, they do not usually underestimate the cost of a road. The road surveyed by Mr. Davy was from Edmundston to Moncton which is the most difficult part of the section between Quebec and Moncton. A road from Quebec to Edmundston would be less costly, and therefore if a road from Edmundston to Moncton equal to the Intercolonial Railway could be built for \$25,000 a mile, a road from the Quebec bridge to Moncton could probably be built for somewhat less per mile.

Mr. SPROULE. What was the date of this engineer's report?

Mr. FIELDING. About 1890.

Mr. SPROULE. The Minister of Finance is aware that railroad building is more expensive now than it was then.

Mr. FIELDING. On the contrary, I can tell my hon. friend that while certain commodities are dearer now, yet the improved machinery and facilities which science enables us now to employ, has brought about the result that railroad building is no more expensive to-day than it was several years ago, but rather less. Then, last year I estimated that the road from Quebec to Winnipeg would cost on a basis of \$28,000 per mile. I made that estimate, not because I believed that the country was any more difficult, but because it was less accessible and there might be a greater cost for getting supplies. Again, in order to provide a fine grade of road, I added one-quarter to the estimate, and I assumed that the road would cost \$35,000 per mile. The leader of the opposition made it \$40,000 but gave no authority whatever for his theory.

CHIEF ENGINEER SCHREIBER'S VIEWS.

I stated last year that my information as respects the estimate of \$25,000 per mile for the one section and \$28,000 per mile for the other, was obtained from an eminent engineer, and I think I said my information came from Mr. Collingwood Schreiber, the chief engineer of government railways. I was then asked if I obtained a written report from Mr. Schreiber, and I said I had not. Anticipating that the same question might be asked again this year, I asked my hon. friend the Minister of Railways to obtain from Mr. Schreiber a statement of his views on the matter, reminding him of the information he gave me last year. Mr. Schreiber has addressed to the Minister of Railways the following letter, which deals entirely with the original estimate of \$25,000 and \$28,000 per mile:

Office of the Deputy Minister and Chief Engineer
Ottawa, Ont., 17th May, 1904.

Hon. H. R. Emmerson, Minister of Railways and Canals,
Ottawa, Ont.

Sir,—In compliance with your request that I should put in writing the information orally given by me to Mr. Fielding last summer, while he was acting minister of this department, in respect of the estimated cost of constructing the eastern division, between Moncton and Winnipeg, of the proposed Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, I would state as follows: premising that the character of railway I had in view was a substantially built railway, with maximum grades of less severity, and curves of greater radius than those on the Intercolonial Railway.

As to the section between Moncton and the south approach to the bridge now in course of construction over the River St Lawrence at Quebec, I advised Mr. Fielding that from my personal knowledge of the general configuration of the country, and from information gathered from the writ-